

Citizen's Satisfaction On The Public Service's Administration: A Case Study At Lap Thach District, Vinh Phuc Province

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at evaluating the citizen's satisfaction on the public services' administration at the People's Committee of Lap Thach District, Vinh Phuc Province. The author collected primary data through information provided by questionnaire survey for respondents who have been using the public service in the mentioned period of data collecting time. The survey was conducted on the working days from 20/05/2018 to 30/09/2018.

Keyword: Citizen, satisfaction, Public services, Public administrative reform, Vinh Phuc Province.

I. INTRODUCTION

Public services, generally, is defined as services that are conducted by government entities with objective of improving living standard of people within its jurisdiction. Public services is extremely important in developing and poor countries whether government has sufficient capital and fully access to resources required for developing economies and people's living standards.

Lap Thach is a rural district of Vinh Phuc Province in the Red River Delta region of northern Vietnam. This district is located in the northwestern Vinh Phuc, bordering Tuyen Quang on the north, districts of Tam Dao and Tam Duong on the east, Vinh Tuong on the south and Song Lo District and Phu Tho Province on the west. Lap Thach is subdivided into eighteen communes and two townships. The communes are Son Dong, Trieu De, Dinh Chu, Xuan Loi, Van Quan, Tien Lu, Dong Ich, Ban Gian, Tu Du, Lien Hoa, Ngoc My, Xuan Hoa, Van Truc, Lien Son, Thai Hoa, Bac Binh, Hop Ly, Quang Son, and the townships are Lap Thach, the district seat, and Hoa Son.

Public administrative reform is an urgent as well as a lasting duty in order to step by step build a clear and strong public administration

which serves efficiently and promotes greatly the process of reforming and developing the country. Administrative procedures are an indispensable part in our social life. It is also a tool of the state in administering the society and serving both organizations and individuals. After seventeen years since the application of the comprehensive public administrative reform program, the carrying out of administrative reform has had many positive changes, which have been supported by most of the public. Based on this, the People's committee of Lap Thach district is always making requests: Continuing complete, further improvement of serving the people, stable administrative activities towards fast, simple and effective.

Currently the administrative reform in Lap Thach District has created standards in offering people, especially in the field of standard applications such as ISO, the system is built the procedures clear and simple. Residents and enterprises are now easily to go through administrative procedures, such as notary public, business registration, civil procedures... Although Lap Thach district has been achieving important results, the reform process changes slowly compared with the actual requirements, efficiency, long administrative procedure.... the current public services at Lap Thach district are under performance. Therefore, the requirement of assessing current performance of public services in Lap Thach district is emerging as one of the most important tasks. Besides the function of state management, the serving function of the state aims at providing necessary services for the citizens so that they can carry out their rights and duties appropriately is now given more attention than before. As a consequence, the question as to how to evaluate the public administrative service quality as well as the citizens' satisfaction is still raised. In this study, the author aims at determining and evaluating the citizens' satisfaction with the

delivery of the public administrative services belonging to Lap Thach District.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study could be divided in to two stages including: Preliminary stage and formal stage.

Preliminary studies were conducted using qualitative methods through technical research. The author studied on legal documents, previous studies, and discussed with staffs, experts in public

sector, experts. The pilot test was conducted at the People Committee of Lap Thach district with a sample of 30 people who have been using public service, after another adjustment, the complete questionnaire was finalized. In formal studies, data would collected via conducting a survey on people and citizens at Lap Thach district. Data would be cleaned and analyzed using SPSS 20 software. The research process could be showed as figure below:

