PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY & ECONOMIC PERCEPTION SURVEY

Viewpoints On:
Public service agencies, Service Delivery Criteria and Perceptions on Current Economic Conditions

7-10 April 2005
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I. Issues
II. Perceptions on Public Service Delivery
III. Perceptions on the Economy

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INTRODUCTION
The first in the series of surveys to be undertaken in 2005

Supported by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, these surveys have the following objectives:

1. Continued tracking of public opinion on salient issues affecting political and social debate
2. Increase awareness and acceptance of opinion research in public discourse
3. Increase the usage of factual research and statistics in matters of public debate
Survey Methodology

Structured sampling according to:
- ethnicity, gender and state of residence
- Telephone interviews
- Randomized selection of respondents
- Interviews conducted between: 9am – 9pm
- Total number interviews completed: 1016 respondents, aged 20 and above
- Survey period: 7 - 10 April 2005
- Margin of error : +/- 3.10% (95% confidence interval)
ISSUES
In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Malaysia right now?

Top 12 national issues

- Crime and public safety: 16%
- Price hike: 10%
- Business opportunities and econ. growth: 9%
- Social and moral problems: 7%
- Education: 6%
- Unemployment/job opportunities: 4%
- Tsunami and aftermath: 4%
- Natural disasters: 4%
- Politics: 2%
- Infrastructure & public amenities: 2%
- Illegal immigrants: 2%
- Environment: 1%
Generally speaking, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way things are going in the country today?

General satisfaction

- Total: 83%
- Malay: 83%
- Chinese: 83%
- Indian: 79%

Satisfied: 83%, 83%, 83%, 79%
Dissatisfied: 16%, 17%, 16%, 21%
PERCEPTIONS ON PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY
Generally speaking, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of government service agencies at present?

Satisfaction with the quality of service provided by government agencies

- Malay: 78%
- Chinese: 69%
- Indian: 79%

Satisfied

- Malay: 22%
- Chinese: 27%
- Indian: 17%

Dissatisfied
Generally speaking, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the performance of government service agencies at present? (Across regions)

**Satisfaction with the quality of service provided by government agencies**

- **Northern**: 77%
- **Central**: 73%
- **Eastern**: 79%
- **Southern**: 74%

**Dissatisfied**

- **Northern**: 21%
- **Central**: 24%
- **Eastern**: 19%
- **Southern**: 24%
In your opinion, has the quality of government service agencies improved or declined after Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi become Prime Minister?

Slightly under two-thirds feel that public services have improved under the current PM. This is reported by most respondents, but higher earning and better educated respondents have a dimmer view of the state of public service: among this group, only 45% felt that it had improved, the remainder felt that it has largely remained the same.
I am going to read you a list of issues that some people say affects government agencies. How big of a problem would you say it is or is it not a problem at all?

**Perception on government agencies**

- **Problem**
- **Indifferent**
- **Not a problem**
- **Don't know/ No response**

Of five issues tested, we found that the public service most common perception problem revolves around corruption, inefficiency and unfriendly service.

The fact that most public service employees tend to come from one ethnic group also presents a problem for a majority of the people.
Can you tell me one government agency that you had dealt with most recently?

**Top 12 public accessed government agencies**

- **Govt. hospitals/clinics**: 17%
- **Post Office**: 10%
- **National Registration Dept**: 9%
- **Immigration Dept**: 6%
- **Road Transport Dept (JPJ)**: 5%
- **Land Office**: 3%
- **Bank Simpanan Nasional**: 3%
- **Inland Revenue Dept**: 3%
- **EPF**: 2%
- **Town Council**: 2%
- **Ministry/Dept of Education**: 2%
- **District Office/Council/City Hall**: 2%

Reflecting national statistics, a high number of respondents note dealing with the public health system.
If satisfied, can you tell me the reason for your satisfaction?

Top 5 reasons for satisfaction with the government agencies:

- Courtesy: 49%
- Efficient: 37%
- Fast service/response: 2%
- Reasonable fees/Free of charge: 2%
- Good service: 2%
If dissatisfied, can you tell me the reason for your dissatisfaction?

Top 5 reasons for dissatisfaction with the government agencies

- Slow response/service: 41%
- Discourteous: 28%
- Inefficient: 16%
- Bureaucracy: 4%
- Incompetence: 2%

Slowness and lack of courtesy account for nearly all of the complaints towards government agencies.

The government’s current courtesy campaign is a step in the right direction but needs to ensure that the practice is embedded as part of the service culture. Over the longer term, more attention needs to paid on improving staff skills, automation and resources in order to reduce waiting time.
Can you tell me what is the most important public service in your area that needs most improvement in the coming years?

**Findings** imply that even though many Malaysians generally have the means to own or already possess their own cars, many would, if given the choice, opt for public transport in order to avoid congested and unsafe roads. However, as many as a quarter still feel that more needs to be done to improve public transportation.

One in sixteen want service at public hospitals to be improved. Major complaint here is waiting time, though improved compared to the past remains below public expectations.
Can you tell me how strongly satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the outpatient service at Government Hospitals based on…

Perception towards outpatient service at government hospitals

Unlike the JPJ and Local Govt. we note that more people access the public healthcare system and thus have a lot more to speak about it. Overall, the main source of satisfaction is the low cost of healthcare as compared to private institutions.

But in terms of response time, the performance of public health institutions lag far behind the other services. Nearly half of those we spoke to were unhappy with the response time at govt. hospitals and clinics, twice the level at JPJ or local govt.

Although we understand that the nature of service at hospitals are more complex than that at other counter services, we hope that the govt.’s planned withdrawal of medical subsidies will free up resources to improve service quality and reduce waiting time.
Can you tell me how strongly satisfied or dissatisfied you are with counter service at the Road Transport Department (JPJ) based on...

