



**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SERVICE
COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES IN
CONTEXTS OF AUTOCRATIC GOVERNANCE:
THE CASE OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

By

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ABSTRACT

Almost inevitably on occasions, purchasers, customers or users of services will be so dissatisfied with the quality or experience of procurement that they will feel driven to make a complaint. Whether in relation to public or private sector organisations, complaints can provide suppliers with valuable feedback information about their services which may help to inform and direct improvements more generally as well as in relation to the particular case and circumstances. Devising and operating an effective complaints process, and learning from those who use it, is thus a potentially important component of any organisation's strategy for success.

This aim of this study has been to examine complaint management within a public governmental organization – and particularly within such an organization in an autocratic state context. Whereas in the private sector market pressures are likely to provide the incentive to businesses to learn from complaints and improve service, and whereas in public bodies in democratic states, there may be equivalent incentives and accountability processes at work, for example, through the ballot box, it was hypothesized that, in autocratic state contexts, such pressures would be less apparent, and so a key mechanism for feedback, learning and organizational and service development correspondingly less clear.

Accordingly, this study has focused on the impacts of a complaint management processes on public service provision and on the potential of such processes in relation to governmental service development and improvement. The study has taken the form of a case-study – set in Brunei Darussalam - and involved a mixed methods research approach of both a survey of some 200 public servants with a structured questionnaire, and a set of some 60 more in-depth,

semi structured, interviews with senior governmental officials drawn from a range of departments.

While almost all respondents and interviewees readily acknowledged the importance and value of complaints and complaint management as a key component of good customer focus, the research found that, mostly, the mechanisms for realizing such value were not in place and that, in practice, few government departments in Brunei were managing complaints in any systematic manner. This state of affairs, it has been concluded, reflects the lack of market or democratic pressures for departments to learn from complaints and to improve its public services. In an autocratic state context such as Brunei, the quality of public services therefore depends more on the clarity of objectives and priority afforded to the issue of service standards by leaders at national and local levels, and to the instructions and training on expectations in this respect, and to enforcement processes that are instituted.

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

Three papers from this research were presented to conferences and other research meetings at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CM	Complaint Management
HDI	Human Development Index
MSD	Management Services Department
MIB	Malay Islamic Monarchy (<i>Melayu Islam Beraja</i>)
NMP	New Public Management
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OL	Organisational Learning
WGI	World Governance Indicator

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

Among the many challenges for governments in countries of both the developed and undeveloped world, the inexorable rise in public expectations about standards of public services has been one of the most significant – imposing major pressures on state institutions, whether at national, regional or local levels, to invest in new provision and to upgrade existing services. The forces of globalization have also played their part in fuelling such rising public expectations, as has the growing commercialization and marketisation of public services by encouraging stronger consumerism and the rebranding of service users, passengers, patients and the like as customers.

Customer satisfaction has become as important an indicator of performance in the public sector as it has long been in the private sector; even though, in many public services, the usual conditions of the market, and most notably the scope for choice, are generally absent. Similarly, increasing attention has been devoted to customer complaints, with the introduction of formal complaint procedures, and the institution of review processes to promote organizational learning and service improvement in response to dissatisfaction and formal complaints (Zemke, 1999:280).

From the citizens' point of view, it would no doubt seem ideal to have world class public services. However, the implications of such a utopian vision in terms of higher taxes would inevitably serve as a check in most states around the world. In the public sector, with its imperfect market conditions, for the most part, service user 'satisfaction', rather than delight, is usually regarded as a sufficient test of the user's perception of quality and of a positive service experience.

Such feedback is important because it allows service providers to be more confident about quality from the user's viewpoint and to learn about the scope and directions for service improvement and development (Jacobs, 2010). A common problem here, however, is the general reluctance of most public service users to provide such feedback, perhaps because too few people believe much, if any, notice will be taken of their comments; perhaps because they do not have the same expectations about public services as they might with private ones that they have directly purchased; perhaps because of cultural barriers of one form or another; perhaps because public organisations seem not to be so interested in feedback or in providing simple and accessible channels for its provision; and, no doubt, for many other reasons besides (Haynes, 2003:39).

Not only can feedback on public services generate valuable evaluative data for policy-makers and service providers, but it can also create powerful incentives for staff to sustain high standards and look to improving these (Jacobs, 2010). While this is true both of positive feedback (i.e. expressions of appreciation or compliments) and negative feedback (i.e. criticisms or complaints), it is axiomatic that negative feedback can be particularly helpful in

highlighting how and where a service has failed to satisfy a user, and where providers might usefully direct their attentions in seeking to improve provision (see for example, Söderlund, 1998; Deichmann and Lall, 2003). Of course different service users may have different service experiences (Larivet and Brouard, 2010) and may also regard quality differently. It is also often difficult to know how widely one person's complaint might apply or whether a particular reported problem was a 'one-off' or endemic to the process of delivery.

Traditionally, users of public services, the world over, have had little direct impact on the nature or quality of provision, and have largely been expected simply to accept the standards they encounter or receive (Alford, 2002). But since the late 1980s/early 1990s, almost as antidote to the New Public Management (NPM) reforms of the early 1980s (Hood, 1991) interest in the quality of public services in Western economies has grown rapidly, heralding the advent of a 'new public consumerism' (Needham, 2009; Modell and Wiesel, 2009) and the inexorable rise of customer-centricity in governmental and other public service organisations.

The new rhetoric of public organisations has argued that customers, consumers and users of public services should no longer simply accept what is being offered to them, but should be empowered to become key participants in processes of service redesign. Instead of passively tolerating poor services, they should be encouraged to provide feedback so as to help improve and reshape provision for the better. Meanwhile, for public organisations themselves, the establishment of more systematic processes for gathering and handling such feedback, including complaints procedures has become the new norm and expectation. In this way, it has

been argued, trust and confidence in government are also likely to be strengthened (De Walle and Bouckaert, 2003; Luria *et al.*, 2009).

Such developments have increasingly taken place at a global scale, and in many countries the interests of the public service consumer have taken center-stage and have been championed both within existing government departments and through new units and cross-departmental teams, focused specifically on reforming public services for the benefit of users. Included here, have been developments in establishing independent service quality review teams, and also introducing ombudsmen to handle complaints and to provide independent adjudication on them and on other cases of alleged maladministration (Powers and Bendall-Lyons, 2002; Gal and Doron, 2007).

1.2 Problem Statement

The subject of consumer experience and satisfaction with public services has attracted increasing interest from academic scholars over the past thirty years or so, in light of the increased focus on performance management that has been such a key component of the New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Barlow and Moller, 1996). However, very little of that interest has focused specifically on user complaints against public organizations.

Yet the public sector is particularly interesting in this respect for various reasons, not least the absence of market competition and other incentives to improve quality and to retain customers as in the private sector, or the fact that any such improvements might have to be financed by

higher taxes for all rather than by individual payments by users. In such a context, there are also questions about the motivation upon public officials to listen sufficiently carefully to what public service customers have to say about the value and quality of provision or about desired improvements. Indeed, in some parts of the public sector there might well be antipathy towards the idea of customer complaint reflecting entrenched attitudes that question the public service user's right to complain (Sarah and Macaulay, 1997).

On the other hand, a number of studies (e.g. Wood, 1996) have emphasized not only the value for learning about public services through complaint processes, but also the importance of awareness of the barriers that may prevent complaints being made in the first place. Principal among these might be inadequate information about how to complain, fear of the consequences of so doing, and low public expectations about the prospects of achieving positive responses from the organizations whose service quality is being challenged.

Such circumstances are perhaps more likely to prevail in autocratic state contexts where there is no democratic mechanism through which citizens can articulate their dissatisfaction or voice their concerns, still less, change their government in protest. Such is the context for this thesis which considers complaint management in the autocratic state context of Brunei. In particular, the research to be presented examines the ways in which the Brunei government and its various departments of state approach and handle complaints about public services and the extent to which complaint management is institutionalised within government and embedded in the ways of working.

The argument in any national context, however, is that complaints procedures are important because they are a part of any citizen's entitlement, and an inherent part of open and accountable good governance. In this respect, complaints procedures, as Seneviratne (1990:3) has argued, represent a method of accountability, and, if complaints are monitored, they can provide a vital base of knowledge, not only to inform the organisation about its performance and about how well it is living up to expectations but also to help shape future priorities and decisions as to how to improve the public services on which many people depend.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study and the Research Questions

As indicated above, the objective of the research for this thesis has been to study the nature of complaint management in an autocratic state context; to ascertain the extent to which government learns about itself and its public services through the medium of complaints. A case study approach has been followed in the design of the research to provide a suitably "in-depth" and "rich" empirical evidence base from which to draw conclusions, not only for the case-study state itself, but also to support more generalized application in other financially-rich autocratic state contexts. Three key research questions, and four subsidiary questions, have underpinned and shaped this thesis as follows:

- 1. What is the motivation for governments of autocratic states to learn about citizen/customer experience with public services and, as a result to improve them?**

And in approaching this questions, also considering:

- (a) How important are complaints as an indicator in this respect? and*
- (b) Are there differences between government departments/public service functions in the attention given to citizen/customer complaints, and if so why?*

2. **What difference does a systematic complaint management process make to a government department's capability and inclination to learn from its citizens and customers and to improve and develop its public services accordingly?**

And again, in approaching this question, also considering:

- (a) What are the key elements of a good complaint management process?*
- (b) How well does the Brunei complaints system compare with best practice in this respect?*

3. **How might governments in autocratic states, and therefore without the pressures of democratic accountability, best exploit the learning opportunities of complaints to ensure appropriate improvements to their public services**

1.4 Introducing the Research

These questions have been addressed through a blend of literature review (for an understanding of previous research in this field and theoretical insight) and purpose-designed empirical data-gathering (based on a case-study of a sample of departments of the Brunei government). The

literature review has involved extensive library and on-line researching both at the University of Birmingham and in Brunei at the University of Brunei Darussalam. In addition, an extensive review has been made of relevant government reports and other published documents, including news reports and Statistical Yearbooks published by the Department of Economic Planning and Development under the Prime Minister's Office. A series of reports specifically on complaint handling, prepared by the Management Services Department (in which the author is employed), have also been particularly helpful for the statistical information they contained.

A 'mixed methods' approach was chosen for the empirical component of the study – comprising quantitative data gathered through a questionnaire (addressed to a large sample of government officials from a range of different government departments) and qualitative data derived from a series of face-to-face interviews with a follow-up sample of such officials (senior officers and front-line staff). The fieldwork was conducted in the period late June till August 2013 in Brunei Darussalam. The questionnaire was designed as a self-completion survey and responses were received from a total of 171 government officials and staff drawn from some twenty government departments. The follow-up interviews, on the other hand, were arranged with a sample of 60 government civil servants, drawn from senior, middle and junior levels of each department (i.e. from each department, someone from top management – the director/deputy director or senior complaint officer; someone from middle management - either the public relations officer or complaint handling officer; and someone from the front-line – either a customer service/complaint officer or a member of reception staff).

1.5 Complaint Management in an Autocratic State Context: Brunei as a Case Study

Besides the fact that the author of this thesis is a Brunei citizen and a serving official in the Management Services Department of the Government there, several additional reasons underlay the choice for the research as a single case study based on this small state (with a population of less than half a million). First, as indicated, it was of interest to examine complaint management in a political context where the democratic incentives for taking user complaints seriously are largely absent, with Brunei providing a good example of an autocracy – a country that does not hold elections, and as such, without voting pressure on the government ministers and departments. Second, Brunei is also a particularly wealthy state, such that the government does not need to raise money from tax payers to finance public services or other governmental activity – indeed, there is no personal income tax levied in Brunei - (The Report Brunei Darussalam, 2010:201).

Third, unlike the position in many countries, the framework for public service provision is fairly simple, with the state at national level taking responsibility for all such activity (i.e. there is no local government tier - only local administration that is undertaken through four districts and three municipal boards responsible for urban areas (Commonwealth Local Government Handbook 2011). Accordingly, while some complaints from citizens may reflect perceived shortcomings in local administration, as well as those by officials at the centre, in practice, responsibility for dealing with them is concentrated at the centre in the relevant departments of state.

Fourth, Brunei is considered to be generally representative of many other wealthy Islamic states, notably Kuwait and other countries of the Middle East region. In this respect, a particular interest underpinning the research has been to examine and test the proposition that the lack of democratic challenge or resource constraints for public services in such states would likely result in uncaring and unresponsive attitudes within government towards the public as consumers about aspects of provision. More than this, it was of interest in the research also to explore and test the veracity of the assumption and oft-cited philosophy in autocratic states that ‘citizen happiness increases loyalty to the king or leader and thus creates political stability for the country’ (Wang, 2005; Fish, 2002).

1.6 Definitions: Complaints and Complaint Management

Two important terms lie at the heart of this thesis – ‘complaints’ and ‘complaint management’, both of which deserve clear definition for the purposes of the study. The definition of a complaint, however, is hardly straightforward. At its most simple level, a complaint might be defined as referring as to a ‘*statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable*’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2011). But equally common is a definition of a complaint as including ‘statements about expectations that have not been met’ (Barlow and Møller, 1996:11). Other authors (e.g. Brennan and Douglas, 2002 and Trappey *et al.*, 2010) have similarly discussed both complaints as arising from dissatisfaction with products or services and as occurring when an organization fails to meet customers’ expectations.

Likewise various researchers such as Stauss and Seidel (2005:30) have defined complaints as ‘articulations of dissatisfaction that are expressed toward firms and or third-party institutions with the aim of making a provider aware of a behaviour that is subjectively experienced as harmful, receiving compensation for adverse effects suffered and making a change in the criticized behaviour’. Similarly, Faed (2010:205): has defined complaints simply as the consequence of ‘something miscarried with products and services’.

Other authors have emphasised the inevitability of complaints and seen them more as the ‘natural consequence of any service activity’, and as reflecting the reality that mistakes and shortcomings are an ‘unavoidable feature of all human endeavours’ (Boshoff, 1997 and Taleghani, 2011). Some researchers, moreover, have defined customer complaints as a form of protest to a supplier and with the goal of obtaining an exchange, refund or apology (Singh and Wilding, 1991). In all such definitions, however, complaint is seen as a form of negative feedback from the customer (Bell *et al.*, 2004) whether reasonable or unreasonable (McCole, 2004). Complaint-making has also been described as stressful (Shortland and Stone, 2011), with recognition that it takes much courage and determination to voice such criticisms as a customer (Stone, 2011).

Other researchers, however, have emphasised the nature of complaints as raw data which needs to be processed and evaluated in order to learn something of value (Razali and Jaafar, 2012). Complaints can cause problems in relationships, but at the same time they can turn out to have been opportunities for learning and improvement (Sciabina and Fomichow, 2005; Vos *et al.*, 2008). They can also be indicators of how well or how badly an organization is performing

(Faulkner, 2003:91). Moreover, as Larivet and Brouard (2010) have argued, different customers may have different objectives in making their complaints. Some may look for redress or for remedial action; but others may only want to express their point of view and be heard.

Turning from the word 'complaint' to the phrase 'complaint management', Johnston (2001:61) has defined it as 'a process by which complaints are handled and customers recovered'. He has also referred to complaint management as 'the design; planning, control and execution of these processes are core operations tasks'. Other researchers such as Stauss and Seidel (2005:30) have offered similar definitions and made the point that complaint management should encompass planning, execution and controlling of all the measures taken by a firm in connection with the complaints it receives. Stone (2011) has also stressed that complaint management needs to be thought of as part of the overall customer relationship, and with strong focus on 'customer journey' and 'customer experience' towards products and services. Other authors, for example, Gilly *et al.* (1991) have further argued that complaint management can be viewed as a challenge of information processing within the organization.

No so differently, Faed (2010) has described complaint management as a documenting procedure that aims to resolve customer complaints. In addition, Teleghani (2011) has argued that it should include service recovery and the receipt, investigation, settlement and prevention of further customer complaint on the same issue. But then, according to Fornell and Wernerfelt (1988) and Fornell and Westbrook (1979), complaint management is to be regarded as much more than 'complaint handling'. In addition, the process is one in which an organisation provides appropriate redress to unsatisfied customers. Complaint management, Fornell and

Wenerfelt (1988) have further argued, is about facilitating ‘complaint expression’ and its dissemination’ within the organisation. This, it must be acknowledged, can sometimes be controversial within organisations (as staff may sometimes see customers being prioritised above themselves). Resistance, then, to complaint management comes in various forms (De’trie, 2007) with customers often being portrayed by staff as whiners, complaints being regarded as denunciations of their efforts, and their actions assumed to have been careless, incompetent and even, on occasions, as malevolent.

Lam and Dale (1999) have highlighted the importance of complaint management being dynamic, facilitating the conveying of consumer information, and about communicating it within the organization. On the other hand, Buck (2006) has suggested that most organizations tend to treat complaint management systems simply as series of protective mechanisms designed to minimize customer churn, costs of compliance and negative advocacy. To be efficient in complaint management, Carney (1996) has argued, the organization has to give priority to complaint handling, to improving the services and to avoiding customer losses.

To that end, as Henneberg *et al.*, (2009) have asserted, organizations must both process complaints effectively and demonstrate their genuine commitment to openness and empathy. These, indeed, were the challenges that underlay this particular research in Brunei – to examine the ways in which public complaints are being handled and particularly the manner in which learning so derived is translated into organizational learning and improvements in public service provision. In light of these introductory ideas about complain management and about

the research undertaken on this subject in Brunei, the next (and final) section of this first chapter outlines the structure of the thesis and summarises the content of the succeeding six chapters.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

In **Chapter Two** a substantive literature review of complaint management is presented. The chapter considers definitional issues further and also focuses on different ways of conceptualizing complaints and their management, drawing on theoretical perspectives as well as experience from practice. The chapter is organized into four sections. The first discusses literature highlighting the case for complaint information and the benefits to the organization. Different reasons as to why customers might or might not want to lodge complaints are also explored. From there, the chapter progresses to examine theories related to complaint management and considers its relationship to organizational learning. The chapter then turns to focus on what the literature reveals about the impact of complaint management on employee attitudes and on its relation to customer orientation, and other issues such as service improvement, equity and public participation. The third section of the chapter focuses particularly on literature on complaint management in a public sector context, in doing so, highlighting some best practice lessons, before a final section in which, following further discussion of complaint management, a conceptual framework for the study is proposed.

Chapter Three then provides an overview of complaint management in the chosen context of Brunei. Here key statistical analyses of complaints received by Brunei Government departments in recent years are presented and discussed. The chapter begins, however, with

further introduction to the local context of public service provision and reform in Brunei, before outlining the ways in which complaint management is currently practiced there. In doing so, evidence is examined of the ‘customer focus’ of different government departments and a government-wide ‘client charter’ initiative is discussed – this having been led by the government’s Management Services Department and being generally regarded within government at least as an important reform measure in the context of debate about the quality of public services. In the final part of the chapter an analysis is presented of complaints statistics over a fourteen year period (from 1998 until 2013).

The research methodology for the research is outlined in **Chapter Four**. This chapter discusses the design of the study which, it was decided, would be a case-study based on the author’s own nation state of Brunei Darussalam. The chapter then discusses the methods used to gather data (a mixed methods approach being chosen, of quantitative data-gathering on the volume and patterns of complaints received by different government departments, and qualitative research based on a series of interviews with officials to understand better the nature of complaint management practices in place and their impact on departmental learning). The steps taken and associated design and methodological issues associated with both components of this mixed methods approach are discussed in some detail in this chapter.

In the succeeding chapter - **Chapter Five** – the research findings on the key elements of good complaint management are considered, and to this end the research successively considers complaint policy and procedures, the complaints process, complaint communication, and issues of visibility and access, responsiveness, staff training in dealing with complaints, and the extent

of commitment to learning from complaints. The chapter then examines evidence as to the perceived benefits and improvements to be derived from complaint management within different government departments before turning to the complainants' experience of interacting with government departments.

The qualitative data gathered in the study through interviews with a cross-sectional sample of public officials provides the focus of **Chapter Six**. This chapter explores motivation among departmental officials involved in complaint management. In addition, views from the interviews are presented that reveal the varying extents of customer orientation among government departments and the factors that account for such variance. Finally the chapter offers insights from the interviews on the challenges perceived by government departments in developing more effective complaint management in Brunei.

The final chapter - **Chapter Seven** - draws the threads together and provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions as well as a discussion of the main policy implications for realizing the positive potential of complaint management. This is followed by reflections on the contribution of the thesis, before presentation of a set of eight recommendations for developing complaint management more consistently and effectively across government in Brunei. The thesis ends with a concluding summary and final thoughts about the challenge ahead for the Brunei government and its departments in taking forward the agenda for improving complaint management.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

To understand fully the nature of complaint management in the public and governmental sector both as a concept and in practice, it is appropriate also to consider literature that addresses the subject from a private sector viewpoint, since here, arguably, the idea and custom have been longer established and where, as indicated in the preceding chapter, there is potentially stronger commercial motivation to treat customer dissatisfaction and complaints seriously. There is a vast literature that touches on aspects of management in the private sector relating to customer satisfaction and its importance to the survival and success of businesses. Accordingly, this literature review chapter commences with a focus on research and experience in the private sector, and takes as a starting assumption that the best business perspectives are likely to be of value to an understanding and development of effective complaint management practice in the public sector.