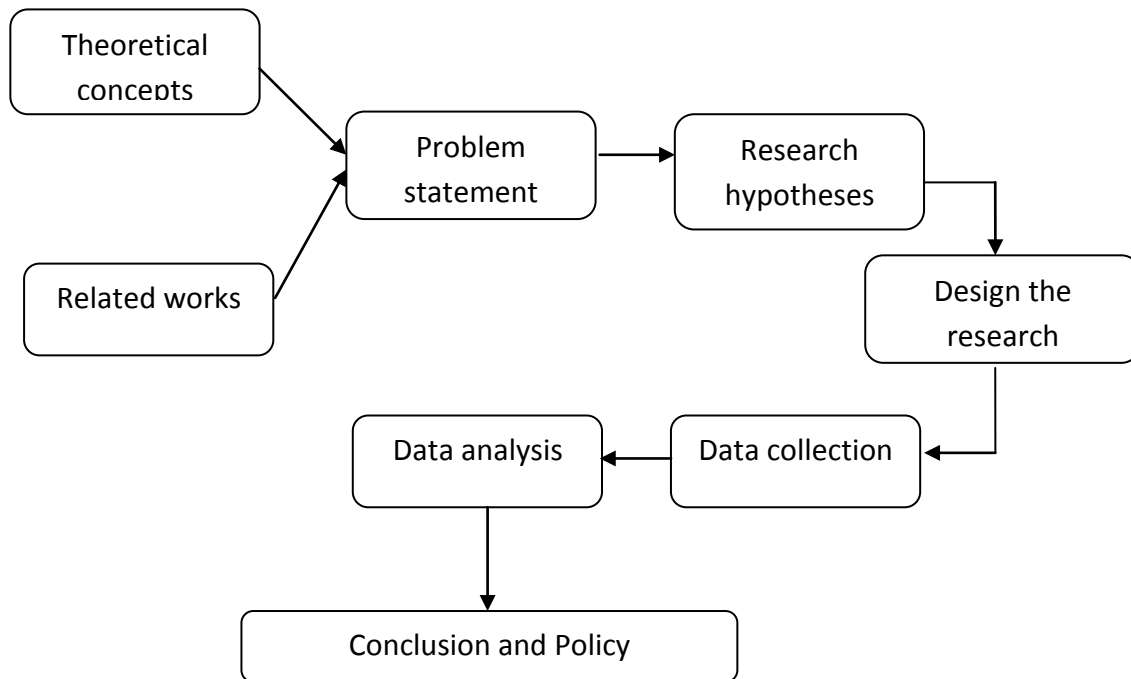


Figure 1. Flow of research approach used in the thesis

Source: Kothari (2004)

The research was conducted at Lap Thach District of Vinh Phuc Province. In more detail, respondents would be received the questionnaire and answered at the People Committee of Lap Thach district, when they used public service there.

In order to ensure the sample size of the study, 230 questionnaires were distributed. Respondents were randomly chosen from people who came to the People Committee of Lap Thach district from September to November, 2018. Among them, only 213 questionnaires were collected. After that, survey result was input into a Microsoft Excel file, refined, and removed any erroneous (if any) before implementing

analysis by SPSS software. There were 12 questionnaires unusable because the respondents did not fill all necessary information. Therefore, there were only 201 questionnaires utilized for the analysis.

On the basis of the theory of quality public services, selectively inherit the results of previous studies, legacy service quality assessment methods of Parasuraman include 7 components: Coordinating with the opinion of the citizens, the author proposed research model consisting of seven factors affect the level of satisfaction of the taxpayer as follows:

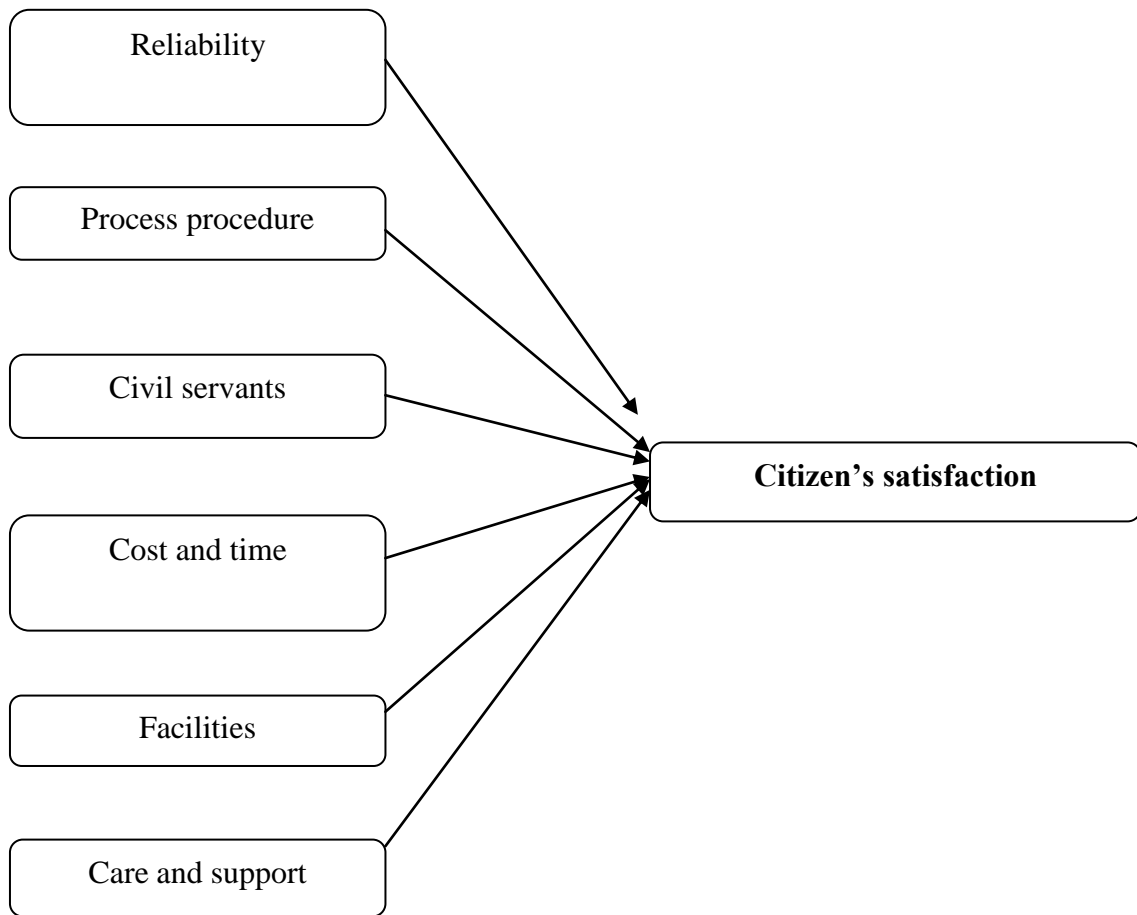


Figure 2. The research model

Source: Author

Hypotheses

- H1: Factor of reliability has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction
- H2: Factor of process procedure has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction
- H3: Factor of civil servants has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction
- H4: Factor of Cost and time has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction

H5: Factor of facilities has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction

H4: Factor of care and support has positive effect on the citizen's satisfaction

Based on previous studies and the discussion results with staffs and expert, the observed variables are showed below

Table 1: Observed variables

STT	Scale	Variables	Encode variables
1	Reliability	1. The public trust the quality of public administrative services	RE1
2		2. People are very confident in the use of public administrative services	RE2
3		3. Public administrative services always carry out what they have committed	RE3
4		4. Information of the people is always good security	RE4
5		5. The service provides people with high accuracy	RE5

6	Process procedure	1. Procedures of publicity and transparency	PP1
7		2. Current application procedures are simple to implement	PP2
8		3. Procedures are properly dealt with regulations	PP3
9		4. Procedures for reasonable settlement	PP4
10		5. Information on services is provided in full	PP5
11		6. Waiting time and transaction processing is appropriate	PP6
12	Civil servants	1. Processing accurate records	CS1
13		2. Very responsible in the work	CS2
14		3. Have a friendly attitude	CS3
15		4. Polite, agile behavior	CS4
16		5. Always be fair to everyone	CS5
17	Cost and time	1. Full public fees and charges for workplaces	CT1
18		2. To collect fees and charges in accordance with regulations	CT2
19		3. The time for returning the dossier-settling results is right	CT3
20		4. Waiting time for receiving and processing applications quickly	CT4
21	Facilities	1. Place convenient, easy to find, easy to see	FA1
22		2. Standby area and receive separate results	FA2
23		3. Modern equipment	FA3
24	Care and support	1. Have counseling, explain to the people	CS1-A
25		2. There is a hotline	CS2-A
26		3. Procedures for resolving scientific complaints	CS3-A
27		4. The information system is appropriate	CS4-A
28	The satisfaction of citizen	1. Satisfying the civil servants	SHL1
29		2. Satisfaction with the process and cost	SHL2
30		3. Satisfied with the facilities	SHL3
31		4. Satisfaction about care and support	SHL4