Perception towards counter service at the Road Transport Department (JPJ)

- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Don't know / No response

- Response time to attend your matters: 21% satisfied, 25% dissatisfied
- Convenience of dealing with them: 22% satisfied, 19% dissatisfied
- Value for money: 22% satisfied, 15% dissatisfied
- Satisfaction with overall service provided: 62% satisfied
- Competence of their staff: 62% satisfied
- Courtesy of their personnel: 62% satisfied
Can you tell me how strongly satisfied or dissatisfied you are with counter services at local government agencies such as DBKL, your city hall/municipal/district council based on...

Perception towards counter services at local government agencies

Satisfaction with local government agencies is moderate at 61%. We note however that satisfaction in more urbanized areas such as Kuala Lumpur and Selangor is lower at 56%. As with other services, the main area of weakness is response time in attending client matters.
Now I would like you tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the following services…

Satisfaction with public services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Don't know / No response</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation (bus/train/lrt/taxi)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash collection</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National secondary schools</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government hospitals in general</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National primary schools</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Talking about government agencies, which one of the following areas do you think they need to improve the most in order to satisfy a person like you?

**Area for improvement of government agencies**

- **Courtesy of their personnel**: 31%
- **Response time to attend to your matters**: 24%
- **Competence of their staff**: 19%
- **Convenience of dealing with them**: 10%
- **Service charge**: 8%

Being courteous to customers goes a long way in leaving a positive impression on them. The govt’s current courtesy campaign is on the mark in terms of addressing the public’s immediate needs vis-à-vis public service. If they are successful in doing so, nearly a third of public would be made happy.

Improving waiting and response time should be the next area of focus.
Perceptions about public service

Can you tell me if you would agree or disagree with the following statements…

Perception towards public services

- Don’t know/ No response
- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don’t know/ No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased government spending has raised the quality of public services over the last few years</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not that public services has declined in recent years but that people now demand and expect more of them</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public service information is more easily available than before, which enables people to exercise choice</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is some recognition that there are many other factors that impinge upon public service such as a growing clientele and competing priorities in national development. At the same time, there are acknowledgements of improvements such as greater level of information than available before.
PERCEPTIONS ON THE ECONOMY
How would you rate the overall performance of the government in managing the national economy at present?

**Government performance in managing national economy**

- **Satisfied**
  - Malay: 81%
  - Chinese: 81%
  - Indian: 57%

- **Dissatisfied**
  - Malay: 17%
  - Chinese: 26%
  - Indian: 15%

- **Don't know/ No response**
  - Malay: 2%
  - Chinese: 17%
  - Indian: 4%
How would you rate your ability to handle rising prices at present?

Rising cost of living and of goods and services are beginning to have a marked impression on lower and lower-middle income groups. These changes brought about by rising fuel costs will affect more than two-thirds of the public.

Price increases have not hit crisis proportions but the impact is beginning to be felt as consumers switch purchasing patterns, i.e. by buying lower grade staple items and holding back from making major purchases.
How would you rate the current condition with respect to job opportunities for the average person right now?

Job opportunities for the average person right now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Plentiful</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;RM 1,500 p/mth</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 1,501-3,000 p/mth</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 3,001-5,000 p/mth</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;RM 5,000 p/mth</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How would you rate the current condition with respect to business growth right now?

**Current condition with respect to business growth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>Unfavorable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;RM 1,500/mth</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 1,501-3,000/mth</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 3,001-5,000/mth</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;RM 5,000/mth</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicative perhaps of the limitations in accessing and understanding economic information, it is interesting to note that lower income respondents, while feeling the pinch of rising prices and lower than expected job prospects still retain strong confidence in the overall business climate.

One possible explanation is that many lower income respondents tend to be wage earners and may have limited access to the outlook on the general economy as a business owner might possess.

The following chart further expands on the perspective along ethnic lines.
Perceptions on the business climate have very strong variance along ethnic lines. We note that while Malays and Indians remain enthusiastic about the economy, that is not the case with their Chinese counterparts where only half share similar sentiments.

Perhaps being more directly involved in commerce and invested in the stock market has a bearing on why Chinese respondents are more reserved about overall business prospects than other respondents.
We are told that the country’s economy continues to perform well. Do you agree or disagree that this economic growth has increased the income for ordinary Malaysians like you and your family?

**Do you agree that national economic growth has increased the income for ordinary Malaysians?**

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;RM 1,500/mth</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 1,501-3,000/mth</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM 3,001-5,000/mth</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;RM 5,000/mth</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are told that the country’s economy continues to perform well. Do you agree or disagree that this economic growth has increased the income for ordinary Malaysians like you and your family?

Again, a marked dichotomy along ethnic lines. More than half of the Chinese and Indians say that they do not feel the impact of national economic growth but more than two-thirds of Malays say they do.
How would you rate your own personal financial situation?

**Personal financial status**

- More than enough
- Can make ends meet
- Struggle to make ends meet

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**<RM 1,500/mth**
- More than enough: 9%
- Can make ends meet: 64%
- Struggle to make ends meet: 27%

**RM 1,501-3,000/mth**
- More than enough: 10%
- Can make ends meet: 63%
- Struggle to make ends meet: 25%

**RM 3,001-5,000/mth**
- More than enough: 18%
- Can make ends meet: 59%
- Struggle to make ends meet: 23%

**>RM 5,000/mth**
- More than enough: 23%
- Can make ends meet: 56%
- Struggle to make ends meet: 21%

**Total**
- More than enough: 11%
- Can make ends meet: 62%
- Struggle to make ends meet: 26%