This chapter, then, draws heavily on the business literature to supplement the relevant published research in public management, and particularly considers different ways of conceptualizing complaint management theory and practice and summarising what has been learned thus far in this regard. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first (section 2.2) focuses on literature on the motivation factors to taking complaints seriously; the second (section 2.3) on

the connection between complaint management and organisational learning; and the third (section 2.4) on complaint management in the public sector and conceptualisations of the subject with a view to developing a framework for the research that follows.

SECTION I: Literature on Motivation to Treat Complaints Seriously

In the first section, the discussion focuses on literature that focuses the reasons and motivations for organizations to take complaints seriously. These reasons will be explored from literature that highlights both positive and negative aspects that might associate with complaint information. The potential reasons as to why customers might be motivated to lodge complaints will also be explored.

2.2 The Costs and Benefits of Complaints to the Organization

In general, when an organization produces goods for, or provides services to, a customer, that organization is inevitably potentially likely to generate positive reactions (e.g. compliments or appreciation) or negative feedback (e.g. criticisms or complaints). Failures in service delivery are almost inevitable from time to time in any service organization (Andreassen, 2000). For instance, in a business environment, most organizations receive complaints at some point and the organization's existence and long term sustainability depend on these being minimised (Faulkner, 2003:91). The situation is hardly different in the public sector.

As long as the government provides services to the people then the government is likely to attract criticisms of some aspect of the delivery of those services. Thus, many researchers from

various backgrounds, whether from academia or business/public sector practice, would agree about the potential importance of learning from complaints. Atkins (1992) has argued that good management is less about having many amazing ideas and leading a plethora of new initiatives, but more about fitting them into a coherent picture that is appropriate for the organization.

2.2.1 Negativity and Complaints

Different scholars have viewed the impact of complaints in different ways. Some have seen complaints as a positive signal from which to learn and improve while others have regarded them only in negative terms and as a sign of failure or shortcoming (Haynes, 2003:38). Traditionally, customer complaints have been mostly regarded in negative terms, i.e. as indicators of poor quality or corporate under-performance, and many organisations have engaged in defensive communication strategies that involve denying the problem that invoked the complaint (Breitsohl *et al.*, 2014).

Most researchers have acknowledged that handling complaints is stressful and that the best way is to avoid them in the first place (Shortland and Stone, 2011). As Andreassen (1999) has emphasised, customers who are dissatisfied with the goods or service they receive are likely to experience some degree of negative effect, for instance anger, disappointment, or unwelcome surprise. The organization just cannot ignore complaints about their products or services because, as Grainer *et al.* (2013) have argued, the dissatisfied customers may do more damage than the satisfied customers through exercising their voice.

According to Barlow and Moller (1996:38) in businesses, dissatisfied customers are likely to tell between 8 and 10 people about the bad service they received. Several researchers have also highlighted the high potential cost of dealing with complaints. Dealing with complaints will, for example, take up valuable management time (Brennan and Douglas, 2002), as well as involving loss of resources (Martin, 1994:5), and damaging the organization's reputation (Desatnick and Detzel, 1993). Marra (2005) has described that when customers have invested their time and experience in using the product or service, this is referred to as 'emotional cost' and when this cost is getting high, the customer may seek alternatives. Complaints made to the organization are a key part of such emotional cost, and this is a further reason why Taleghani (2011) and many others have argued that complaint management deserves serious attention.

2.2.2 Positivity and Complaints

Despite the fact that complaints have often had negative impacts on organizations, many researchers have agreed that there are also clear benefits to be derived from them. Complaints are considered as an indispensable tool for learning from the voice of the customer (Crask et al., 1995; Stone, 2011). Moreover, as Faulkner (2003) and Trappey et al (2010) have argued, the volume of complaints can provide a valuable indicator of the quality of service to customers and can also be indicative of the organizational performance (good or bad).

Many other writers, too, have emphasised the value of complaint monitoring as an opportunity for learning, for example, Scriabina and Fomichov (2005), who have discussed differences between organisations with regard to their attitude towards complaints; and Vos *et al.* (2008)

who have argued that there are benefits from good complaint management not only for an organization's long term relationship with its customers but also internally for staff through workplace learning. In similar vein, Veronica and Francisco (2007) have highlighted through their study of LatinAir, how the process of responding to a complaint had transformed a seemingly trivial issue into an exciting learning experience for staff and the wider organisation, particularly in switching mentality from regarding complaints as a reason for blame to one for positive learning. Other researchers have also stressed the value of complaint management as an important component of any marketing strategy (see, for example, Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987).

Apart from learning, customer complaints, according to Dalrymple and Donnelly (1997) provide an important key to quality improvement. Their value in striving for continuous improvement has also been emphasised by Jackson (2003) and by Bennett and Savani (2011), and as a rich source of information on quality aspects (Phau and Baird, 2008). Moreover, as Gulland (2009) and Lyons and Powers (2001) have suggested, with complaints, not only is the organization able to identify the problem areas but it might also be able to improve other qualities in the organization.

Holland (2010) has written about the value of citizen complaints in serving as quality control while Deichmann and Lall (2003) have emphasised the value of citizen feedback as a means for evaluating the quality of public service delivery. They have argued that the systematic collection and analysis of feedback can provide a powerful means of public accountability in

relation to public services, which is especially important if there are no alternative providers of such services.

Although almost all good organizations will take care to treat their customers well, Linton (1995) and Tax and Brown (1998) have pointed out that relatively few seem to learn enough from their mistakes and problems. This is a point that has also been echoed by Johnston and Mehra (2002) and more recently still by Stone (2011).

According to Johnson and Mehra (2002), customer complaints can also have positive impacts for staff attitudes and indeed, according to Strauss and Siedel (2005), staff retention as well, through enhanced motivation and commitment. Moreover, as Scriabina and Fomichov (2005) have argued, by encouraging customers to express dissatisfaction, the organization can increase its chances of retaining customers because, it has been estimated, only 4% percent of dissatisfied customers ever complain while 96% will instead simply take their business elsewhere and turn to competitors. On the other hand, research by the Customer Service Network (2010) has shown that 95% of customers who complain are likely to remain loyal if their complaints are handled effectively.

In any event, as Bosch and Enriquez (2005:37) have suggested, a customer complaint represents an opportunity for an organization to extract valuable information. This, as indicated, is because customer complaints contain unfiltered information about the experience of quality shortcomings (Dingemans, 1996; Cook and Macaulay, 1997; Carney, 1996; and Behrens *et al.* 2007). Storbacka and Nenonen (2009) have indicated that the customer relationship could be

further improved when complainants realize that their concerns are likely to be taken seriously and be handled properly. But to listen and respond effectively to the voice of the customer or citizen, Maguire *et al.* (2007) have suggested, there is a need to ensure that the information about customer concerns flows quickly to the most appropriate person and for them to be dealt with reliably.

Taleghani (2011) also talks of the importance of complaints being scrutinized in a constructive, positive and professional manner because this is a chance for the organisation to either tarnish its reputation still further (if the complaint handling is similarly seen in negative terms) or to redeem itself (if the complaint is handled well and the concerns remedied). Finally, as Chen *et al.* (2003) have argued, complaint handling in a public sector context can be seen as a key aspect of democratic participation and a valued component of open and responsive public governance for citizens. Indeed, as the OECD (1995) has stressed, due sensitivity and responsiveness in relation to any shortcomings in public service provision is an important element of good governance. As discussed above, this is also important in relation to the accountability of public servants (Haji Saim, 2006:19).

2.2.3 Why Don't More People Complain?

Although complaints are a source of learning for organisations, on their own, they are hardly a reliable indicator of satisfaction with service experience, because many dissatisfied people do not complain (Boden, 2001:4) and may choose silence (Kosecik and Sagbas, 2004; Gal and Doron, 2007). Taleghani (2011) describes this sort of action as 'passives'. Accordingly, it is

important to understand why not everyone comes forward to complain and what it is that drives and motivates those who do so (Hsieh, 2010).

Gronhaug and Arndt (1980) have claimed that dissatisfied customers often fail to express their dissatisfaction with public services simply because they do not expect much to happen if they did – they feel that it is just not worth the effort in relation to public service organisations in comparison with commercial providers, where the reputational and loss of business risks are felt more likely to elicit some remedy or redress. More generally, Oren (1992) and Polatoglu, (2001:130) have suggested that a majority of dissatisfied customers (whether in relation to public or private sector organisations) do not complain for two main reasons. First, they do not know how, or to whom, they should complain and have inadequate information on their rights, and second, they do not believe it will be worth their time and trouble (Cukurcayir, 2002:219). Instead, as indicated, many will just opt for taking their business elsewhere if there is such an option. (Spreng *et al.*, 1995). Brennan and Douglas (2002) have similarly asserted that significant numbers of consumers do not lodge complaints simply because they “cannot be bothered” or “do not think it would do any good”.

Moreover, according to Downton (2002) (cited in Chebat *et al.* 2005), the vast majority of those who do not complain simply feel they do not have the time or energy to do so. Many consumers, they suggest, have low levels of assertiveness or feel disempowered or nervous about challenging the service provider unless the problem is so obviously serious and unacceptable. Often too, with large organisations, they do not wish to raise their dissatisfaction with the front-line member of staff, who they recognise, is not at fault (Duvenger, 2012). But more often than

not, as Johnston and Clark (2005:404) have stated, such consumers simply doubt that anything much would change as a result of their complaint. Moreover, in some contexts, for example, health care, they fear that they could receive bad treatment or lower service quality after their complaint has been lodged (Lyon and Powers, 2001). Consumers make the choice to complain mostly when they calculate the outcome will be positive (Singh and Pandya, 1991).

In a study conducted in 1988 and based on local authorities in England by Seneviratne and Cracknell (1988), it was found that large numbers of departments claimed to use complaints as a method for reviewing their administrative procedures. However, the same study found that 58% of citizens surveyed did not even know that their local authority had a complaints procedure. There is, then, it would appear, an additional reason why people might not complain – that complaints procedures are not always adequately publicised or communicated to would-be complainers.

SECTION II: Literature on Complaint Management and Organisational Learning

This section discusses theories that are relevant to complaint management, including its relationship to organizational learning and employee attitudes. The section also considers theoretical perspectives on the linkage between complaint management and customer orientation public participation and consumerism.

2.3 Complaint Management and Organizational Learning

It is important to understand what is meant by organizational learning and where such learning might take place. Argyris (1999) has stated that organizational learning means learning on the part of individuals who operate within an organizational setting. Other authors have viewed organizational learning as the process of actions through which better knowledge and understanding is acquired (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). Huber (1989) and Dixon (1994) have suggested that organizational learning should be seen as a continuous cycle of generating information, analysing and interpreting it, then taking action on it, and finally reviewing the effects before commencing the process again. Organizational learning, on the other hand, has been seen by Leeuw *et al* (2003:3) as a *“process in which the organization continually attempts to become more competent in pursuing the steps and taking actions, while at the same time reflecting on them and on the lessons for the future”*.

Other researchers have discussed further the definition of organizational learning as comprising *‘the capacity or processes within an organization to maintain or improve performance based on experience’* (Nevis *et al.*, 1995:15) while Vince and Saleem (2004:135) have argued that it can be seen as both a social and a political process because it happens with and through other people. In addition to acknowledging a cyclical process, Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1999:3) have argued that organizational learning should also be considered from a technical perspective and as being concerned with the effective processing, interpretation of, and response to, information both within and outside the organization.

Meanwhile, West (1994) has argued that organizational learning only occurs if there is interest on the part of individual staff to learn, and that individual learning needs to be shared within the organization. Argyris (1999) has emphasised that the organization does not itself perform the actions that produce the learning, but that it is the individual staff, as agents of the organization, who enact the behaviours that lead to learning. Besides that, it has been argued that not only do organizations learn from their own direct experience, but they also learn from the experiences of other organizations (Argote, 2000:145).

In an earlier contribution on the subject, Argyris (1997) reminded us that the theory of organizational learning must take into account the interplay between the actions and interactions of front-line staff and the actions or interactions of those at a higher level within the organization. Other scholars have also agreed that individual learning is necessary for organizational learning to occur, and that learning both at the front-line and at senior levels is a prerequisite for success in this respect (Kramlinger, 1992; McManus, 1996; Robinson *et al.*, 1997). Similarly, Stacey (2003) has suggested organisational learning to be an activity of interdependent people, and that people cannot learn in this sense in isolation.

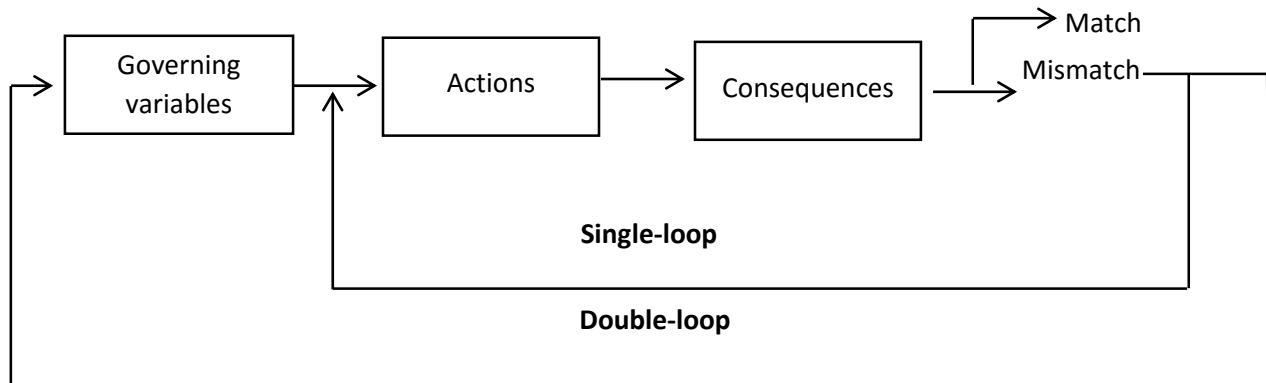
A number of writers, including, for example, Berends *et al.* (2003:1042) have argued that organizational learning needs to be understood as *'the development of knowledge held by organizational members that is being accepted as knowledge and is applicable in organizational activities, therewith implying a (potential) change in those activities'*. Garvin (1993:79), on the other hand, has argued that most discussions on organizational learning do not get to the heart of how to make it happen; *"instead their focus is on high philosophy and*

sweeping metaphors rather than on the gritty details of practice". Most commonly, understanding of organisational learning focuses on three key aspects: learning, changing, and improving. The learning aspect, according to Garvin (1993) includes gaining new knowledge, continuous learning, learning from mistakes, and learning by all members of the organization.

However, other authors have tended to place the emphasis somewhat differently. Moreover, they have argued that evaluation is the key to success in organizational learning and that it must be systematic, to the extent of operating in a culture of efficient and timely evaluation. Rational information, they suggest, however, is only one contending force and not necessarily the most important one in decision making. Hedberg (1981:6) has asserted that 'although organizational learning occurs through individuals, it would be a mistake to conclude that organizational learning is nothing but the cumulative result of their members learning. This is because members come and go, and leadership changes, but organizations' memories preserve certain behaviors, mental maps norms and values over time.

In simple terms, the conceptual approach of Argyris (1999) differentiates learning as occurring in either a single or double loop mode. Single loop learning, he says, is linked to incremental change, where an organization tries out new methods and tactics and attempts to get rapid feedback on the consequences in order to be able to make continuous adjustments and adaptations. In contrast, double loop learning, is associated with more radical changes, that might involve a major shift in strategic direction, possibly linked to the replacement of staff, change in senior management or in systems or policies. This is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below:

Figure 2.1: Organizational Learning Model (Single-loop and double-loop learning)



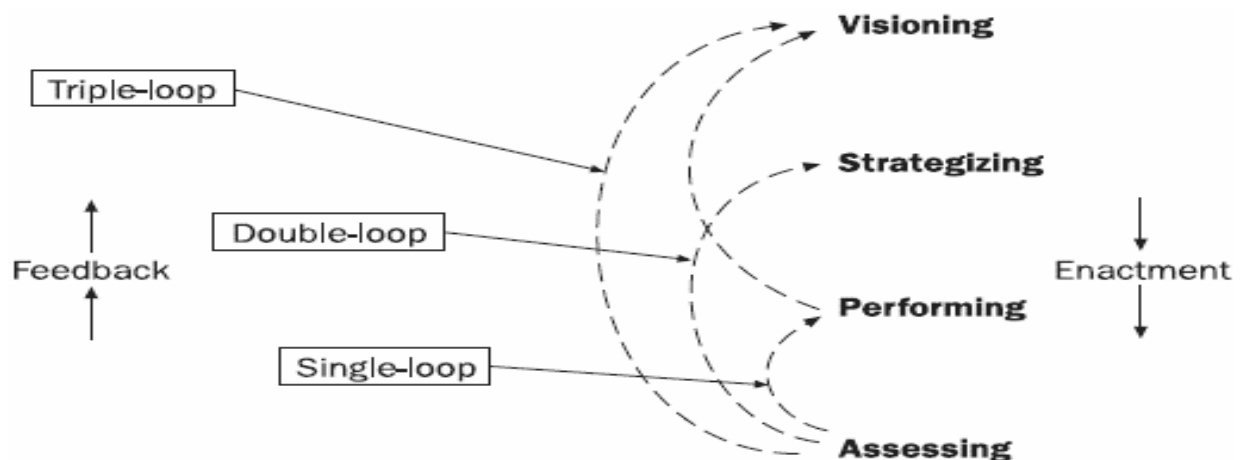
Source: Argyris (1999:68)

Several other authors on organizational learning have similarly paid attention to the idea of learning loops (whether single or double). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), for instance, have argued that the distinction between single and double-loop learning may not be clearly visible because sometimes the organisational processes are to be found concentrated at the grass-roots of the organization, among staff who are often excluded from debates and decisions about effectiveness.

Torbert (1999) has made a particularly helpful contribution to this literature by identifying a third learning loop. As well as the most commonly discussed single-loop and double-loop learning he refers to triple-loop or strategic learning. While single-loop learning asks: 'Are we doing it right?' and double-loop learning asks 'Can we do it better?' with triple-loop learning, he suggests, it happens when the organization starts to ask still more searching questions like 'Are we asking the right questions?' Triple-loop learning, he suggests, is concerned with defining or finding a new strategic vision for an organization, and it assumes that staff can only

reframe how they look at their activities and roles by questioning the underlying assumptions, principles, objectives and organizational beliefs (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Enactment and Single, double and triple-loop learning across the four territories of experience



Source: Torbert (1999)

Despite all this, the question of how to research organizational learning continues to generate debate, not least because of the difficulties of measuring something that tends to be quite diffuse in character (Gilson *et al.*, 2009). Greve (2003) sought to measure such learning quantitatively while others have approached the problem more by benchmarking, or by examining the incentives for learning responses (Rashman and Radnor, 2005). Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2000) have argued for more case study examples, while in the public sector, with quantitative measures much less well developed than in private business, case studies have proved especially popular (see for example, March and Olsen, 1994; Dekker and Hansen, 2004).

Stone (2011) has emphasised, however, the importance of learning from failures, nurturing the culture of the organization wide learning through assimilation and dissemination of information. In writing about continuous improvement, Slack *et al.* (2010:544) argue that it is not the rate of improvement which is important; but its momentum that matters. There is little point in improvement, they suggest, unless it meets the requirements and expectations of customers. In this respect, customers are seen not as being external to the organization but as an integral and important part of it.

However, the idea of being customer–centric does not mean that customers must be provided with everything that they want (Slack *et al.*, 2010:546). As Gilly *et al.* (1991) have stated, very little research has yet examined how customer feedback systems might operate in dealing with customer complaints. Instead, the focus of the vast majority of consumer complaint research has tended to be on the dissatisfied consumer only and rarely, they argue, on how complaints can bring changes to the organization such as learning.