Source: Author

The scale of all observed variables of the component elements of service public administration based on Likert scale level 5, respectively (according to the agreed incremental):

1: Strongly disagree (completely false statement)

2: Disagreed

3: Normal, (neutral)

4: Agree

5: Strongly agree (completely true statement)

Based on the results of the discussions confirms the factors (factors) and pepper Press (observed variables) mismatch between the scale theory and actual situation in the People's Committee Lap Thach District. Through qualitative analysis shows that the question of the scale used to research are

clear and easy to understand each question reflect different aspects of the component elements.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Results from questionnaire

The research results from questionnaire show that the answer mostly at the level 3 and level 4 in the five point Likert scale. The Mean values are more than 3 and some questions have Mean value around 2.5, and the standard deviations of some variables are quite high. That means there are a significant difference between respondent's perception towards public services at Lap Thach district. Therefore, we can initially conclude that the satisfaction level of citizens at Lap Thach district with public services is item good.

3.2. Reliability analysis

Observed variables in the model are built from 3 to 6 different observed items for one factor. To test the reliability of scales for factors, the author uses Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, a popular coefficient used to evaluate the reliability of a research definition (Suander et al, 2007; Hair et al, 2006). As indicated in chapter 3: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient must be at least 0.6, the total correlation coefficient must be at least 0.3. Observed items if have the total correlation coefficient less than 0.3 will be removed from scales for factor and should not appear in next step of analysis.

After testing scales for all factors in the model, 31 observed items and 6 factors are reliable for the next analysis stage. Observed variable RE4 is inappropriate and has been removed from factor analysis. All Observed variables with Cronbach Alpha coefficient greater than 0.68 show that they have high reliability level.

3.3. Explanatory Factor analysis (EFA)

After testing scales for factor by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, scales will be tested by the method of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The method of EFA is used to find the

interdependence between the variables. This method will help the author collect a set of fewer implicit variables (factors) from the data set of observed variables (Hair et al, 2006). For this study, Exploratory factor analysis will be done particularly for independent variables and the dependent variable. Factor extraction method used is Principal component with Varimax rotation to extract the smallest number of factors (Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc, 2008). The analysis standards are factor loading coefficient must be at least 0.5 in one factor, eigen-value equals or greater than 1, variance extracted must be at least 50%, KMO is at least 0.5, Bartlett-test has p-value less than 0.05. Results from data analysis are as follows:

3.3.1. Exploratory factor analysis of independent variables

The results show that $KMO = 0.825 > 0.5$, Bartlett-test has $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$, the variance extracted = 65.726% greater than 50%, eigenvalue = 1.440 after extracting to six factors, and observed items form six different factors. So, using the method of explore factor analysis is appropriate to the research data.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.825
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2418.314
	df	325
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's calculation

The six factor are: process procedure, reliability, civil servants, cost and time, care and support, and facilities as expected.

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PP4	.810					
PP3	.798					
PP5	.795					
PP2	.748					
PP6	.728					
PP1	.577					
RE1		.880				
RE2		.837				
RE5		.794				
RE3		.758				
CS4			.749			
CS1			.743			
CS2			.718			
CS5			.692			

CS3			.662			
CS1_A				.787		
CS4_A				.783		
CS2_A				.757		
CS3_A				.739		
CT3					.788	
CT4					.781	
CT1					.719	
CT2					.623	
FA1						.858
FA3						.851
FA2						.767
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