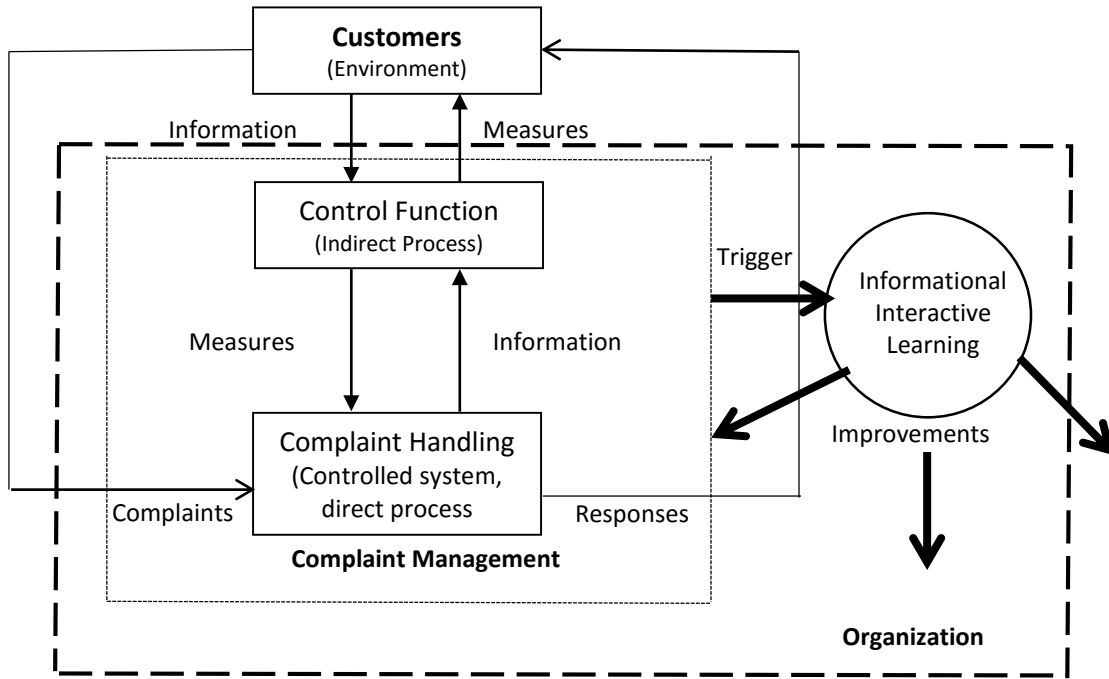
If this is indeed the case, then why, it might be asked, is organizational learning important? Many researchers have argued that learning is a must for the public sector, and not least because in the recent decades, public organizations have undergone substantial reform in the direction of increased customer-centricity (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1999:132 and Rashman *et al.*, 2009). They are also seen as major players in leading and managing complex interrelationships between the state, market and society (Benington, 2000) and critical to national competitiveness through their role in providing the infrastructure to support private business at all levels (Hartley and Skelcher, 2008).

Other scholars such as Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2000) have suggested that there is a need for more studies of organizational learning compared with other aspects of consumer research. Vos *et al.* (2008), for example, have linked organizational learning with complaint management, arguing that complaint management can be understood as an input-output system within an organisational environment, with the process of complaint management involving a number of distinct steps and actions.

They have also discussed the triggers for the process of learning, suggesting that the process may be initiated when a particular individual within the organisation perceives (part of) reality as problematic and is motivated to do something about it. Senge (1990) has referred to such situations as providing creative tension and which might result from a variety of events including a complaint.

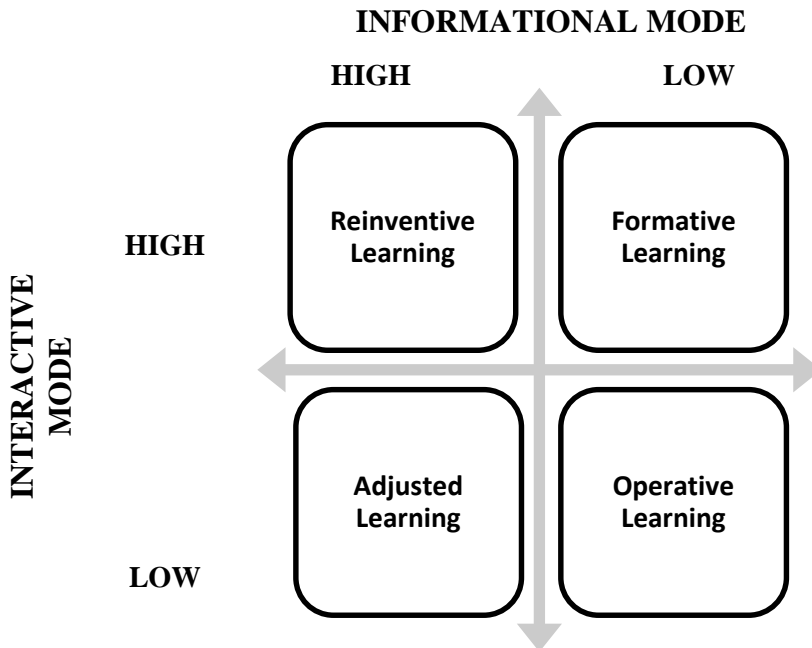
In this regard, the model of Gnyawaly and Stewart (2003) is potentially helpful. This combines two modes of learning: informational and interactive learning as in Figure 2.4. Informational learning, they suggest, takes place if the focus is on the recording and analysis of the complaint or on the information systems that store its details. But interactive learning takes place if the focus is more in the form of dialogue between different individuals, groups or units within the organisation.

Figure 2.3: The Combined Model of Organizational Learning and Complaint Management



Source: Vos *et al.* 2008

Figure 2.4: Informational and Interactive Learning



Adapted from Gnyawali and Stewart (2003)

2.3.1 Complaint Management and Employee Attitudes

In complaint management, besides the formal process involved, employees can also play a vital role in ensuring that the complaint is effectively handled. Bitner *et al.* (1990) have stated that when an aspect of service delivery fails, usually it is the front-line staff involved who are expected to make the response and deal with the matter and associated disappointment. The human interaction component of the service encounter is important to service quality and satisfaction. The frontline must be empowered to do what is perceived as right or fair for the situation and for the customer, including resolving the problem.

Stone (2011) has stated that service recovery procedures have more impact on employees and on process improvement than on customers. Others have found that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more involved in their employing organizations and more dedicated to delivering services with a high level of quality (Yoon and Suh, 2003; Yee *et al.*, 2008). This view has been further supported by other researchers who have similarly found that service quality is influenced by job satisfaction of employees (Bowen and Schneider, 1985; Hartline and Ferrell, 1996).

Although the employee attitude in public sector organisations is hardly predictable, Larivet and Brouard (2010) have argued that they are nevertheless important for effectiveness in complaint management, for example, in affecting promptness, and expertise in dealing with complaints. Thus, it has been argued, customer contact employees should participate more in decision-

making and provide more informational input about the service to the organization (Bowen and Schneider, 1988; Andreassen, 2000).

In addition, Estelami (2000) has stated that positive interactions between employees and the consumer are critical in handling consumer complaints. Johnston and Mehra (2002) have emphasised the importance of speedy responses if complaining customers are to be satisfied. Faulkner (2003:100) has similarly claimed that communication is the key to complaint handling and the National Culture Survey has shown that 73% of complainants prefer face-to-face or personal telephone resolution over any other method. Employees who deal with customers represent the service organization in the eyes of the customers, so the best complaint handling processes operate with skilled and trained front-line staff (Scriabina and Fomichov, 2005). Gruber *et al.* (2009) has also stated that customers, regardless of gender, want contact employees to take them seriously and to treat them fairly and courteously.

In terms of the hierarchy in an organization, normally the interpretation of information and decision-making within the organization is accomplished by top management and those who implement the decisions and take the actions are more often at the lower levels (Dixon, 1999:64). Indeed, various scholars have recognized the influence of different levels of management on organizational learning (Berson *et al.*, 2006), noting that middle management mostly acts as a conduit and filter for information flowing between the top and lower levels within organizations (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Nevertheless, the main challenge in large organisations is that the manager or high ranking officer who normally makes the decisions is at too great a remove or distance from the front-line staff.

Front-liners tend to be important as ‘complaint takers’ only; this has been repeatedly emphasised in academic research on businesses. In the hierarchy, front-liners are only one part of complaint-handling mechanism while most decision-making is undertaken by managers; they being the ones who decide to pursue the complaint or not. Managers will of course be aware that not all complaints are genuine and the ability to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable ones is therefore important (McCole, 2004). But top management should always ensure that sceptical mindsets on complaints are put to one side, and that systems and processes are in alignment to view complaints impartially and freshly, and as an opportunity for learning (McCole, 2004).

Much of the research on complaint handling focuses on the complaint response process, for instance, on how organizations and in particular front line staff should react to a complaint, and on the empowerment of front line personnel to do what they perceive to be right or fair given the situation and the particular issue being raised.

2.3.2 Complaint Management and Customer Orientation

What is meant by customer orientation? According to Deshpandé *et al.* (1993:27) the term is defined as “*a set of organizational beliefs that puts the customer first*”. Organizations that emphasise “client orientation” have a strong desire to measure client satisfaction and to obtain in-depth knowledge of their perceptions of the organization's service quality, with the aim of customising and improving service delivery (Paulin *et al.*, 1999:417). As Chen *et al.* (2004:414) have observed, such organizations tend to have a culture that “places the client as

the focal point of strategic planning and execution". This is in accordance with the view that organizations with a strong "client orientation" typically welcome feedback and undertake regular and systematic research into their clients' needs and characteristics (Deshpandé *et al.*, 1993).

Moreover, according to Chen *et al.* (2004:416), such organizations are willing to "accept criticism [...] and adjust"; as a consequence, they typically have a comprehensive complaints-handling process, which they use to benchmark themselves against best practice. In a similar vein, Brennan and Douglas (2002) have argued that complaints are taken more seriously by a client-focused organization because analysing and responding to complaints creates opportunities for discovering weaknesses in service provision and for correcting deficiencies. Wankayala (2011) defined "Customer orientation" as *"the comprehensive, continuous collection and analysis of customer expectations as well as their internal and external implementation in an organisation's services and interactions, with the objective of establishing stable and economically advantageous customer relationships on the long term"*.

In addition, complaint management and service recovery can be seen as interrelated. Service recovery cannot occur without a complaint and resolution of complaints can build customer confidence in the organization (Lyon and Powers, 2001). Moreover, Stone (2011) has pointed out that service recovery efforts are of a short term importance, while reliability is needed to build long term relationships. Numerous studies have been undertaken that relate how complaint management and service recovery lead to customer satisfaction (Andreassen, 2000; Andreassen 2001; Dewitt and Brady, 2003; Hess *et al.*, 2003; and Weun *et al.*, 2004). Customer

satisfaction is the result of customers' assessments of a service based on comparisons of their perceptions of service delivery with their prior expectations (Johnston and Clark, 2005:105).

According to Powell *et al.* (2010), one of the important elements in the New Public Management (NPM) is the promotion of consumer sovereignty in the provision of public services (Aberbach and Christensen 2005). The 'New Public Management' concept has gained significant international following in the 1990s (Callender. 2001) with the key driver for reform being the pursuit of greater efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency has always been raised as one of the key objectives in public service reform and has always been of central interest in government (Lapsley *et al.*, 1994:9). Other authors such as Haynes (2003:9) have described 'New Public Management' somewhat differently, but a general point of agreement has been the attempt to transfer management ideas from business and the private sector into public services. Other commentators have claimed that putting the customers first, increasing customer focus and seeking to raise levels of customer satisfaction are at the forefront of almost every government's public service reform agenda (Fountain, 2001 and Needham, 2006).

All organizations have an interest in maximising their knowledge on what the public wants. However, it is also important to find ways of gearing the service to their requirements (Stewart, 1988:3). A potential problem here, however, is that relationships with the public often combine predictability and unpredictability. It is the new conventional wisdom that public service users have become less deferential are more assertive; that they are less ignorant are more knowledgeable, and have changed from being passive to active in expressing their voice and expectations (Clarke *et al.*, 2007:67). The public sector must therefore find ways of improving

the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery by providing better value for money through improving quality of service.

Another reason here is the increase in expectations about public services, particularly as private services have become more customer-focused, so the expectations of public services have risen (Sitkso-Lutek *et al.*, 2010). However, it is also true to say that many of those who are reliant on public services are likely to have more limited influence and will tend to be less demanding (Duffy, 2000). Moreover, as Yen *et al.* (2007) have suggested, satisfaction with public services can be quite different from one area to another. Other researchers have argued that it is ultimately the responsibility of citizens to behave as customers and to be more assertive in their pursuit of better services and treatment by the government (Tax and Brown, 1998).

Service charters have often been considered a potentially powerful tool for fostering such public service improvement because they require the organization to focus more thoroughly on the service to be delivered, to measure performance and to initiate performance improvement (Sharma and Agnihotri, 2001). The performance of government services matters greatly for legitimacy and public accountability (Esaiasson, 2010) and the Citizens' Charter, as proposed in the UK public service in the early 1990s, (Skelcher, 1992:4) focused on the key principles of 'standards', 'openness', 'information', 'choice', 'non discrimination', 'accessibility' and 'redress'. Similarly, Clarke *et al.* (2007:31) have discussed six important elements of quality public services as follows:

- Setting, monitoring and publication of explicit standards
- Information for, and openness to, the service user
- Choice where practicable, plus regular and systematic consultation with users
- Courtesy and helpfulness
- Well-publicised and easy to use complaints procedures
- Value for money

2.3.3 Complaint Management and Fairness

Stone (2011) has argued that complaint handling should focus on the outcome primarily and secondly on the process. Fairness does not necessarily imply that the customer is always right, and Lyon and Powers (2001) have argued that there may frequently be situations in which the organization realizes that the customers are not right and that customer retention may not be the appropriate goal. Dissatisfied complaining customers expect a good explanation of what has happened, an apology, empathy with their situation and efforts being made to make them happy again. In the literature, three types of fairness associated with complaint management have been discussed, these being 'procedural', 'distributional' and 'interactional' fairness.

Stone (2011) has particularly discussed distributional fairness and procedural fairness as being important during service recovery, arguing that improved service quality will be important in rebuilding customer satisfaction, loyalty and trust, whereas interactional fairness is likely only to enhance the customer's perception of trust. Procedural fairness is likely to encompass customer participation in and influence over the decision, and the opportunity to have 'voice'.

Interactional fairness on the other hand is about how the customer is treated in terms of respect, politeness and dignity. In this respect, an apology can be an invaluable compensation that would disseminate value in a mutual relationship (Faed, 2010). Indeed, an apology to a customer can significantly improve or change the perception towards the service provider (Razali and Jaafar, 2012).

Nel *et al.* (2000) have used the theory of justice to consider customers' opinions of organizational complaint handling in the public sector, using the same three independent variables - interactional, procedural and distributive justice - to explain customer evaluations of service complaint experiences. They found significant relationships between the three justice dimensions, with each playing an important part in determining levels of satisfaction with complaint handling, and in both private and public sector contexts.

2.3.4 Complaint Management and Public Participation

Farrell (2010) has discussed two classic frameworks for thinking about public empowerment in relation to complaints: the 'ladder of participation and involvement' and 'voice, choice and exit'. Both help to understand the potential involvement of the consumer and citizen in public services by highlighting the hierarchy of empowerment and the exercise of influence through active participation by citizens in the pursuit of their concerns and complaints (Hirschman, 1970).

Simmons (2006) however, has argued that choice is usually limited in public service contexts. As Farrell (2010) has pointed out, participation and the exercise of voice is clearly dependent on time, resources and the commitment of the citizen. In reality, citizens often have little choice, opportunity to voice a viewpoint or possibility for exit and may feel anything but empowered. Facilitating such mechanisms, then, is a major challenge for many public services if citizens are to be meaningfully empowered as customers. Michels and De Graaf (2010) have pointed out that citizen participation should be seen as a vital aspect of democracy and, as Barnes (1999:67) has previously suggested, that it contributes to citizens' feeling of being 'public', part of a community and, as a consequence, more personally involved in, and responsible for, public decisions.

As Gaster and Taylor (1993) have stated, feedback from consumers and local residents, including complaints, is itself a form of participation and some public organisations have recognised complaints as being valuable and important to learning, so they encourage their staff to treat them positively, following up on them promptly and using them as performance measures of service quality. In this respect, much has indeed been learned from business about the importance of the customer's perspective, about the provision of choice and of the benefits that flow from having well-advertised, efficient and reliable services. Moreover, as Gaster and Taylor (1993) concluded, the application in practice of such thinking has made a significant difference for many people as users and consumers of public services.

SECTION III: Conceptualising Complaint Management

In this third section the discussion of the relevant published literature develops these ideas about quality and complaints in public services further, particularly by considering how we might conceptualise complaint management. Here the section specifically considers literature and findings from research that highlight different ways of thinking about complaint management and about best practices in this respect, with a view to developing a framework for the research on which this thesis is based.

2.4 Complaint Management in the Public Sector

Particularly in times of uncertainty, a government facing difficulties in managing the expectations of its citizens who look for greater economic prosperity, increased security and better quality public services, may struggle to win public support. In such circumstances the government cannot ignore the problems without risking greater difficulties as happened in countries such as Egypt, Syria and Libya. Arguably it is better for public concerns and complaints to be voiced and addressed than for citizens and consumers to feel driven to more negative, or even subversive, tactics to propagate their dissatisfaction, for example, through social media, (Stone, 2011).

If there is public pressure for changes in the management and delivery of government services that places public sector organizations under pressure, there needs to be responses that sustain public confidence in the public services (Stewart, 1988). As Ramesh *et al.* (2010) have argued, for the past 30 years, governments around the world have sought to change their bureaucratic

structures and managerial processes, sometimes quite assertively, to improve productivity and other aspects of performance of their public services. In short, the public sector has been moving towards a business-like model in which citizens have increasingly come to be treated as customers. One of the symbols of this change has been the shift to more formal complaint handling systems (Bennett and Savani, 2011).

Other initiatives undertaken by the government in this regard have been discussed by various authors such as Migdadi *et al.* (2012), who describes how, in Jordan, there now exists a radio programme broadcast each weekday and which specifically focuses on public service problems, and receives complaining calls from local citizens describing the problems they have encountered and highlighting apparent causes, many of which are portrayed as bureaucratic inefficiency. The programme proceeds to make phone-calls to the relevant government department and to try and negotiate solutions for the problems that have been raised. One recurrent theme in the programme is that only competition¹ will guarantee quality, efficiency and effectiveness (Halachmi and Bouckaert, 1996:230).

As indicated, in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, the Government introduced its “Citizens’ Charter” specifically with the principles of the public services in mind. In this context, Powell *et al.* (2010) have noted that various different terms have been used to describe public service users. For example, according to Alford (2002:337) labels such as ‘customer’, ‘consumer’, ‘client’, ‘user’, ‘stakeholder’, ‘citizen’, ‘taxpayer’ or ‘the public’ are used interchangeably. In

¹ Businesses that experience higher levels of competition are more likely to positively respond to consumer complaints, and a lack of competition seems to foster a passive approach to complaint complaining (Estelami, 2000)

much the same vein, Halachmi and Bouckaert (1996:229) have stated that ‘citizens’ have come to be defined more and more by the set of rights they have within a constitutional state.

Particularly in democratic politics, citizens increasingly expect bureaucrats to be responsive to their demands and expectations, and increasingly, government finds itself working out ways of handling citizen pressures and meeting service demands more effectively.

Bovins (2005:182) has stated that public accountability is the hallmark of modern democratic governance. If a complaint procedure is going to be effective as a means of democratic accountability and good administration, it must be accessible to all of the public (Seneviratne and Cracknell, 1988). In addition, complaint procedures must be clear so that everyone knows how to press their complaints and how they will be treated in the process (Atkins, 1992).

In addition, complaint procedures and associated mechanisms have been seen as providing insights on how government is improving (Gulland, 2009). Although complaint procedures also have other purposes, and more often than not, are intended as mechanism for maximising consumer satisfaction or for providing information about quality of services to management. Gulland (2009) found that the early stages of many complaint procedures were not always followed and the complainants were often unclear when asked about where they were within the procedure (Gulland, 2009). To some extent, the organizations preferred not to publicize the complaint procedures, because they predicted that the chance of receiving complaint against them was quite high (Stone, 2011).

Moreover, another study in United Kingdom identified various reasons why dissatisfied citizens did not register their complaints about public services, notably fear of reprisals, difficulty in navigating the complaint procedures, limited understanding of how to progress a complaint because of the complexity of the system or the technical language used (Gauri, 2013). One of the important components of complaint management, it was concluded, was to understand how information from customers flowed through the organization to relevant decisions makers and what reactions it generated.

Brewer (2007) has underlined the importance of public service complaints being handled effectively and the right of redress being upheld as integral features of good governance and effective service delivery. How well service complaints are handled, he has suggested, is a key determinant of the quality of public services at both systemic and service-recipient levels. Although much research has been undertaken on complaint management in the private sector, there is still little within the academic literature on complaint management in a public sector context.

Much of what research has been published explores how complaint management is managed in the public sector and one argument is that there are more positive contributions and benefits from complaint management in the private business world than with public services. Different researchers have presented different perspectives on public services. Some have emphasised the stereotypically slow, largely inwardly focused, and overly bureaucratic nature of the public organizations and their low productivity compared with the private sector (see, for example, (Heracleous and Johnston, 2008). Others have supported this viewpoint and highlighted the

structural characteristics of public delivery systems that underlay the lower responsiveness to consumer or user needs, notably the lack of incentives for a customer orientation, and the resulting lower accessibility, lower efficiency and lower sense of humanity (Gronhaug and Arndt, 1980).

Moreover many authors have further commented on the reluctance of public service organizations to take risks and instead the preference for “playing it safe” (Sherman, 1989:63, Skelcher, 1992:114) for fear of making mistakes and invoking criticism and damaging reputations. Such an attitude and lack of urgency for improvement, contentment with the status quo, however, has itself often resulted in negative perspectives on public service organisations and criticisms of the divorce between output value (the quality) and input resources (the employee contribution) and of the limited commitment towards improvement (Pyon *et al.*, 2009). Pyon *et al.* (2009) and Callender (2001) have also highlighted the lack of competitor pressure and of a profit-making motivation to drive improvement and value creation.

Although the public sector has been widely dubbed as bureaucratic, however, it is fair to say that, by now, many governments have taken steps to improve their public services and to apply more customer-centric principles and practices and generally committing to improved standards of provision. Johnston (2004) has suggested that the attitudinal commitment to dealing with customer/citizen problems and queries provides a good barometer of an organization’s quality of service. Customers obviously much prefer organizations to deliver on their promises, but may be prepared to accept problems provided these are dealt with well. Tax and Brown (1998), for example, found that most complaints are lodged when customers

experience poor treatment in relation to a service defect. Thus, while an aspect of poor service may well be tolerated with private expressions of disappointment and frustration, it is more likely to become a subject of formal complaint if the problem is compounded by indifference or worse on the part of front-line staff or indeed more senior officials.

On the other hand, effective resolution of consumer complaints presents other immediate opportunities for improving organisational reputations (Estelami, 2000). As indicated previously, other authors such as Gaster and Taylor (1993) have emphasized the value of complaints as an important management tool, encouraging staff to think about them positively, coordinating and following up complaints and using them as performance measures in systematic performance reviews. They have also seen them as a way for public organisations to listen to and learn from citizens, customers, service users and consumers.

Conversely, complaints can be considered costly to governments and their departments, particularly where redress procedures involve resort to other agencies such as courts. For instance, the Department for Work and Pensions in the United Kingdom has estimated that when complaints are resolved successfully at the outset, costs may be as much as 40 times less expensive than when they end up in an appeal processes (Gauri, 2013).

One of the key factors that all authors agree contributes to organizational success is being ‘close to the customer’, listening to and learning from them and taking steps to use that information directly to improve quality (Skelcher, 1992). But at the same time, as discussed earlier, in many public service activities notions of ‘customer’ and of ‘customer choice’ are not always wholly

appropriate, especially, perhaps if an element of coercion is involved, for example, in criminal justice or border control. Even then, however, complaints will also provide a means of monitoring service quality from the user's perspective (Skelcher, 1992).

Skelcher (1992) has discussed four principles as being particularly important in relation to an effective complaints system, these being commitment, access, communication and information. Atkins (1992) has argued that an effective complaint system is a pre-condition of quality management. In order to improve, as Linton (1995) and Haji Mahri *et al* (2013) have argued, organizations need to establish methods for obtaining, monitoring and analysing information beyond simple satisfaction surveys but also complaints. Both receiving feedback and learning from flaws have been described by Bosch and Enriques (2005) and by Faed (2010) as key elements of customer relationship management, total quality management and in sustaining a good reputation.

2.5 Best Practices in Complaint Management

The literature on complaint management includes much discussion about 'best practices', and while it might be concluded that there is no one model as to how it is best done, there is a high degree of commonality as to the key principles and priorities. Johnston and Mehra (2002) for example, have suggested that good complaint management should be based on four key notions: 'a complaints-soliciting culture', 'a straight forward complaint procedure', 'process simplicity' and 'follow-up'. Meanwhile, Johnston and Clark (2005) have discussed a strategy

where an excellent complaint handling process consists of seven operational activities as follows:

1. Acknowledgement: knowledge that a problem has occurred.
2. Empathy: understanding the problem from a customer's point of view.
3. Apology: saying sorry.
4. Owning the problem: taking ownership of the customer and the issue.
5. Fixing the problem: fixing, or at least trying to fix the problem for the customer.
6. Providing assurance: providing assurance that the problem has been/will be sorted and should not occur again.
7. Providing compensation: providing a refund, and/or a token and/or compensation, depending on the severity of the problem.

In similar vein, Marra (2005) has discussed five key processes: 'contact process', 'fulfillment process', 'validation process', 'escalation process' and 'management process', while Henneberg *et al.* (2008) have focused on softer attributes such as 'taking quick action', 'understanding the problem', 'showing empathy', 'active listening', 'manners' and 'openness'. Meanwhile, McKevitt (1998) and more recently Stone (2011), have emphasised the following criteria for an effective complaint management process:

- Easily accessible and well publicized;
- Simple to understand and use;

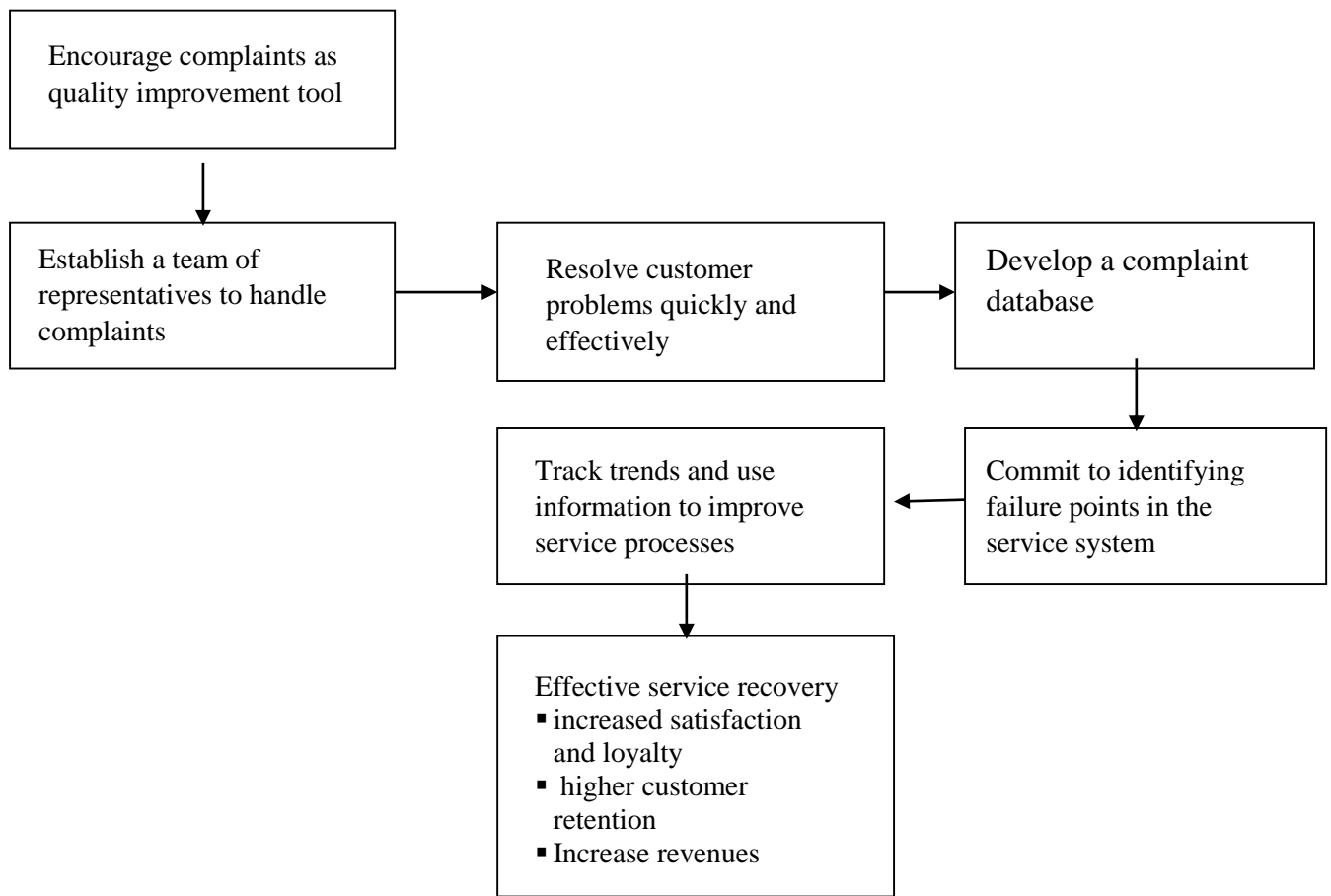
- Speedy, with established time limits for action, and keeping people informed of progress;
- Fair, with full and impartial investigation;
- Confidential, to maintain confidentiality of both staff and complainers;
- Effective, addressing all the points at issue, and providing appropriate redress;
- Informative, providing information to management so that the services can be improved;
- Keeping customers informed during the complaint management process.

A further typology (and a graphical model) has been offered by Lyon and Powers (2001) who have suggested six steps to a good complaint management process as shown in Figure 2.5. First, they suggest, complaints should be encouraged. This can be done through informing customers about the existence of a complaint process and ensuring that staff always record complaints formally. Second, they argue that the organization needs to establish clearly who is responsible for what tasks with regard to complaint handlings (they talk of having representatives for each step in the process and extending from the frontline to top management). Third, they discuss the commitment needed to resolve complaints quickly and for which a procedure manual can be helpful in ensuring that all staff are familiar with the process and are able to answer at least the o frequently asked questions.

Fourth, they refer to the importance of having a formal complaint log or database that captures and holds complaint management information and details of all the actions taken (and when) in addressing it. This will allow complaints to be tracked for follow up and documentary

purposes. Fifth, they discuss the analysis of complaint data and the derivation of learning for the organization to ensure that the same problem does not arise again. Next they refer to the value of analysing patterns and trends in complaints for further learning, and finally to effective service recovery and the achievement of customer satisfaction. These steps are illustrated graphically in Figure 2.5 below.

Figure 2.5: Complaint Management Process



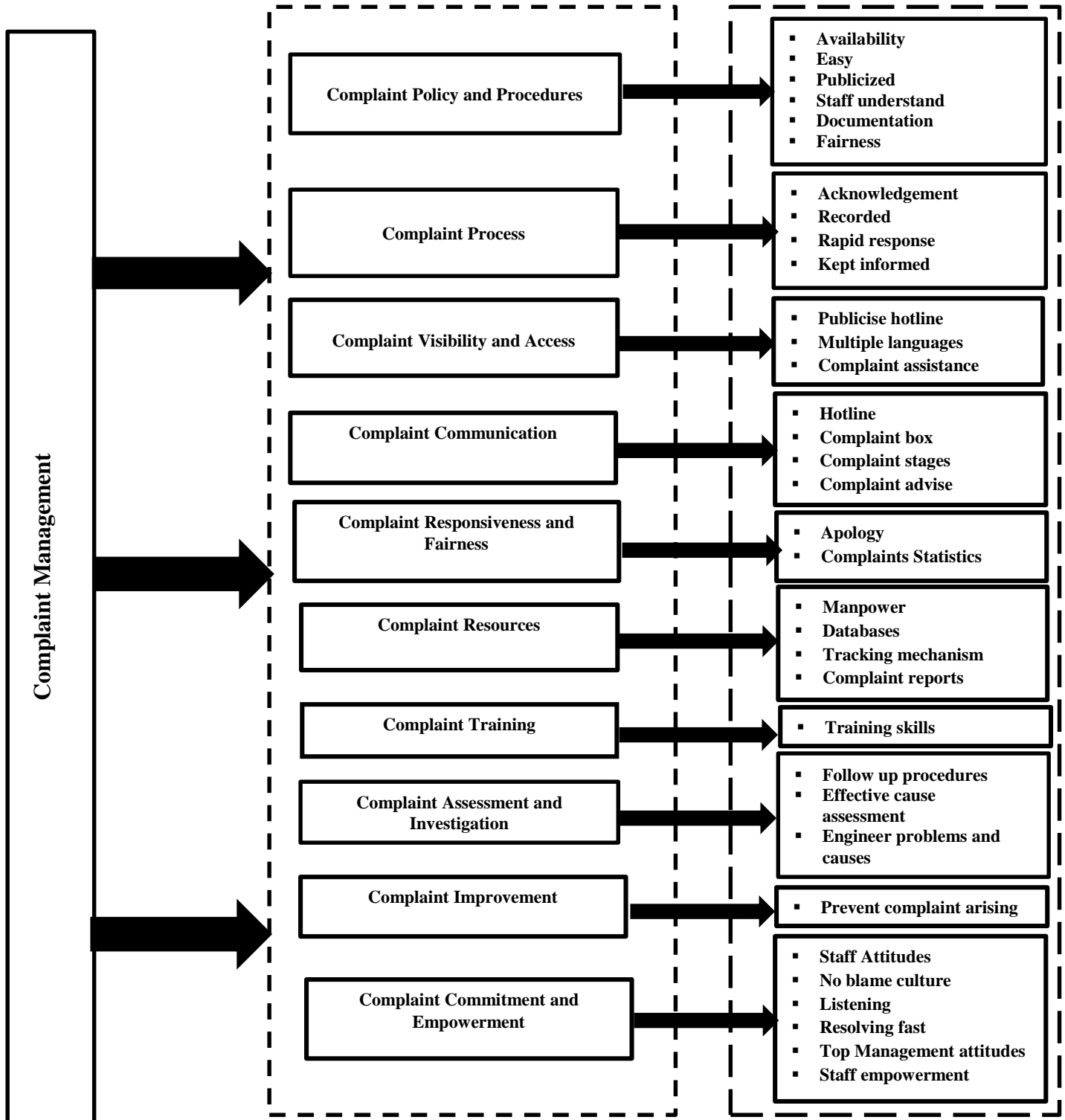
Source: Lyon and Powers (2001), Journal of Quality Improvement.

2.6 Developing a Conceptual Framework for the Research

This review of relevant literature on complaint management has highlighted a number of key themes that have been derived from previous research, some focused on the value of seeing complaints in a positive light and as providing organisational learning opportunities, some focusing on the challenges particularly for public sector organisations in becoming more customer-centric, and some providing normative perspectives on how complaint management might be best approached and organised. From all this, a key task has been to develop a conceptual framework to inform and shape the particular research undertaken for this thesis. This is depicted graphically in Figure 2.6 below and takes the form of an effective complaint management model that has drawn on the work of a number of authors whose work has been discussed in this chapter, namely, Hart *et al.* (1990), Johnston (1995), Barlow and Moller (1996), Boshoff (1997), Dalrymple and Donnelly (1997), Van Ossel and Stremersch (1998), Johnston (2000), Johnston and Mehra (2002), The Australian Standard AS 4629-1995(*Effective Complaints Management Fact Sheets*) and the Annual Report of the United Kingdom Local Government Ombudsman (2012-2013).

We will return to consider findings from the application of this framework in Chapters 5 and 6. But first, in Chapter 3 and 4, we turn to focus on the approach to the research and to the context within which it has been conducted.

Figure 2.6: Conceptual Framework for the Research (A Model for Complaint Management)



CHAPTER 3

COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT IN BRUNEI

3.1 Introduction

Particularly in the era of digital technology, where information can be easily obtained through electronic mass media, the expectations of citizens toward the services delivered by the government have increased markedly. Citizens, as clients, expect the best services from public agencies, especially when they have to pay taxes and therefore feel in some sense ownership of them. Therefore, the government, through its departments, needs to show responsiveness and sensitivity towards its service users. Failure to do so, the literature suggests, is likely to affect trust and confidence in government. In this regard, then, the effective management of complaints can be an important strategy within the overall framework of service user and citizen-customer care.

In this chapter, the focus is on introducing how complaint management works in the case-study state for this thesis – Brunei Darussalam. The chapter begins with an overview and introduction to the context of the case-study state before outlining the organisational processes in place across government there for managing complaints.

3.2 Brunei Darussalam: An Overview

Brunei Darussalam (hereinafter Brunei) is a relatively small country with a correspondingly small population of about 398,000, with a geographical territory of 5765 km², and situated along the north-west of Borneo Island in Southeast Asia. Despite its small size, however, Brunei has made itself quite visible on the world map by being an increasingly active player in world and regional affairs.

Figures 3.1: Map of Brunei



Brunei Darussalam is a Malay Muslim Monarchy² whereby the ‘Sultan or King’ is the Head of State and Chief Executive. The conduct of state affairs rests primarily on the basis of the constitution, law and the rulings of an independent judiciary. Brunei Darussalam has a long history which stretches 600 years back to the first Sultan. It has operated with a civil service since then although the form in which it has been organised and practised has changed over time. The modern civil service began after the Second World War (Borneo Bulletin, 2001). Brunei finally gained its independence from British colonial rule in 1984 although the Constitution that was written in 1959 established that Brunei should uphold its own national philosophy, with the Malay Islamic Monarch, as leader of the government and head of management and administration. The political system of Brunei is unique in today’s world, combining a strong tradition of single family rule with a desire to see consensus achieved among the different political actors. In 2005, the king decreed that cabinet members would only serve for terms of five years, although these could be extended if felt appropriate, and he exercises the right to reshuffle the cabinet at any time (The Report Brunei Darussalam, 2010:15).

² Malay Islamic Monarchy or ‘Melayu Islam Beraja’ incorporates the national philosophy of Brunei Darussalam. It represents Brunei Darussalam as a nation according to the Islamic faith with a king, who is the sultan and supreme ruler of the nation. The Malay Islamic Monarchy holds three essential elements. First, Malay refers to the right of the Malay that consists of seven dynamic and dominant indigenous groups of Malay securing the life of monarchical government, family, society, nations and state. Second, Islam is the official religion of the nation which is in accordance to the belief of Ahli Sunnah Wal Jama’ah of Shafie sect. Lastly, Monarchy refers to the monarchical government, with the sultan as leader and patron of the people, who holds the trust from Allah in the exercise of supreme authority to rule the nation. Thus, these three components contain ideas that influence the lifestyle of Bruneian and can be effectively be applied as the national philosophy. It also brought up the Malay values and traditions of Malay culture such as habitual politeness and ritual elements epitomized by the teachings of Islam. (Haji Serudin, 2013:46-48)

The United Nations Development Programme has ranked Brunei Darussalam 30th in the “High Human Development³” category (United Nations Development Programme, 2013) and the literacy⁴ rate is about 95.3%, which places it among the highest in the world.

In terms of economy, Brunei is ranked at 39th in the world with a Gross National Income in 2010 of 31,180 million US dollars per capita. The main source of income of Brunei is from the oil sector and this generates sufficient wealth for the state not to need to levy income-tax on its citizens. However, despite this state of affairs and, moreover, the provision of subsidies to citizens in the form of low cost health care, free education and a range of other public service benefits (The Report Brunei Darussalam, 2010:13), as in most states around the world, demand from citizens for more and higher quality services from their government appears to be rising inexorably.

3.3 Public Service Reform in Brunei

Over the past thirty years or so, since its independence, many changes have been made to the Brunei government management and administration systems, with various new strategies, policies and practices having been introduced to seek to ensure that Brunei remains competitive with neighbouring states. A programme of modernization of the civil service has been undertaken as one of seven strategic thematic goals of the Prime Minister’s Office in Brunei

³United Nations Development Index defined Human Development Index (HDI) as “ a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development – a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living” (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi-table>)

⁴The World Bank defined “Literacy rate” as “the total percentage of the population age 15 and above who can, with understanding, read and write a short. Simple statement on their everyday life” (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>)

Darussalam). The civil service employs about 11% of the population, making it the nation's single largest employer (The Report Brunei Darussalam, 2007:16). In Brunei, most of the public goods such as housing, education, utilities services and hospitals are provided by the government. Thus, for many years, the government has been seen as the main provider of basic services for citizens and there has been little or no debate about, or criticism of, provision, reflecting the traditional culture of deference towards the authority of the king in this small state.

These days, as indicated, however, there is more overt commitment to raise standards of public provision in the country, as Brunei aims to be within the top 10 countries of the world in terms of economic development, education and standards of living. Included within the Brunei Vision 2035 is an institutional development strategy that aims to enhance good governance in both the public and private sectors, to ensure high quality public services, operate modern and pragmatic legal and regulatory frameworks and to provide efficient government procedures that entail the minimum of bureaucratic "red tape". Based on the Worldwide Governance Indicators, Brunei was measured at negative one (-1) compared with Singapore and the United Kingdom in terms of voice and accountability. In this respect, monitoring is in place to measure the extent to which the country's citizens are feeling more empowered to participate in selecting their government, the level of freedom of expression and of a free media (Haji Saim, 2006:135).