Source: Author's calculation

3.3.2. Exploratory factor analysis of dependent variables

The results show that $KMO = 0.764 > 0.5$, Bartlett-test has $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$, the

variance extracted = 68.097% greater than 50%, eigenvalue = 2.724 after extracting to one factors.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test for reliability test of dependent variables

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.764
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	336.739
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's calculation

Thus, using method of factor analysis here is appropriate, and scales for the dependent variable "satisfaction" are unidirectional scales

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Component Matrix ^a	
	Component
	1
SHL4	.872
SHL1	.828
SHL3	.817
SHL2	.781
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Author's calculation

The regression function is defined as follows: $SHL = 0.323*PP + 0.196*RE + 0.350*CS + 0.235*CS_A + 0.478*CT + 0.355*FA$. Variance analysis shows that F-test has $p\text{-value} = 0.000$, it means there is at least one independent variable having Beta coefficient differs from 0. Adjusted R square = 0.665 proves that independent variables explain 66.5% of the variability of the dependent variable SHL- Citizen's satisfaction. Because this study used standardized variables, the estimated

model does not violate the assumptions of the method OLS.

3.4. Testing research hypotheses

Testing hypothesis H1: Factor "Process Procedure" positively affects citizens satisfaction. From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item PP is $\beta = 0.323 > 0$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor "Process Procedure" has positive impact on citizen's satisfaction. In other

words, we accept the hypothesis H1. This result shows that the factor “**Process Procedure**” is a factor affecting general feeling of citizen’s satisfaction.

Testing hypothesis H2: Factor “Reliability” positively affects citizen’s satisfaction. From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item SC is $\beta = 0.196 > 0$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 > 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor “Reliability” have positive impact citizen’s satisfaction. In other words, we accept the hypothesis H2.

Testing hypothesis H3: Does factor “Civil Servants” positively affects citizen’s satisfaction? From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item CS is $\beta = 0.350 > 0$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 > 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor “Response” have positive impact on citizen’s satisfaction. In other words, we accept the hypothesis H3.

Testing hypothesis H4: Factor “Care and Support” positively affects citizen’s satisfaction. From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item SU is $\beta = 0.235 > 0$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor “Care and Support” has positive impact on citizen’s satisfaction. In other words, we accept the hypothesis H4. This showed that if the People Committee of Lap Thach District improves the feeling of citizens with the factor “Care and Support” (change attitude, improve the relationship between officers and citizens), the satisfaction level of citizens will increase.

Testing hypothesis H5: Factor “Cost and Time” positively affects citizen’s satisfaction. From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item SU is $\beta = 0.478 > 0$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor “Cost and Time” has positive impact on Citizen’s satisfaction. In other words, we accept the hypothesis H5. This showed that if the People Committee of Lap Thach district improves the feeling of citizens with the factor “Cost and Time”, the satisfaction level of taxpayer will increase.

Testing hypothesis H6: Factor “Facilities” positively affects citizen’s satisfaction. From actual data, we see that Beta coefficient of the item SU is $\beta = 0.355 > 0$, $p - \text{value} = 0.000 < 0.01$. So with the reliability coefficient = 99%, we can suppose that the factor “Facilities” has positive impact on citizen’s satisfaction. In other words, we accept the hypothesis H6.

If the citizens feel satisfied with facilities (for example: equipment, standby area...), they will have tendency of becoming more satisfied with the People Committee of Lap Thach District.

3.5. Discussions

The research results show a close relation between factors in the model which the authors built and the dependent variable “Citizen’s satisfaction” with a high level of significant. In this study, the factor “Cost and Time” has biggest impact intensity. This result is a bit different as compared with some other studies in Vietnam. Factor “Cost and time” include the following variables:

1. Full public fees and charges for workplaces
2. To collect fees and charges in accordance with regulations
3. The time for returning the dossier-settling results is right
4. Waiting time for receiving and processing applications quickly

It is quite understandable to see this factor influencing the most to citizen’s satisfaction. We have learnt much about the complaints from citizens in Vietnam in general and Lap Thach district in particular in particular regarding the attitude of time and unofficial cost. They usually complain about the attitude of officers when dealing with their problems.