Although a negative score has not reflected well on Brunei's achievements in these respects to date, the Prime Minister's Office is now leading other ministries with a fresh vision and a more concerted approach to achieving more positive progress into the future. There are, in fact, seven

strategic themes comprising the Brunei Prime Minister's vision (Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Brunei Darussalam, 2011). One of these themes is the modernisation of the civil service to ensure higher standards of efficiency and to be more effective in meeting public expectations in relation to public services.

Another theme focuses on strengthening government's achievements in demonstrating care and responsibility towards its citizen. For a small state in a highly competitive global economy, a good public image is not only essential for government in terms of the public financial performance but also important for political stability. The objectives underpinning such themes and priorities for government have been strongly emphasised in various public pronouncements by the king in recent years, for example, in his introduction to the 2008 Development Plan:

“My government is not only responsible for our people today. It must also help them fulfil their hopes for our next generation. To do this, it must listen to them and offer clear-sighted, realistic plans for the future that can be implemented with skill and professionalism. ...Increase in enterprises capable of re-generating the economy is an important agenda in the nation's development. It entails enhancement in the provision of a speedier, more competent and effective public services. The Civil Service plays a very important role in generating growth of viable enterprises to achieve the nation's aspiration for an economic diversity that is sustainable and dynamic”

(Brunei Darussalam Long-Term Development Plan, 2008: v).

Although Brunei has the economic means to provide the best public services in the region, with the estimated ratio of one civil servant per nine citizens/customers (Brunei Times, 2007a), service delivery by the civil service has been described by the Deputy Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, as slow, inefficient, uncoordinated, not customer-friendly and suffering from unduly bureaucratic procedures (Brunei Times, 2007b), a viewpoint seemingly endorsed by the high volume of official complaints about public services that are received from the public. These issues have been highlighted in the mass media as follows;

"...the lack of efficiency of the officers and staff or the civil servants themselves. ...there is no one at the service counter when many customers are waiting. This should be blamed on the department head, who should have placed a representative there or a replacement when the representative is unable to man the counter"

(Brunei Times, 2007c)

"Managing a public utility is undoubtedly tough being half way between a government department and a private sector business. Often, as in Brunei, the customers are citizens who have no choice in who provides their essential services. Paradoxically, this creates more pressure to deliver excellent service because customers totally rely on the utility's service quality for their quality of life. Failing to deliver outstanding customer service is therefore a moral as well as a commercial issue. If a private sector service provider is lousy, then a) customers go to someone

who is better, and b) the bad service provider either improves or goes out of business. This cannot happen when there is only one provider, and that one is owned by the government.”

(Brunei Times, 2012)

Here it should be borne in mind that people often tend to think of government as a single entity and that, if just one department is seen as inefficient or delivering poor service, it is likely to reflect badly on government as a whole. For this reason, the Brunei Government, through the Prime Minister's Office, has been working to establish a cross-governmental performance framework for which all ministries are expected to prepare "success indicators" of the effectiveness of public services. One such “success indicator” concerns the responsiveness to feedback received from citizens regarding public service delivery. Another initiative was taken in 2007 when the King established a steering committee on the delivery of the public services. This steering committee held a number of meetings with relevant groups to obtain feedback on the problems faced by citizens in dealing with the government agencies, and which led to changes in several government processes (Borneo Bulletin, 2007a).

Currently there are some 12 government ministries and a total of 108 departments in Brunei, together employing some 51,151 civil servants in total⁵. Moreover, this figure has been increasing year on year and the growth of government in this way has evidently represented significant additional pressure on the public finances. The Ministry of Education employs the

⁵ This figures was taken from the Public Service Department, Prime Minister’s Office in 2013 and available at <http://www.psd.gov.bn/>

highest number of civil servants – some 12,960 workers, while the Ministry of Finance is the smallest with 864 workers.

In Brunei, all civil servants are graded into five divisions in terms of seniority. The top management falls into division 1 and those here account for just 1.9% of the total workforce of government. The principal role of members of this division is to ensure that departments run effectively and that the specified vision and mission for the departments is indeed achieved.

Division 2 represents middle management and consists of senior and middle ranking officers. This division accounts for a further 19.3% from the government workforce. Division 3 - constituted of more junior ranks comprised assistant officers on various salary scales, and accounts for a further 23.5% of the workforce, while Division 4, constituting 25.8%, includes the majority of front-line posts – i.e. staff who deal with the day-to-day running of departments, including most communications with customers and the public. Meanwhile Division 5 constitutes 29.5% of the workforce and comprises the most junior support staff who, nevertheless, are vital to their operation and continuity of most public services.

3.4 Public Service Delivery in Brunei

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, however, a number of academic research studies have been undertaken to investigate public opinions and attitudes towards public service delivery in Brunei. In 1996, for example, a national survey was conducted on public attitudes towards public services in Brunei Darussalam (Haji Saim, 2006:146), the main aim of which was to find

out what the public thought about provision. The results of that survey identified public significant dissatisfaction in relation to various governmental activities and it was argued at the time that the findings should become a trigger for significant improvements (Haji Saim, 2006:146).

Two years later, in 1998, a further study was carried out and this revealed shifting trends in perceptions as well as highlighting differences in public opinions between services. For instance, the average level of satisfaction for postal services was found to have declined since 1996, and only in relation to water and immigration services had perceptions shown signs of improvement (all other activities recording declines in the average satisfaction levels and perceived responsiveness to problems). Another interesting finding was that one of the most commonly cited problems was the lack of clarity about how to pursue a complaint or to obtain remedy for a public service problem.

Further important surveys were undertaken in 2002, 2006 and 2011 by the Management Services Department of Brunei government; these having a particular focus on quality of customer service from the various departments. As shown in Table 3.1 below, these surveys highlighted steady improvement in civil servants' understanding of, and their attitude towards, their public service customers, with satisfaction ratings steadily increasing in successive surveys. However, even though an improving trend was also apparent in relation to the indicator of 'customer orientation within the civil service' (i.e. agreement with the slogan 'the customer is always right') the levels were quite low (just 35.4% rising to 43.6% two years later). Overall, these findings also revealed that, although civil servants had become more customer-focused,

the extent to which this was so compared quite poorly with equivalent statistics for the private business sector.

Table 3.1: Survey on Customer Focused (Customer Interaction) In Brunei Civil Service

No.	Customer Interaction	2002	2006	2011
1	Civil servants' attitude towards customers (positive)	75%	80.3%	na*
2.	Civil servants' understanding on the slogan 'The Customer Is Always Right'	35.4%	43.6%	na*
3	Customers' satisfaction	49%	64.5%	68%
4	Quality of service provided	na*	71%	75%
5	Response officers / staff of an inquiry / request	na*	74%	78%
6	Prompt Action	na*	73%	67%
7	Knowledge of officers / staff in the delivery of services	na*	73%	75%
8	Ability of officers and staff in dealing with queries / problems raised	na*	72%	74%

Note: na*: The data is not available.

Source: Management Services Department Website, 2012

According to the survey conducted by the Government's Management Services Department in 2011, the quality of public services has improved from 71% to 75%. Improvement was also apparent in terms of responses from officers to inquiries and requests for information etc., from 74% to 78% satisfaction. However in terms of perceived promptness of action by civil servants, a decline in responsiveness was recorded from 73% to 67% that suggested some loss of standards of urgency in responding to customer contacts. Interestingly, the same survey also highlighted a general failure on the part of civil servants to apologise to customers for the problems about which they were complaining (this being something that Johnston and Mehra

(2002) have described as best practice in complaint management). However, here the nature of autocratic governance, and specifically, the cultural presumption that ‘government can do no wrong’ probably goes some way to providing an explanation.

The survey also found that public services in Brunei Darussalam were frequently regarded by consumers to be slow, inefficient and lacking in transparency (The Brunei Times, 2007d). In addition, there have been calls in the media for all civil servants to increase their productivity and work ethic (The Brunei Times, 2010). Moreover, there exists an attitudinal problem within the civil service, acknowledged by a training officer from the Civil Service Institute, of “complacency and negativity towards responsibilities that were entrusted to them” and that this is reflected in a high number of customer complaints (The Brunei Times, 2009). In an interview by the President of the Federation of Brunei Malay Entrepreneurs, the concerns about civil service bureaucracy was put still more bluntly:

“(There are) too many people (in the government) who feel that they have the ultimate power or control over things and certain procedures. The clerk checks the invoice, then the invoice gets passed onto the chief clerk, then onto the administrative officer, then the director before reaching the permanent secretary. Mind you, that that is just in one ministry. That's just plain bureaucracy”.

3.4.1 Client Charter

As part of the strategy to become more customer-focused, the development of a client charter was seen as an opportunity for the government departments to improve their service delivery to the public. The client charter was first introduced in 1995 and the initiative was further developed in 1997 when the King of Brunei agreed that all ministries and departments should have their own client charter. The King's ambition has been for Brunei to have a transparent government that is not only trusted by its citizens, but which would also operate and deliver public services in effective and efficient manner. With a responsive, trusted and appreciated government, it was felt, citizens would be able to enjoy satisfaction, security and peaceful mind

However, it has also been agreed that the success of such programme should be carefully monitored; with the number and nature of complaints by the public to the Management Services Department being seen as a potentially important indicator of progress and achievement in this respect. At the same time, (in 1997), the King also consented to the idea that all government agencies or departments providing public services should be required to comply with quality standards that they themselves had set. In the same vein, they would be expected to carry out regular reviews to ensure that the quality of services was indeed in line with public needs and expectations and within the ministries' or departments' capabilities.

A key idea with the client charter was that, not only would it allow the public to know more clearly the service quality they might expect from government, but also that they might be able to voice their suggestions for improvement. All ministries were expected to offer information

on service standards and quality to the public and also to be able to provide prompt and timely responses to inquiries and suggestions made by citizens and customers. Thus, through the client charter, the aim has been for government agencies to become more responsive, more transparent and more accountable in the provision of services, and for which, as indicated, considerable commitment has been made to ensure effective monitoring processes are in place. In principle, then the intentions have been very positive. But in this thesis, the focus is on how effective that commitment has been in practice. Above all, the main objective in implementing the client charter in the Brunei civil service has been to uphold the King's wishes that have always emphasised the aspects of care to the public. Some of the King's comments in this regard have been as follows;

“...Government officers and staff must continuously be caring of the public needs when they visit government departments acquiring information or services. ... What we want here is that every officer and staff will act immediately to provide information or inform and indicate where they should go to when they see members of the public coming to their offices, rather than by allowing the person concerned to wander around”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1991:23-24)

On another occasion, during the King's meeting with the head of department organised by the Prime Minister's Office, the King emphasized that it is the responsibility of the head of department and all officers and staff, to provide necessary services in relation to complaints

and other problems for the public. It was emphasised that they must always show willingness to listen and show interest in those who come for meetings or who contact by telephone. The King also reminded heads of department that they should never show negative or indifferent attitudes towards those who come to complain. An open-minded attitude was to be expected among all officers at all levels because this would give the public confidence in the administration of government that it truly cared about the welfare and well-being of citizens. The explanations offered in relation to complaints should also be delivered with care and sensitivity, the King declared, so that those who brought complaints would not feel unduly aggrieved even if the response given was disappointing to them.

In a more recent speech the King has stated that a sign of effective leadership is a leader that wins the hearts of the people he leads. According to the Monarch, *"Some of the residents may have an easy life, while others have to endure hardship. Priority must be given to those who encounter difficulties because they usually have many requests and do not know which channel to seek for assistance"* (Brudirect, 2012).

The Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office has stated that Brunei Government is aware that people want public services that are good, efficient, effective and proactive. These include having processes and procedures that are strongly customer-focused and prioritise citizen's and service user needs (Borneo Bulletin, 2007:3). The core challenge for the civil service, according to the Permanent Secretary is to be more responsive of the demands of the public, and to provide the services to anybody that needs services efficiently, effectively and professionally. The civil service is expected to act as a facilitator, to reduce red tape and to be

efficient, effective, caring, customer-oriented, accessible, transparent, dedicated, committed to work, forward looking, honest, trustworthy and fair (Borneo Bulletin, 2007:3). The civil service needs to change constantly in order to adapt to global challenges (The Brunei Times, 2008). Information gathered from both the service provider and receiver is an important factor in achieving the goal of excellent public services.

The introduction of a client charter for all the government departments was aimed to demonstrate a customer-focused organization, however, according to a report in 2012 by the Management Services Department, only 86% of the departments (i.e. 93 out of 108) have claimed to have done so while the other 15 (14%) had yet to do so (Management Services Department Website, 2012). Other issues highlighted in this report were the tendency of staff to view the audit function in negative light, as a fault-finding rather than as developmental and an opportunity for learning, and also the lack of cooperation or feedback from government departments on their performance in relation to the client charter. Rather than automatically providing regular updates on the numbers and nature of complaints and compliments, most departments, it was found, had had to be reminded of their responsibilities in this respect and pressed to produce the data.

3.5 The Idea of Complaint Management on Government Departments

The concept of 'complaint management' was first extolled and introduced by the Prime Minister's Office in 1998. However, it is not clear from the limited documentary evidence of the time exactly what lay behind the decision and the extent to which the ministries or

departments were motivated by its potential utility or how they viewed its potential impacts (both beneficial and burdensome) for them. At the time, no governmental study was undertaken to assess the likely impacts and how the new commitment might affect either operational aspects of the Brunei governmental departments or the quality of public services.

Culture is all important in this context and while complaint-making is considered an acceptable way of expressing dissatisfaction in Brunei, the state is generally described as a polite place. Accordingly, in making a complaint, as endorsed in Islamic culture, the expectation is that it will be made in a polite manner (Henry and Ho, 2010). Confrontation in any form, in Brunei, is considered not only rude but also as unduly aggressive, and as behaviour that is quite alien to this generally peace-loving nation. Indeed, it has often been commented that Bruneians tend to avoid confrontation of any form (see for example, McLellan, 1996; Othman and McLellan, 2000).

There is, as indicated, very little published literature on complaint handling by government departments in Brunei. In one rare example, the author has described the processes in place in Brunei as non-institutionalised and piecemeal (Haji Saim, 2006:146). She also describes three main types of complaint handling mechanism - namely 'face to face', written feedback and complaints through the mass media. In her book 'The Administrative system of Brunei Darussalam: Management, Accountability and Reform' she illustrates the face to face mechanism as follows:

“Face to face meetings are between public officials representing the government and the public namely as beneficiaries or interest and target groups. Such meetings take place with the Sultan, Ministers, Permanent Secretaries or Head of Department at function and ceremonies during ceremonial visits, dialogues in official ceremonies and letters directly given or sent to the palace”.

Because of that, this thesis will also highlight the King ‘Titah⁶’ or speeches that indirectly showing the commitment of the king to accept the public complaint. In 1987, the King visited several villages across Brunei with the purpose of getting to know better his citizens’ problems and complaints. As indicated, complaint handling and the improvement of public services has been an important theme for the King, as he stated, for example, in a meeting with residents of the Tutong District on 12 February 1987, in his Titah. Here the King gave a direction for the citizen to lodge complaints as follows;

"About the complaints and concerns of the people in this country, I want to stress out that channels have been provided and available in my government to enable people to submit their complaints and concerns. For government officials, those channel have already exist in the general regulations since 1961. ...I would like to remind the people and particularly the residents in this area, and throughout the country in

⁶ Titah come to be seen as important piece information about the past, the present and the future. Titah also considered as the highest form of reference in Brunei (Haji Saim, 2006:67) and it also become a policy guideline for the government to follow.

general, to confront all the complaints about the inquiries and their difficulties to the government, to the district officers depending on the areas of population and ministries concerned. ... I have repeatedly pointed out to the citizens and residents, that my government is always willing to listen and to investigate complaints concerning the public in order to help to overcome the problems they face. Therefore, citizens should not hesitate to confront the difficulties and inquiries to the parties concerned in my government. Such matters shall be reported to government officers either by letter or by meeting the officers concerned and not to those who are not concerned with the administration of my government. ... I expect the channels that have been provided are to be used without hesitation and with full sense of responsibility by all walks of life to express directly all of their problems and hardships to the parties of the government that are responsible for these issues, rather than on the parties which have nothing to do with the government, which will use these complaints as a springboard to meet their own interests”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1990:3)

In the same year, and on another visit, this time to Mukim Gadong on the 24 Mac 1987, the King emphasized once again in his Titah his willingness to receive complaints from citizens and his commitment to solving their concerns;

“It is my desire in this visit, to receive complaints from the citizens and residents of this district in written form. By doing so, I would be able to understand the issues more clearly and would allow me to examine the problems and the inquiries in depth, and subsequently directed that the complaint will be studied and investigated by the parties in my government. Complaints in writing will also be used as evidence in doing the follow-up actions, to the parties concerned in my government to ensure that the my government have taken necessary measures in solving the problems and concerns faced by citizens and residents of this country.”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1990:10)

Then on a third visit, this time to villagers in Mukim Serasa on 8 July 1987, the King willingly accepted complaints in writing as follows;

“... in this visit I would also accept complaints made in writing by the citizens and residents in this district. In this way, any inquiries and problems will be addressed more clearly and will also make it easier for the parties concerned in my government in doing the research and the investigation. So, it would enable the parties concerned to take further action against these complaints.”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1990:23)

In further support of complaint-making, the King also reminded the government departments several times of their need to maintain positive attitudes when receiving complaints, stating as follows;

“... Especially for departments that are always contacted by the people, I would like to remind that they should always be open and to serve the public in a polite and caring way to any problems they encounter.”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1995:2)

“... Permanent secretaries must show a good example and be a role model for officers and employees, namely by showing the moral attitude and always provide the care for the officers and staff, by being open and ready to listen to any problem, and appreciate the opinions and views presented by the officers and staff.”

(Jabatan Penerangan, 1995:14)

3.6 The Role of the Management Services Department

According to a researcher, matters of concern to citizens, or problems they wish to raise, are received by the King having been ‘passed through handshakes’ (Haji Saim, 2006:146). It has long been a tradition in Brunei that the Sultan meets citizens in every district during occasions such as his birthday celebration. In addition, surprise visits may be made to villages, or during Muslim Friday prayers, and these provide opportunities for issues to be raised by individual

citizens directly to the Sultan. Generally such encounters are regarded as being among the most effective means for providing feedback or raising a concern or grievance and with greatest likelihood of the matter being acted upon; more so than sending a letter to the palace (Haji Saim, 2006:146). However, due to the high volume of letters received at the palace, one of the government departments, namely the Management Services Department, has been given special responsibility for handling all such complaints or grievances submitted in this way (excepting those relating to the judiciary or legislative, personal or family matters, or regarding private or non-government agencies).

The Management Services Department, previously known as Management Services Unit, was established within the large Establishment Directorate on 1st January 1982. Four years later (on 1st September 1986), the department was transferred to the Prime Minister's Office and its role upgraded, first to include government security, but then, in a further reorganization, to include an overarching responsibility for modernizing public services in Brunei. This is reflected in the Department's vision and mission that is to be 'an excellent organization leading the civil service towards excellence'. To realise this, all the officers and staff of the Management Services Department are expected to work to a common set of core values, notably by exhibiting integrity, vision, professionalism and excellence in their work.

Given the importance of the role played by the Department in introducing reforms and change to the Brunei civil service, the support and cooperation of other ministries and departments is considered vital – a point stressed by the Permanent Secretary at the Brunei Prime Minister's Office in one of the Circulars in 1998. In that circular, all ministries and departments were

encouraged to seek advice and consultancy expertise from the Management Services Department in relation to policy analysis and management, administrative and organizational structure improvements, development and enhancement of systems, and the improvement of productivity. At the same time, all ministries and departments were also asked to provide regular feedback and information of their performance to the Management Services Department (Prime Minister Offices Brunei, 2012). The Department was also assigned an additional responsibility of becoming the focal point for receipt of complaints from the public concerning public services delivery by the government.

Now, more than a decade on, the Department (MSD) is indeed playing the key role in handling public complaints about the public services of all ministries/departments. The Department is also expected to make inspections and hold discussions with the other ministries/departments to follow-up on any complaints raised by the public. It also conducts special in-depth studies looking at standards and service quality in areas such as welfare, housing applications, and outstanding claims.