The second important factor is “facilities”. This result is also same with results from some other studies. This once again confirms the relationship between the service quality and citizen’s satisfaction. It seems, in the People Committee of Lap Thach district, facilities such as equipment standby area even are being improved, however, according to citizens, it is still a very important factor to satisfy the expectation of citizens. The third important factor is “civil servants”. This result is similar with expected relationship between variables in the model. It proves positive relationship between the civil servants and citizen’s satisfaction. The fourth factor that impacts taxpayers the most is “process procedure”. It should not be surprise with this conclusion because of all citizens going to the People Committee of Lap Thach district expect a fast procedure. Ranking the fifth place is the factor named “Care and support”. There are two possible explanations, the officers are good in their work regarding their knowledge and their enthusiasm (if may be their feel satisfied with the companies working with) and they are willing to help at the office. And the last two factors are “reliability” ranked as the lowest impact on citizen’s satisfaction. It is not surprising for the factor “reliability” because recently, most of the offices at the People Committee of Lap Thach district are well equipped for the process procedure and

knowledge related to their work. The working conditions for officers have been improved a lot for the last five years.

IV. SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Public services are key determinant of quality of life and important ingredients for any poverty reduction policy. Public services are services related to law enforcement activities, not for profit purposes, granted by competent state agencies to organizations and individuals in the form of valid legal documents in the areas governed by that government agency (Government). Bovaird and Loffler argued that high quality public administration not only increases customer's satisfaction with public services but also builds public trust through transparency. Assessing public service provision must be understood as a catalyst of accountability, of civil society through citizen action and other interest groups.

Lap Thach district has achieved a significant progress in terms of public services reform process. However, the local government of Lap Thach district is still under pressure of improve their public administrative service. This study aims to assess the level of satisfaction of citizens at Lap Thach district towards public services. Based on previous studies and literature, the author did establish a theoretical framework and conceptual framework. A survey has been conducted with 230 respondents who are the citizens at Lap Thach district. The survey results showed that basically, citizen's satisfied with public services at the People Committee of Lap Thach district. Using the method of exploratory factor analysis and a regression model, all six factors has positive impact on the citizen's satisfaction. The results also suggested that among six factors, there are three factors showing greatest impact on the level of citizen's satisfaction including: Cost and time, facilities, and civil servants. This results also a basis in order to suggest recommendations to enhance public services at the People Committee of Lap Thach district.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Assessing the level of satisfaction of citizen for public administrative services contributes to administrative reform in order to better serve the people. The study was conducted in 2018 by randomly interviewing 200 citizens in the Lap Thach district of Vinh Phuc Province - Vietnam. SPSS was used to test Cronbach's alpha and analyze EFA and run regression to assess

citizens' satisfaction on the quality of public administrative services at the People Committee of Lap Thach district, Vinh Phuc Province. The results of the study have identified six groups of factors that affect the satisfaction of citizens is Process procedure; Reliability; cost and time; care and support, civil servants and facilities. All factors have a positive impact on citizen's satisfaction, especially Cost and Time ($\beta = 0.478$); Facilities (0.355); Civil Servants (0.350) are the most significant factors.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

6.1. Improving "cost and time" and upgrading facilities related to the public services

In the last few years, Lap Thach district has been conducting a public reform, according recent report, Lap Thach has improved their public service in all aspects such as: Employing information technology in order to reducing service time, and cost. However, it seems the gap to improve time and cost of services is still existed. Even according to data form Lap Thach district, 97 percent documents applied by the citizens has solved on time, the people at Lap Thach district do not satisfy with the service time. The average score of the item: "The time for returning the dossier-settling results is right?" is only 2.85. They want the time for returning documents shorter than the duration time proposed by the People Committee of Lap Thach district. In the coming time, the People committee of Lap Thach district could improve time and cost related to public services by employing the followings solutions:

Firstly, Intensifying Information technology application, so that time to dealing with documents would be reduced. It is necessary to speed up the formulation and improvement of institutions so as to create a complete and comprehensive legal framework for e-government building and establishment.