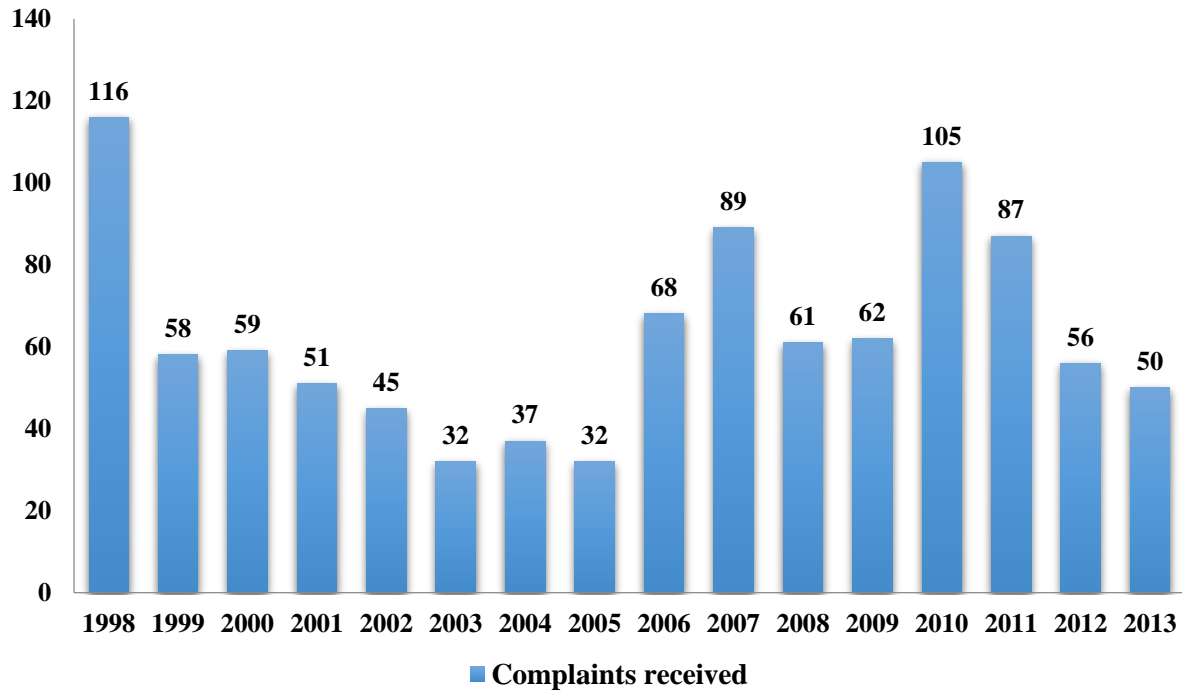
The Management Services Department has also organized special programs to promote customer friendly public services, including open days for the public. The Department's involvement as a third party complaint handler between the government department and the public is felt within government to have improved confidence among citizens in the commitment to public service improvement within government. This has been apparent, for example, in the findings of surveys conducted by the Department, as well as through evidence presented at bilateral meetings with different government departments.

The idea of public open days (customer days) has not, however, been limited to the Management Services Department but in fact has been encouraged of all ministries and departments in the Prime Minister's Office Circular (02/2006) in 2006. The circular also emphasised the need for departments to evaluate all their services on offer, to consider whether it was of the highest possible quality, and to address the particular rules and procedures that might be regarded as barriers to effective provision.

To strengthen the role played by the Management Services Department further, 'complaint officers' were assigned to be available to take feedback and to hear complaints from citizens in each the four district offices during sessions held at three monthly intervals. The fact that very few citizens have come forward in response to this initiative has been felt to reflect continuing reluctance on the part of most citizens to complain or to express their views directly to a public official.

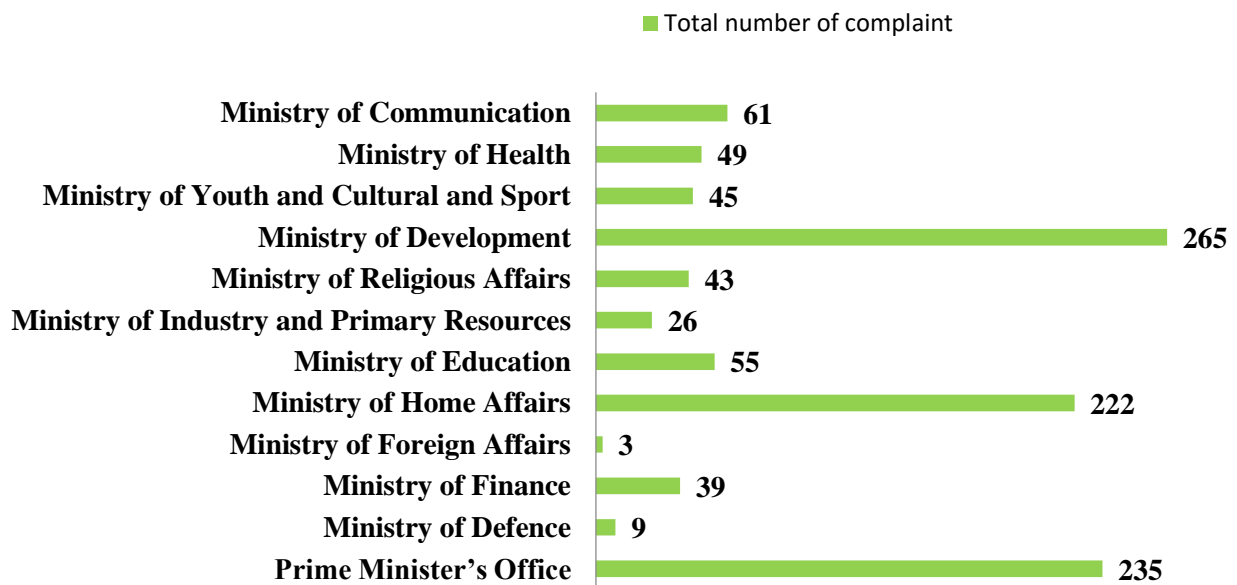
Nevertheless, overall, since the Management Services Department became the focal point for handling public complaints, the number of complaints received has been generally steady and amounted to a cumulative total of 1008, from 1998 to year 2013 (and with fluctuations from year to year). See Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Numbers of Complaints Received By the MSD from 1998 to 2013



Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by Management Services Department in 2014.

Figure 3.3: The Total Complaints Received by Management Services Department from 1998 to 2013 by Ministry



Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by Management Services Department in 2014.

Based on the statistics recorded by the Management Services Department between 1998 and 2013, the higher number of complaints received related to the Ministry of Development, closely followed by the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The relatively high figure for the Ministry of Development probably reflects, above all, the nature of the ministry's core business in providing infrastructure, state housing, environment matters, land use and industrial development – construction work being a matter that would always be likely to engender public complaints. The fact that the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs recorded the second and third highest numbers was less obviously explained although one of the findings of further research by the Management Services Department was that some ministries (including these two) had been much criticized for their tardiness to action, and particularly in addressing complaints.

Without doubt, the task for the Management Services Department, as a third party complaint handler, has become more challenging year by year as the expectations of complainants has increased. This has placed much pressure on departmental officials, especially on those in the Complaints Unit which has often been a target of criticism by complainants, for example, concerning the dearth of information of the progress on particular complaint investigations or for the time taken in dealing with them.

According to the Management Services Department, however, the problem in such instances is more often delays by the relevant ministries and departments with which the Department has to liaise, and from which key responses and evidence is required for the investigation to proceed and before decisions can be reached. The cooperation of all ministries and departments is

indeed vital to the process of investigating complaints, as is proactivity, and a co-operative attitude on the part of departmental staff. A further point to be emphasized in this context, however, is that, although the number of complaints received each year by the Management Services Department is considered by staff there to be relatively small within the context of the range and volume of public services being provided, there is recognition that formal complaints must be regarded as the ‘tip of the iceberg’ and that there are likely to be many more dissatisfied citizens who, for one reason or another, stop short of making formal complaints about poor or failed service.

Table 3.2: The Number of Complaint Received by Ministry by Rank

No.	Ministry	Complaints Received	Category
1	Ministry of Development	265	Highest
2	Prime Minister’s Office	235	
3	Ministry of Home Affairs	222	
4	Ministry of Communication	61	Medium
5	Ministry of Health	49	
6	Ministry of Education	55	
7	Ministry of Youth and Cultural and Sport	45	
8	Ministry of Religious Affairs	43	
9	Ministry of Finance	39	
10	Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources	26	
11	Ministry of Defence	9	Lowest
12	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	

Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by Management Services Department in 2014.

Each year the Management Services Department compiles an annual report on the complaints it has handled and all the ministries are expected to submit their own reports to the Department to contribute to the compilation process. One of the main aims of these reports is to highlight the commitments made by individual ministries and departments in addressing customer-service issues and complaints. In addition, the reports are also expected to explain the actions that have been taken by the respective ministry and department in responding to each complaint submitted to them. Departments are also expected to summarise the nature of improvements that have been made in response to public complaints.

According to the statistics gathered in this way in 2003, and collated by the Management Service Department, about 12,806 complaints had been recorded, while in 2004, about 10,117 complaints had been received by 36 departments (although the total number of departments in the Brunei government was 108 – and it is not known whether or not any complaints had been received by the other 72 departments). Even in relation to the 36 responding departments, it was less than clear from the reports to what extent complaint management was being practiced and how closely the processes being followed were in compliance with expectations and with the guidance issued by the Management Services Department.

Analysis of the Management Services Department data also revealed that only a very few ministries and departments were providing feedback on service quality issues that had been reported in the newspapers, again as the guidance suggested should be routine practice. The suspicion, indeed, was that many ministries and departments were not systematically monitoring the complaints being received and that few, if any, analyses were being undertaken

of patterns among those complaints, thus making it less than likely that service improvement would follow.

Table 3.3: Modes of Complaint Submission as recorded by the Management Services Department

Complaint Sources	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	%
Via the Prime Minister's Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0	3	6	5	7	1	3	27	2.4
Letter	49	41	46	22	12	12	17	6	24	49	18	18	32	29	14	19	408	36.1
Copies of letter	9	13	9	12	3	9	13	14	14	3	9	10	13	11	17	4	163	14.4
Telephone	42	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	4	5	2	2	5	3	2	0	71	6.3
Walk in	15	0	0	0	5	1	2	9	18	19	23	23	34	21	12	16	198	17.5
Email / Fax	0	1	0	4	0	3	4	0	3	2	2	2	7	10	7	1	46	4.1
Complain Box	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	11	4	0	4	2	2	2	29	2.6
Mass Media (Newspaper)	1	1	3	13	25	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	4	1	5	66	5.8
Customer Friendly Programme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	121	-	-	-	-	-	-	121	10.7
Total	116	58	59	51	45	32	37	32	68	210	61	62	105	87	56	50	1129	100%

Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by Management Services Department in 2014.

As will be noted from Table 3.3. The most common mode for submitting a complaint (to the Management Services Department) has to date been through letter-writing, with 408 complaints or 36.1% of the total number being received in this way. The second highest mode has been through 'walk-in' to the Management Services Department, with 198 complaints recorded (constituting 17.5% of the total).

The third most common mode for complaints to be received has been in the form of copies of letters originally submitted to other government departments (i.e. to which the complaints related). On receipt of such copy letters, the Management Services Department would normally cross check with the relevant department to ascertain an explanation of the complaint and information on any actions that have been/will be taken. Besides that, telephone is another possible mode for making complaints (though this mode constitutes just 6.3% of the total sources of complaint with only 71 complaints being recorded in this way over the 14 year period for which statistics are available).

In the digital era, it is unsurprising that another complaint channel is through email or facsimile, with a total of 46 complaints having been received in this way. This has so far constituted just 4.1% of the total sources (the highest number of complaints recorded using this approach was in 2011 with 10 complaints) but might well be expected to rise into the future as digital communication increasingly becomes a more dominantly embedded means of contacting government. For now, while this mode might well seem one of the easiest ways of communicating (including for lodging formal complaints), the still relatively low usage at present might perhaps indicate that complainants do not have sufficient confidence in electronic submissions being likely to engender satisfactory responses (or indeed responses at all) compared with formal letters. But

possibly also, the relatively limited use of email for complaint submission, might reflect the relative difficulties of identifying appropriate email addresses compared with use of the postal service to government departments.

Other modes, such as the use of complaint boxes (designed to make it easier for citizen to lodge a complaint) also emerge from this analysis as being relatively little used (with only 25 complaints having been submitted in this way since 2006 – when such complaint / suggestion boxes were first provided in each local district) and when the guidance leaflet “Lodging Complaints in Government Services” was first published).

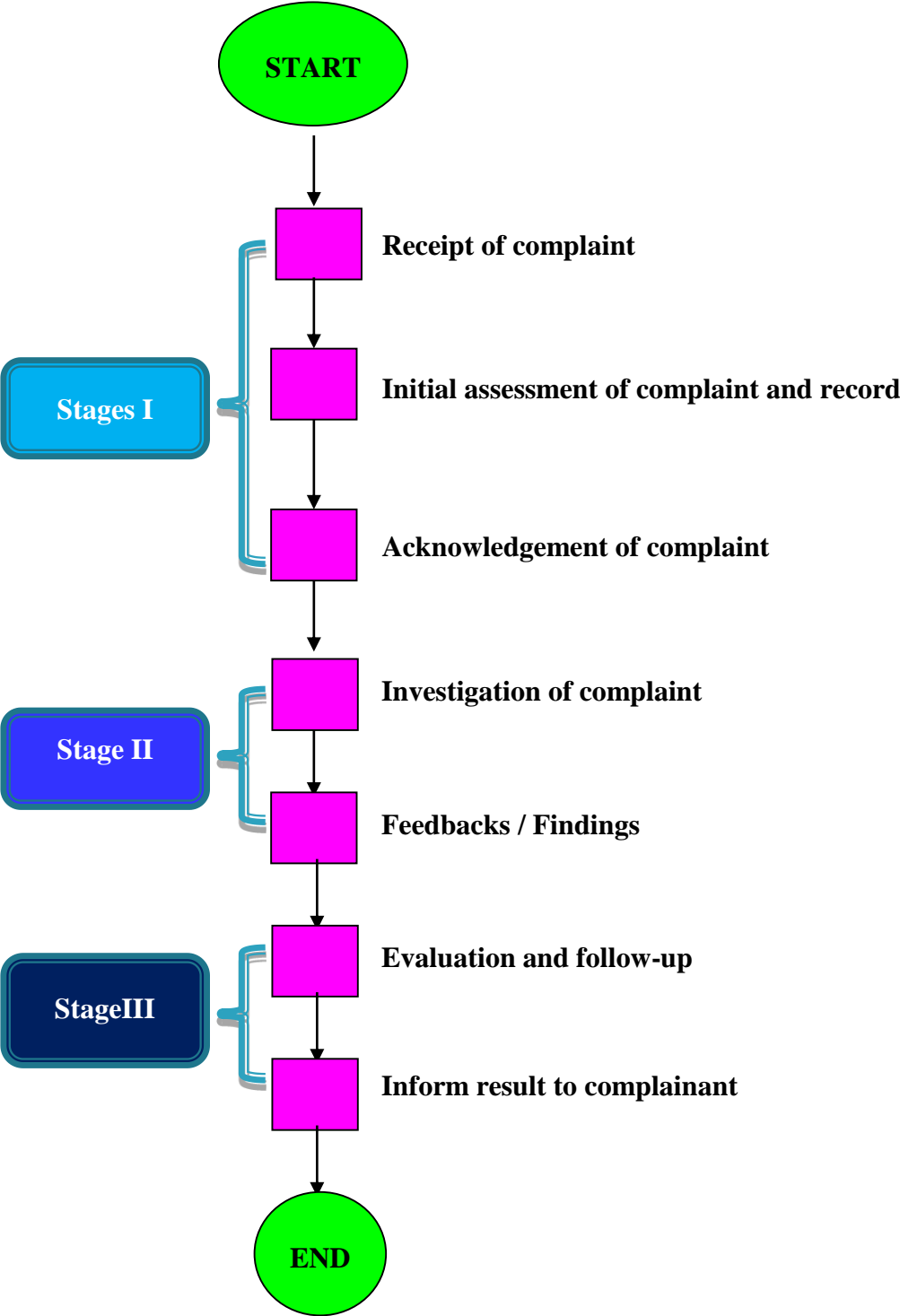
Since taking on lead responsibility for complaint management across government, the Management Services Department has particularly recommended that all government departments and ministries should adopt three standard processes in managing complaints, these, as discussed in Chapter 2, having generally been regarded in the published literature as key elements of a “proper” complaint management system. First is the recording of each complaint received from a customer, the issuing of an acknowledgment letter that indicates both that complaints are welcomed and that they will always be carefully examined.

Second is the investigation and the provision of feedback on findings. This element is regarded as being the core of complaint handling and the basis from which government departments and ministries might expect to acquire valuable learning. Third is the evaluation and follow up stage, where decisions are made about the actions that merit being taken to ensure that the same problems do not recur in the future. The advice from the Management Services Department is that these

three elements should be seen as parts of a single continuous process at the end of which notice of the outcomes of the investigation should be communicated to the complainant to ensure full accountability and closure.

However, as indicated in Chapter 1, a key question for this research has been whether and to what extent such guidance and expectations from the Management Services Department are reliably and routinely followed by all the different departments and ministries. Given the steady increase in complaints received at the Management Services Department about unresponsiveness in relation to complaints made to other departments, the suggestion was that such guidance and expectations is not always being followed, and a key aim for this research was to understand better why this might be so.

Figure 3.4: Flow Chart of the Complaint Handling Process Recommended by the Management Services Department



3.7 Management Services Department Jurisdiction

The Brunei Management Services Department has defined a complaint as “an expression of public grievances towards government services including those unable to meet the client charter standard in terms of timelines or quality of services” (Management Services Department Website, 2012). On this basis, leaflets have been published and widely distributed with the objective of facilitating the public in making complaints about public services rendered by government departments and agencies. The Department’s argument is that by handling public complaints effectively, stronger accountability in public services will be achieved and the reputation of, and public trust in, government will be enhanced as well. According to the Department, the nine most common causes of complaint are as follows:

1. Services unable to meet their client charter;
2. Late responses or no actions taken by government agencies;
3. Inconsistence actions taken by government agencies;
4. Poor implementation or enforcement of policies or laws;
5. Lack of coordination with departments of the same ministry;
6. Improper treatment or services rendered by public servants;
7. Poor quality services;
8. Lack of facilities or infrastructure; and
9. Other services related complaints.

In line with its own advocated standards, the Management Services Department claims always to issue a letter of acknowledgement to a complainant, doing so within 7 working days from the date of receiving the complaint. In addition to that, the Department pledges to take action

within 7 working days after receipt of a complaint, initially by contacting the relevant department/agency. It claims also to ensure that the complainant is kept informed about the investigation and about the outcome within seven working days of the final decision having been made. Again, however, reality of these claims was something that this research has sought to test.

3.8 Complaint Categories

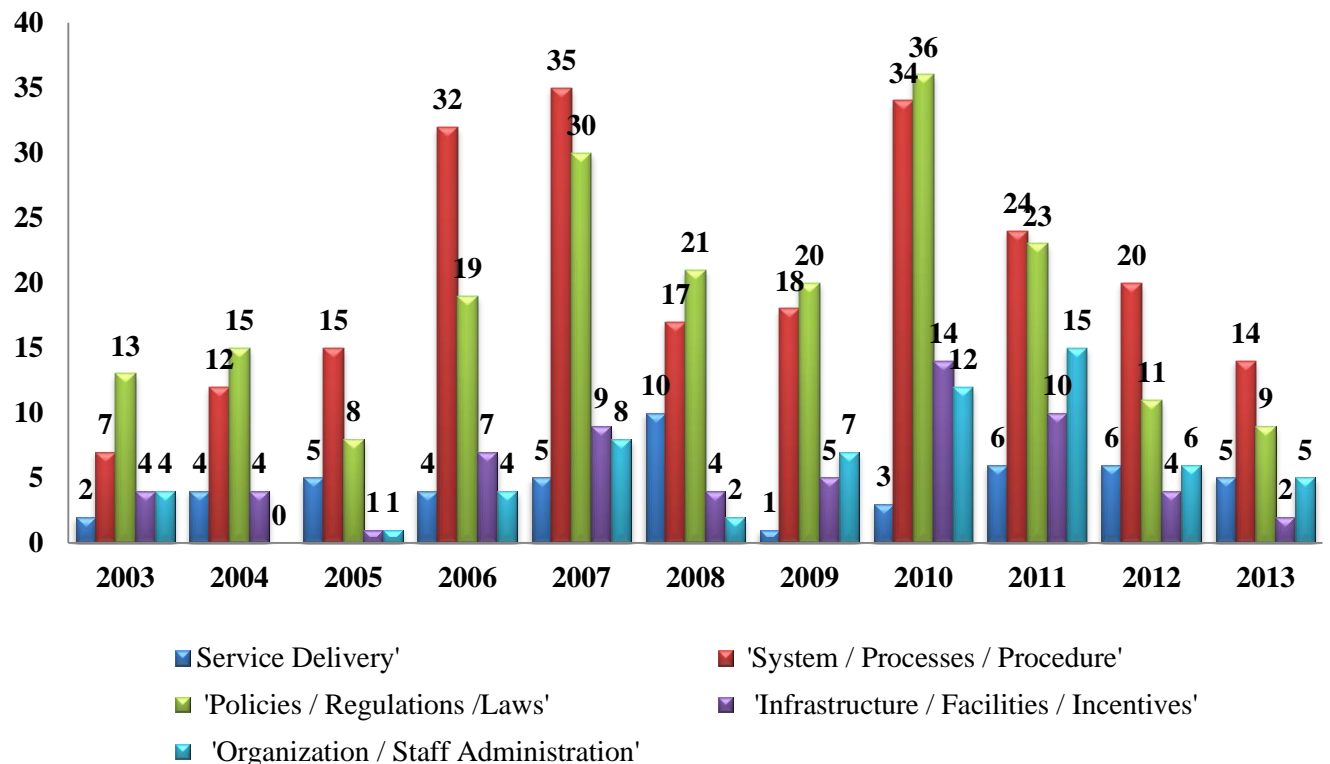
The Department categorizes complaints that are received into 5 categories as follows:

1. Policies, Regulations and Laws
2. Systems, Processes and Procedures
3. Service Delivery
4. Organization and Staff Administrative
5. Infrastructure, Facilities and Incentives

The first category, 'Policies, Regulations and Laws', covers any issues relating to particular government policies, legislation or other rules and standards and their associated enforcement. The second, concerns all processes involved in public applications, services and work undertaken by the ministries and departments. The third category, 'Service Delivery', concerns complaints about service quality delivered by a public organization. Complaints from public servants about welfare issues concerning their working environment; the fourth category, concerning 'Organization and Staff Administration' relates largely to personnel matters, while the last category, 'Infrastructure, Facilities and Incentives', covers complaints about physical facilities and other such provision.