It is also required to complete local databases at Lap Thach district and all others local government in Viet Nam serving as the foundation for e-local government building and development. Together with the formulation of institutions, efforts should also be concentrated on the building of local databases as the foundation for e-government development with special importance attached to the local population and land databases. Additionally, in order to ensure their effective use, these local databases should be built based on an integrated platform that enables the sharing of data between information systems at the central and local levels and ensures the transferability among the Government's special-use digital signature

authentication system, public digital signature authentication systems, and national payment portals, etc.

Secondly, it is necessary to establish the system of applications serving people, enterprises, and the Government's management and administration work.

At present, local government of Lap Thach district is working hard to build the local public service portal, contributing to a national public service portal and deploy an electronic single-window information system linked to public service portals of ministries, sectors and localities. In addition, in order to serve the Government's management and administration work, in the coming time, a paperless information system, an e-system on policy consultancy and a local information and reporting system should be developed serving the formation of an administration center of the local government.

Thirdly, to review, re-arrange and mobilize all human and financial resources serving e-government development. In order to improve the efficiency of investment in IT application projects, it is necessary to review, re-arrange and mobilize resources for the performance of prioritized e-government development tasks, adopt a special mechanism for investment in IT application projects, and increase socialization so as to promote the effectiveness of public-private partnership in the sector. Additionally, the effectiveness of public information about e-government, digital economy and digital infrastructure need to be improved through implementation of propagation programs aiming to raise awareness, change behaviors and habits, and create social consensus about the development of the e-government.

Other aspect of the problem should be facilities at the People Committee of Lap Thach district. Even facilities at the People Committee of Lap Thach district have been upgrading with modern equipment and re-organizing the office. However, more investment on facilities is required and the participation of private sector can be considered as a new approach for improving facilities at the Lap Thach district.

6.2. Improving the Quality of the Civil Servants and Officials

The civil servants and officials are those who directly carry out public administrative services. They must be familiar with the procedures and policies related to the public administration they carry and the parties involved. Therefore, it is necessary to open regular training courses,

professional training and dissemination of new relevant policies for staff. Particularly, the informatics and foreign language training for the civil servants are enhanced to be able to apply the electronic one-door model in the future. Beside expertise, the attitude and ethics of civil servants and officials are very important. This is a relatively strong factor affecting the satisfaction of citizens at the People Committee of Lap Thach district. Therefore, it's a must to raise the sense of responsibility, enthusiasm in work and resolutely fight the violations of law and ethics.

6.3. Completing the Process Procedure

At present, the People Committee of Lap Thach district is applying the one-stop-shop mechanism and inter-agency one-stop-shop mechanism at state administrative agencies. However, Lap Thach district has not applied the electronic one door system like other local government in Vietnam. The "electronic one-door" public administrative service is supposed to facilitate individuals and organizations that need to quickly resolve administrative procedures at a single access site. People can check the status of records processing via the internet. This helps to shorten the process, reduce costs and time, and reduce fraud in the processing of records and procedures. Therefore, Lap Thach district should invest in special infrastructure information system to progress to apply electronic door. Besides, it helps to set up unexpected and periodical inspection teams to evaluate the implementation of administrative reform in localities in the provinces. From there, propose solutions to shorten the process in the most reasonable way.

6.4. Promoting Care and Support for the People

Satisfying people with public administrative services, care and support is important. If citizens are assisted and supplied with the procedures, they will be prepared in full, shortening waiting time. The provinces should stipulate that it is compulsory for public administrative units to clearly define the functions and tasks of the unit. This is because a lot of people do not know whether this is the place where the public services carry out or not. The People Committee of Lap Thach district in particular and in Vinh Phuc province in general also surveys on the satisfaction of the citizens with regard to public administrative services and also gives some results as nearly 97% of the people are satisfied with the results of service they need. This is the evidence for the People's Committee of Lap Thach district to recognize the situation in the district departments

and propose solutions to improve the quality of service and the benefit of organizations and individuals. However, at present, public administrative office in the district do not have any survey to collect opinion of people. Therefore, each office should actively collect opinions from people after implementing public services. This is the proof for improving the quality of public administrative services through assessment and aspirations of the people.

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