In order to examine as part of the research for this thesis the patterns of complaints from citizens in Brunei, data was abstracted from the Public Complaints Annual Report (2003-2011) of the Management Services Department (data on complaints made before 2003 onwards were categorized differently). As can be seen in Figure 3.5, complaints relating to policy, regulation and laws were the most commonly reported in five of the eleven year time-series. Complaints relating to the category 'systems, processes and procedures' were the most common in six of the eleven years and particularly high in number in two of them (2006 and 2007). Meanwhile, increases in the number of complaints about government policies, regulations and laws were higher in 2010 and 2011 compared with previous and subsequent years.

Figure 3.5: Complaint Category by Management Services Department



Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by the Management Services Department in 2014.

3.9 Use of the Media as an outlet for Complaints

As well as the use of the various methods described in Figure 3.3 for making complaints about particular government departments, another commonly used means for registering dissatisfaction is to write to the newspapers (and use the print media to convey discontent). The advantage of this mode of complaint, of course, is that the comments are likely to reach a wide audience and therefore potentially have greater impact and influence as well.

For this reason, and particularly when the information provided in letters to the editor of a newspaper are felt to be less than fully accurate or fair, the Management Services Department also advises the relevant government departments to prepare response letters within as short a time as possible. Based on the statistics collated by the Department, more than 5,706 letters criticising aspects of government services or poor handling of administrative duties had been noted in the print media in the thirteen year period from 2001 to 2013 as shown in Table 3.4.

For instance, in 2001, some 464 critical letters about public services and government departments were noted while in 2007, the number of letters considered worthy of a letter of response was 589. Of those, 378 related to specific complaints, 24 were more in the nature of enquiries, and 132 offered suggestions for improvement or about how a particular issue might be better handled. On the other hand, some 55 letters of appreciation of government departments (or plaudits about high quality public services) were noted.

Although the government claims to have worked at establishing good relationships with the media, as with citizens as clients of public services, and to develop a stronger customer focus, this has not always been apparent in the statistics collated by the Management Services

Department. Indeed, it seems that many government agencies did not in fact provide responses to critical letters in the media. This can be seen in Table 3.4 where approximately only 578 issues had been responded by the government department. This only constitutes to 10.1% of the total issues raised been noted. And an interesting question arises as to why this might be the case and what underlay the missing of an opportunity to rescue or improve the reputation of a government department.

Table 3.4: Issues raised in Mass Media from 2001 till 2013

Year	Issues				Total	Government Response
	Complaints	Inquiries	Suggestion	Appreciation		
2001	na*	na*	na*	na*	464	na*
2002	na*	na*	na*	na*	430	na*
2003	422	67	56	25	570	105
2004	269	68	54	33	424	100
2005	295	58	36	24	413	94
2006	298	41	126	36	501	68
2007	378	24	132	55	589	83
2008	na*	na*	na*	na*	555	na*
2009	226	23	210	36	495	64
2010	311	24	148	25	508	64
2011	na*	na*	na*	na*	na*	na*
2012	244	26	71	25	366	na*
2013	206	30	136	19	391	na*
Total	2649	361	969	278	5706	578

Note: na*: The data is not available.

Source: Management Services Department Unpublished Report of issue raised in Media, 2012

3.10 The Complaints Hotline

In 2011, the Public Works Department took an initiative to improve its customer service with the announcement of a Customer Care Centre (CCC). This, as reported in the Brunei Times, was designed to facilitate the lodging of all complaints about departmental services (Brunei Times, 2010). Since then, this particular Department has received more than 30,000 calls from members of the public (Brunei Times, 2011).

Nevertheless, one other initiative of relevance here has been the launch in 2014 of a national complaints hotline - the “Talian Darussalam 123” specifically to handle complaints, queries and provision of information for non-emergency government services. This hotline consolidated four existing government hotlines into one dedicated service, these being for the Ministry of Development (140), Department of Electrical Services (144), Department of Land Transport (119) and e-Darussalam (+6732424959).

The e-Government National Centre (eGNC) is also hoping that “The centralisation of the four government hotlines is expected to promote better handling of calls from the public, and not least because the Talian Darussalam service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and because it pledges “immediate follow-up and follow-through to government agencies by call centre agents for all complaints”. It is still early days for this new service and so, as yet, no official monitoring data has been released (at the time of writing).

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, the context for this study – the state of Brunei – has been considered, firstly as a small, but generally wealthy, autocratic state in which the provision of public services is seen as much as a gift of the King as the expectation of citizens. The chapter has outlined the nature of public service reform and the various improvement programmes that have been rolled out, as well as discussing the special role of the Management Services Department in leading on behalf of government in complaint handling policy and practice. Some descriptive analyses have been presented that highlight both the levels of, and variance in, complaints and their nature, and also in the modes through which dissatisfaction and complaints are expressed.

While the approach to complaint management that is advocated by the Management Services Department generally follows espoused best practices in other contexts (e.g. in the private as well as public sectors around the world), the data analysis suggests that such exemplary standards of practice are not reliably being followed or complied with by all departments of government. In particular, the analysis suggests that the opportunities that a good complaints management process can create for learning from the citizens' experiences of poor service, and about how to improve public provision, are only partially, and inconsistently, being taken. Following the next chapter, which outlines the research design and methods adopted for this research, the key underlying reasons for this state of affairs will be examined.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has highlighted the current practice of complaint management and complaint handling of government agencies in Brunei Darussalam has been discussed. A fieldwork study has been carried out that examined the extent of organizational learning that takes place from complaint handling of the different government departments in Brunei. The work included investigating the key elements of good complaint management and how Brunei complaints system matches up to best practice. This chapter gives an overview of the research approach adopted in the thesis. It will further describe the research methods used, including data collection processes, analysis of data and the practical approach adopted in addressing the research questions. While it ends with a discussion of issues related to the validity, reliability and triangulation, it begins with discussion about issues raised in conducting research on public administration and in the social sciences more generally.

4.2 Conducting Research in Public Administration

An on-going issue for debate in public administration research concerns the potential value of quantitative and qualitative approaches (McNabb, 2002:15). A few researchers, according to McNabb (2002:15) have argued in the past that a positivist approach with its emphasis on quantitative methods would be the only valid way to conduct research. However, others have found that positivism was not able to answer many of the human problems facing public

administrators and have turned to the body of qualitative research methods for help with those problems (McNabb, 2002:16). Then again, many researchers argue that both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with either deductive or inductive reasoning, are valid approaches for research in such social and administrative science contexts (White, 1986 cited in McNabb, 2002:21).

Qualitative data is usually subjective (verbal) data (McNabb, 2002:21) and the two research methods used most often in qualitative research within the social and administrative sciences are ethnography and the case study approach (McNabb, 2002:21) – with case studies, in particular, being used extensively in public administration and business management research. Two types of case studies are used in the social and administrative sciences – the single approach and one that uses a limited number of closely related cases. Other author make a distinction that Qualitative data is in the form of words rather than numbers (McNeil, 1990:120).

Quantitative research is based on the measurement and the analysis of causal relationships between variables. Berg (2001), among others, has discussed the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research by arguing that quantitative research refers to measurable and countable matters, while qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of such matters. A comparison of quantitative and qualitative approaches is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Approach

Types	Quantitative Methods	Qualitative Methods
Scope of findings	Nomothetic	Ideographic
Research focus	Facts	Meanings
Data format	Data based upon numbers	Data based upon text
Relationship between researcher and subject	Distant /outsider	Close /insider
Relationship between theory/concepts and research.	Deductive, testing of theory (confirmation)	Inductive, generation of theory/emergent
Epistemological Position	Objectivist	Constructivist

Adopted from: Bryman (2008:22), Gray (2009:200)

Some might take the view that these respective approaches are entirely separate, while others might be happy to mix them for the particular and different benefits they bring to understanding of the matter under investigation, through what is often referred to as ‘mixed methods’. The objective of a mixed methods approach, then, is to obtain benefits from both approaches and address the weaknesses of each. The use of interviews and observation are generally thought to be qualitative, while survey methods that derive measurable data from carefully devised samples of respondents or observed phenomena, are often considered illustrative of a quantitative approach. That said, in practice, interviews may well be structured in such a way as to produce fully quantified data and sample surveys can similarly be used to gather perceptual and other impressionistic qualitative data.

4.3 Selecting the Research Design

Selection of a research design has been described as choosing “a procedural plan that is [to be] adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically” (Kumar, 2011:94). Gorard (2013:4), on the other hand, has described research design as “about convincing a wider audience of sceptical people that conclusions of the research underlying important decisions are safe as possible”.

Generally, as already noted, there is a choice to be made between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (Creswell, 2009:3). The process of qualitative research generally involves asking questions, gathering responses, and conducting data analysis inductively to build up pictures of generalised themes and understandings from particular comments and responses and through a process that involves the researcher in making interpretations of the meanings. In contrast, the process of quantitative research most often involves examining the relationships among measured variables using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2009:4). Meanwhile, mixed methods research involves ‘the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of data at one or more stages in the process of research’ (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:212). Hanson *et al.* (2005) suggest that using mixed methods allows researchers simultaneously to generalize from a sample to a population and to gain a richer, contextual understanding of the phenomenon being researched. Gary (2009:204) similarly argues that mixed methods research represents a pragmatic method, though emphasising the importance of the researcher using this method being also aware of the potential weaknesses – one of which may be that, as an approach, it may be relatively expensive.

For the present research study a mixed method approach was considered most appropriate because this was felt to increase the validity of the findings (Gray, 2009:214). Also important in this context of choice of approach was the feeling that it would be important to a study of complaint management for the respondents to be drawn from a cross-section of each government department (i.e. from top management, middle management and the front-line) and as such to be receptive to both hard factual data and personal perceptions and interpretations (i.e. quantitative and qualitative data).

A further choice to be made concerned the type of mixed methods research design notably between a triangulation design, an explanatory design and an Exploratory design (Doyle *et al.*, 2009). In triangulation designs the quantitative and qualitative data are typically collected simultaneously, and then both are merged to best understand the research problem (Jick, 1979 cited in Creswell, 1994:174). Scholars frequently define a ‘triangulation’ as a means of mixing data (Olsen, 2004) and ‘combining several qualitative methods or combining quantitative and qualitative methods (Gray, 2009:213). These two methods can focus on a single case which can mean the people who complete questionnaires and in so doing provide various quantitative data are also interviewed and their viewpoints and understandings also gathered in qualitative terms. Guion *et al.* (2002) added that triangulation is a valuable method for checking and establishing validity in studies that involve analysis from multiple perspectives.

Research question 2 in particular, (‘what difference does a systematic complaint management process make to a government department’s capability and inclination to learn from its citizens and customers and to improve and develop its public services accordingly?’), and the two associated sub-questions ‘What are the key elements of a good complaint management process?’ and ‘how well does the Brunei complaints system compare with best practice in this

respect?’ were considered to be best answered in quantitative terms through responses to questions posed in a questionnaire to a significant sized sample of public officials (performing different roles and with different experiences across the range of government departments). On the other hand, in order gather information in-depth about complaint management in practice, it was felt best to rely on interviews (again with respondents from differing levels of seniority and experience in the departments) for gathering qualitative data.

Net *et al.* (2000) point out that there can be great benefit from using open-ended questions in questionnaires by giving respondents opportunities to verbalize their feelings about their experiences. Accordingly, the instrument used in the questionnaire designed for this research included questions, for example, that asked respondents to talk about aspects of particular complaints they had been involved with in the preceding six months.

As indicated, however, the key advantage of triangulation is that it can increase confidence in research data and thus in the clarity of understanding of the matters under investigation (Thurmond, 2001). Using interviews as well as questionnaires also added a depth to the findings that would not have been possible by reliance on questionnaires alone (Guion, 2002). However, as Thurmond (2001) has said, triangulation also implies the disadvantage of being time consuming and the requirement for greater planning and organization.

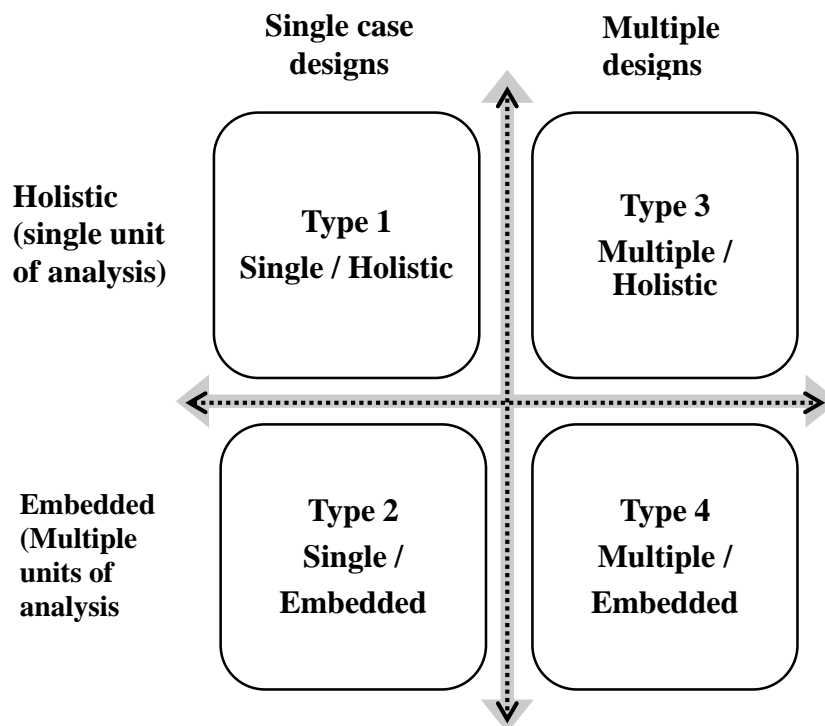
4.4 The Choice of a Case Study Design

A further key design choice made in this research was for a case study design, this being particularly suited to the qualitative components of the research. In this respect, significant advantage was foreseen in focusing the research on a particular context and examining

complaint management in depth rather than in seeking to examine it across a range of contexts and, inevitably, in less detailed terms (De Vaus, 2001:10). According to Yin (2009:18), a case study is ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real life context especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident’. Robson (2002:181) has argued that a case study involves a development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single case or of a small number of related cases.

As Gomm *et al.* (2000:24) have suggested, case studies can be used to test hypotheses, as argued by Yin (cited in Gray, 2009:250), different types of case-study can be considered, as for example, illustrated in Figure 4.1 and described (with their strengths and limitations) in Table 4.2.

Figure 4.1: Types of Case Study Design



Adapted from Gray (2009:256-258)

Table 4.2: Types of Case Study Design with Its Strength and Limitations

Type	Case Study	Definitions	When to use	Strengths	Limitations
1	Single Case (Holistic)	Only a single case is examined	Should be chosen when it plays a significant role in testing a hypothesis or theory. Limited access to cases or the extreme nature of the case	A researcher is allowed into a previously sensitive or secretive organization to carry out research.	Will not be strong enough to test a theory.
2	Single Case (Embedded)	Within a single case study, there are multiple units of analysis	Should be used when examined only a global nature of the organization or a program	The subunits can often add significant opportunities for extensive analysis enhancing the insights into single case	When the case study focuses only on the subunit level and fails to return to the larger unit of analysis.
3	Multiple Case Holistic	Multiple case study approach is needed but it is not possible to identify multiple units of analysis	To replicate the findings of one case across a number of cases	Improve the reliability or generalizability of the study Will provide a much tougher test of a theory.	The evidence from case study may begin to address a very different set of questions.
4	Multiple Case Embedded	Multiple case study with multiple unit of analysis	To predict a literal replication in the multiple cases	Allow more sensitivity and improved the research questions.	Different cases would give different findings.

				Give more reliability and credibility for those the case that some have similar findings	
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Adapted from De Vaus (2001:226-227); Gray (2009:256-258); Yin, (2009:46-56).

Researchers interested in both evaluation and organizational studies have made extensive use of case study designs (De Vaus, 2001:219) and for which the unit of analysis need not be restricted to individuals but could equally be a government department or an entire government organization. Some cases consist of multiple levels of components and, as such, are sometimes referred to as ‘holistic and embedded’. For example, staff at different levels of seniority and with different experiences in government might be included in a single case study (De Vaus, 2001:220). Since many cases will consist of different elements, different methods of data collection may well simultaneously be required (De Vaus, 2001:220). However, the task for the case study researcher is fundamentally theoretical. As De Vaus (2001: 221) has asserted, collecting and analyzing information from case studies must be guided by theory. Case studies can combine on-site documentary analysis (such as operational policies and audit outcomes) with individual interviews with key players, and key decisions need to be taken concerning who is to be interviewed, what areas are needed to be observed and which documents might be usefully collected while in the field (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:3)

In this particular Brunei case study, a combination of individual interviews with key personnel involved in complaint management, group interviews, personal observation and critical incident analysis (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:35) were seen as all potentially worthwhile. For reasons of practicality and time constraints, interviews could only be conducted within a

sample of government departments (with 20 top managers; 20 middle managers and 20 front-line staff drawn from across twenty departments). However, large scale surveys were needed to decide who to interview, what areas needed to be observed and which documents would be helpful to collect whilst in the field. Interview and observation schedules were developed in order to ensure comparable data was collected from each site.

In this research, the study uses multiple embedded case designs (multiple units of analysis). Doing multiple case designs was more vulnerable than the single case study design (Yin, 2009:61) since having two cases will produce an even stronger effect (Yin, 2009:18). In addition, in case study work, relying on interviews alone can result in an overly empiricists analysis (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:3). Interviews offer an insight into respondents' memories and explanations of why things have come to be what they are, as well as descriptions of current problems and aspirations. Documents can be examined for immediate content, changing content over time and the values that such changing content manifests (Somekh and Lewin, 2005:3).

I was using the embedded multiple cases to provide an in-depth analysis. Twenty government departments that initially have client charter and complaint management in place was selected. Initially, before that, selection of cases were an extensive process because in Brunei there are about 108 departments with various functions and responsibilities. Somekh and Lewin (2005:35) argued that in case study, the decision to select cases should also to take into account how much time is spent in each fieldwork site and what methods of investigation are employed. The units of analysis in this research are the ministry, departments and the division level. These 20 departments will be divided into 8 categories. These categories are utility, welfare, infrastructure, development, finance, communication, human resource, policy.

Table 4.3: Unit of Analysis

Activities	Unit of Analysis		
	Ministry	Departments	Division Levels
Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office ▪ Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrical Services ▪ Water 	Top Management (TP)
Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Affairs ▪ Youth and Cultural Sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brunei Muara District Office ▪ Immigration and National Registration ▪ Labour ▪ Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan ▪ Community Development 	Middle Management (MM) Lower Management (LW)
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land ▪ Survey ▪ Housing 	
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development ▪ Industry and Primary Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town and Country Planning ▪ BINA ▪ Agriculture and Agrifood 	
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treasury ▪ Royal Custom and Excise 	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postal Services ▪ Land Transport ▪ Ports 	
Human Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Services 	
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management Services 	

De Vaus (2001:233) stated that the case study was designed to screen out ‘the influence of variables’ rather than to find out the importance of the ‘causal variables’. Lacking external validity is that a case is just a case and cannot be representative of a larger universe of cases (De Vaus, 2001:237). Bryman (2008:55) pointed out the main concern in carrying out a case study is the external validity or generalizability of case study research. For instance, to what extent the single case study is able to represent the whole population and the findings of a single case can be applied to other cases.

4.5 Practical and Ethical Consideration

The ethical review form of the research was submitted and reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee of the University of Birmingham. The research project was granted ethical approval on the 21st June 2013. All relevant requirements were well taken care of and aligned with in the University’s Code of Practice for Research.

Besides the literature review of complaint management, the questionnaire was developed from two sources namely the “Effective Complaints Management Self Audit Checklist” that was initially developed by the Queensland Ombudsman’s Office in 2006 as an auditing tool for agencies to use to assess their own complaints management policy and practices. The checklist is comprehensive, covering all facets of good complaints management. It is based on the *Effective Complaints Management Fact Sheets*, the Australian Standard AS 4629-1995 and the International Standard ISO 10018:2012. In addition to that, some questions in the questionnaire were taken from Local Government Ombudsman Annual Report 2012-2013, United Kingdom. Moreover, the literature review of complaint management also helped to shape the questionnaire which is suitable to a public sector environment.

Case study design also has some practical and ethical issues that need to be carefully assessed when selecting this method in research. Although Bryman (2008:55) pointed out the main concern in case study work is the external validity or generalizability of case study research for instance, how can a single case possibly be representative so that it might yield findings that can be applied more generally to other cases? However, in this research, the issues of this generalization can be minimized by taking many government departments as a multi case study.

Another issue is the presence of the researcher can alter the dynamics of the cases being observed (De Vaus, 2001:245). In this research, the some of the public servant felt worried when the researcher was present because they feel as if they are being monitored by someone. In addition to that, arranging 60 participants from various levels from the twenty departments for interviews is time consuming.

The ethnical issue of deception and failure to obtain informed consent potentially arises in this situation (De Vaus, 2001:246). This is particularly true when there are certain protocols that need to be followed in government. This happen when the public servants who participate in the research feel insecure and it would not be a surprise if they change their minds and do not want to participate in the study.

When several departments have been identified, then the challenging part would be the interview part. This was because it would be necessary to find out who was relevant for involvement in the interviews – as the units of analysis for the case study research. The units of analysis in this thesis were a sample of top, middle and lower management public servants

involved in the implementation of complaint management and the adoption of the client charter.

4.6 Semi-Structured Interview

In this research, as indicated, a series of interviews was conducted with staff at various levels of seniority in a sample of government departments. In-depth, semi-structured but open-ended interviews were conducted with members of staff of these departments. Interviews were conducted at their workplace. All interviews were completed within a three month period (between June month and year 2013 and August month and year 2013) and each was tape-recorded (with the agreement of each interviewee). Forty officers and twenty frontline staff were selected on the basis that they were all involved in handling public complaints personally – whether at the frontline or at more senior levels. Typically the interviews took around 45 minutes to be completed. The interview schedule consisted of a mix of pre-coded questions and open-ended ones (for greater depth).

As part of the strategy, it was necessary to make appointments for the interviews with top management first because they would always be the busiest and would be the gatekeepers for access to other, more junior staff. To obtain the interviews, brief explanations were given in writing in advance about the aims and purposes of the study. Once potential respondents had agreed to be interviewed, the following steps were taken. Each interview commenced with further discussion about the nature and purposes of the research and consent was obtained for each interview to proceed using a voluntary consent form for which a signature of agreement was obtained in each case. It was made clear that the interview could be terminated at any

point and the interviewee could withdraw from the research process or decline to have data used in the research (Malim and Birch, 1997:12).

4.7 Sampling Strategies

In this study, the sampling frame or target population was focused on the government departments in the Brunei Muara district, this area being chosen because all the ministries and departments are located in this area, the most developed district with the highest number and population.

In this study, stratified sampling was used, in order to attempt to stratify the population in such a way that the population within a stratum is homogenous with respect to the characteristics on the basis of stratification (Kumar, 2011:203). There are two types of stratified sampling; proportionate stratified sampling and disproportionate stratified sampling. The starting point, was the information from Management Services Department as presented in Chapter 3 on the number of complaints received by each ministry from 1998 to 2013. In this respect, ministries were grouped into three categories: those with the 'Highest number of complaints', those with 'average numbers of complaints' and those with 'lowest numbers of complaints' as illustrated in Table 4.5. Nevertheless, only the highest and medium complaint strata are used for sampling because of some reason that will be explained later in this thesis. In this study, three steps were used in explaining the sampling procedures.

Table 4.4: The Rank of Complaint by Ministry

No.	Ministry	Complaints Received	Category
1.	Ministry of Development	237	Highest
2.	Ministry of Home Affairs	179	
3.	Prime Minister's Office	180	
4.	Ministry of Communication	50	Average
5.	Ministry of Health	40	
6.	Ministry of Education	39	
7.	Ministry of Youth and Cultural and Sport	37	
8.	Ministry of Religious Affairs	34	
9.	Ministry of Finance	32	
10.	Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources	22	
11.	Ministry of Defence	5	Lowest
12.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	3	

Source: Unpublished Report of Complaint Handling by Management Services Department in 2010.

4.7.1 Defining the Population Sample (Step 1)

The starting point was analysis of data from the Management Services Department for the various government departments. However, out of the total of 108 departments, only 93 were considered suitable for the research because there was no available data for the other fifteen

4.7.2 Selecting a Sample Size (Step 2)

A sample size of around 20% was decided upon; this being considered to provide a good basis of representativeness of the variance apparent in the Management Services Department information (Appendix A).

4.7.3 Selection of Departments (Step 3)

Based on this sample size, 20 particular departments were selected as the final sample for this research. These 20 departments constituted 20% of all those that had previously implemented a client charter. In addition, the 20 also constituted 38% of all departments that had previously been involved in a Customer Satisfaction Survey. The final selection was made taking into account the objective of a cross-section of policy responsibilities, while also reflecting all three categories defined by numbers of complaints (Table 4.4).

These twenty departments were drawn from a total of seven ministries (as shown in Table 4.5). Three departments were selected from the Prime Minister's Office, two from the Ministry of Finance, four from the Ministry of Home Affairs, two from the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, five from the Ministry of Development, one from the Ministry of Youth, Cultural and Sport and finally three from the Ministry of Communication. The Ministries of Health, Education, and Religious Affairs were excluded from the study because of questions about the reliability of available data in these cases. Furthermore, the Ministries of Defence and of Foreign Affairs were also excluded because neither had yet introduced a client charter and therefore not made the same nominal commitment to provide a customer-oriented services as the others.

Table 4.5 Ministries for Potential Involvement in the Research

No.	Ministry	Number of Department
1.	Prime Minister's Office	3
2.	Finance	2
3.	Home Affairs	4
4.	Industry and Primary Resources	2
5.	Development	5
6.	Youth, Cultural and Sport	1
7.	Communication	3
	Total	20

The remaining departments were then grouped into 8 categories as shown in Table 4.6. The categories were as follows: utility, welfare, infrastructure, development, finance, communication, human resource, policy. The Department of Electrical Services (Prime Minister's Office) and Department of Water Services (Ministry of Development) were treated as falling into the utility category.

Four departments from Ministry of Home Affairs and one department from Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport were categorised under the Welfare heading, along with various other departments, in particular, Brunei Muara District Office, Immigration and National Registration Department, Labour Department, Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan and Community Development Department. The departments that were categorised under the infrastructure heading were the Land Department, Survey Department and Housing

Development Department. Then the departments that were categorised in the development category were the Department of Town and Country Planning (from Ministry of Development) and two departments from the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (the departments of BINA, Agriculture and Agrifood). In the Finance category, came the Treasury Department and the Department of Royal Custom and Excise (from Ministry of Finance). The Postal Services Department, Land Transport and Ports Department (from Ministry of Communication) were all categorised in the communications category. Finally, the Public Services Department and the Management Services Department (from Prime Minister's Office) were placed in the human resource and policy categories respectively.

Table 4.6: List of Departments Involved in the Study

No.	Activities	Unit of Analysis		
		Ministry	Departments	Division Levels
1	Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office ▪ Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrical Services ▪ Water (Public Service Work) 	Top Management (TP)
2	Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Home Affairs ▪ Youth and Cultural Sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brunei Muara District Office ▪ Immigration and National Registration ▪ Labour ▪ Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan ▪ Community Development 	Middle Management (MM) Lower Management (LW)
3	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land ▪ Survey ▪ Housing 	
4	Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town and Country Planning 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industry and Primary Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BINA ▪ Agriculture and Agrifood 	
5	Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treasury ▪ Royal Custom and Excise 	
6	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postal Services ▪ Land Transport ▪ Ports 	
7.	Human Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Services 	
8.	Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prime Minister's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management Services 	

4.8 Selecting the Respondents

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to identify the particular individuals at the relevant tiers within their departments with whom an interview was to be requested. The purposive sampling was based on the researcher's judgement as to who was best placed to provide the information needed to achieve the objectives of the research. As indicated previously, a total of 60 government civil servants were selected in this way – 20 from top management; 20 from the middle ranks of each department; and 20 from the front-line. The target participants for this interview are the director, deputy director, senior officer, senior complaint officer, public relations officer, the complaint handling officer, complaint staff, customer service staff and frontline reception.

4.8.1 Interview Participants

In the course of the fieldwork, at the top management level, eight directors, nine deputy directors and one group level director were involved in the interviews. One director could not be interviewed in person because of work commitments given that Brunei, at that time in 2013, was hosting the ASEAN Summit meeting. Instead, the director responded to the questions through email. This brought the number of interview participants to a total of 19 government employees in the top management level. At the middle management level, some five senior officers and 16 officers were interviewed, making up a total of 21 employees as shown in Table 4.7. This group also included the complaint handling officer and public relation officer. In addition, 20 government employees at lower management level were interviewed. These included the assistant officers and staff that handled public complaints, and the clerks. In total, the sample comprised 53.3% males (n=32) and 46.7% females (n=28) as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7: Number of Participants Interviewed and Level of Management

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Level of Management	Total
Directors	9	Top Management	19
Deputy Directors	9		
Assistant Directors	1		
Senior Officers	5	Middle Management	21
Officers	16		
Assistant Officers	16	Lower Management	20
Clerks	4		

Table 4.8: Participants' Gender

Respondent's Gender Characteristics	Frequency (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	32	53.3
Female	28	46.7
Management Level		
Top Management		
Male	11	55
Female	9	45
Middle Management		
Male	8	40
Female	12	60
Lower Management		
Male	13	65
Female	7	35

4.8.2 Questionnaire Respondents

The respondents who completed the questionnaires included customer service staff (n=48, 24%), senior officers (n=46, 23.1%), complaint handling officers (n=27, 13.6%) and complaint handling staff (n=24, 12.1%) as shown in Figure 4.2. At least two directors (1%) and six deputy directors (3%) also responded to the questionnaires. In addition, nine respondents (5.3%) were from Division 1 of the Brunei Civil Service (i.e. representing top management), 63 respondents (36.8%) were from Middle Management (Division 2), and the remaining 98 (57.4%) respondents from the more junior ranks (Divisions 3, 4 and 5) as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.2 Respondents' Role in the Organization

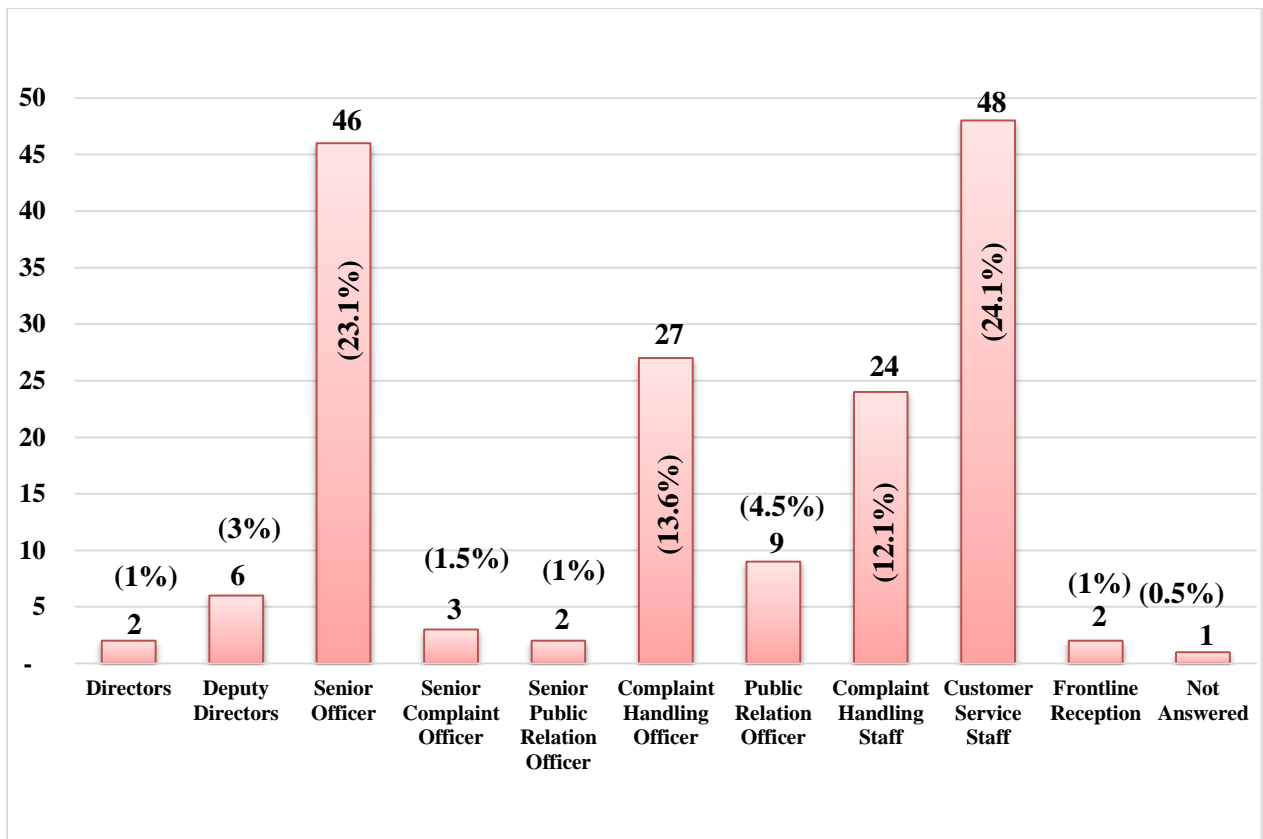
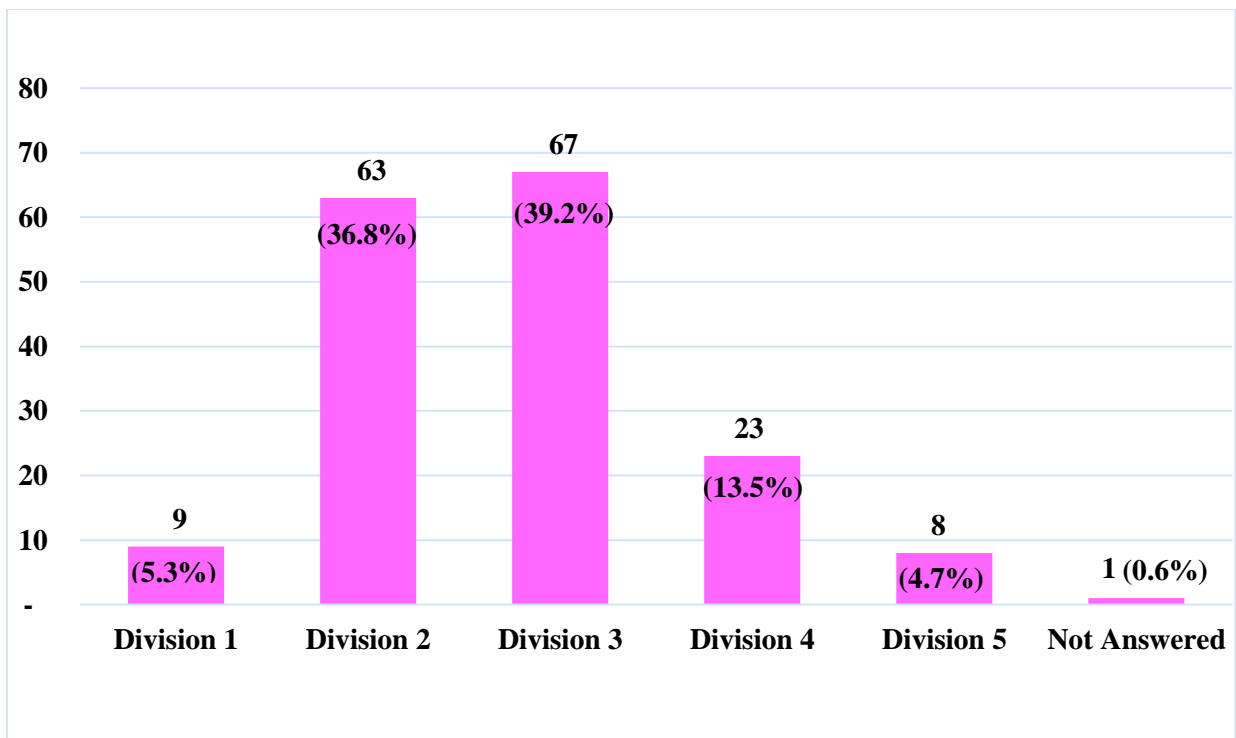


Figure 4.3: Level of Division



Taking a closer look at the gender and age distribution of the participants who completed the questionnaires, it is noteworthy that there was an almost equal number of males (n=86, 50.3%) and females (n=84, 49.1%) (see Figure 4.4) . The respondents ranged in age from 20-25 years old to above 55 years old, with the largest group of respondents (n=39, 22.8%) falling in the age group of 46 to 50 years old as shown in Figure 4.5. In Brunei’s civil service, this age group is considered important because they are typically more experienced than the other age groups, yet they are also often regarded as being less productive and with lower motivation to work due to their impending retirement. The composition of gender and age distribution is illustrated in the figures below.

Figure 4.4: Respondent’s Gender

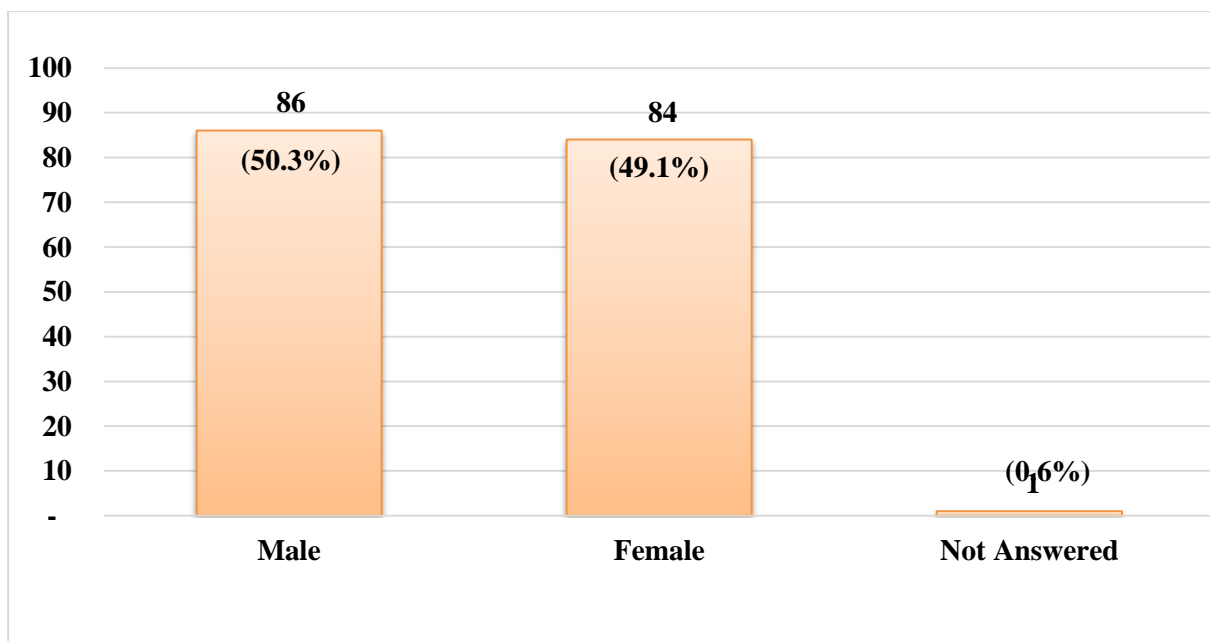
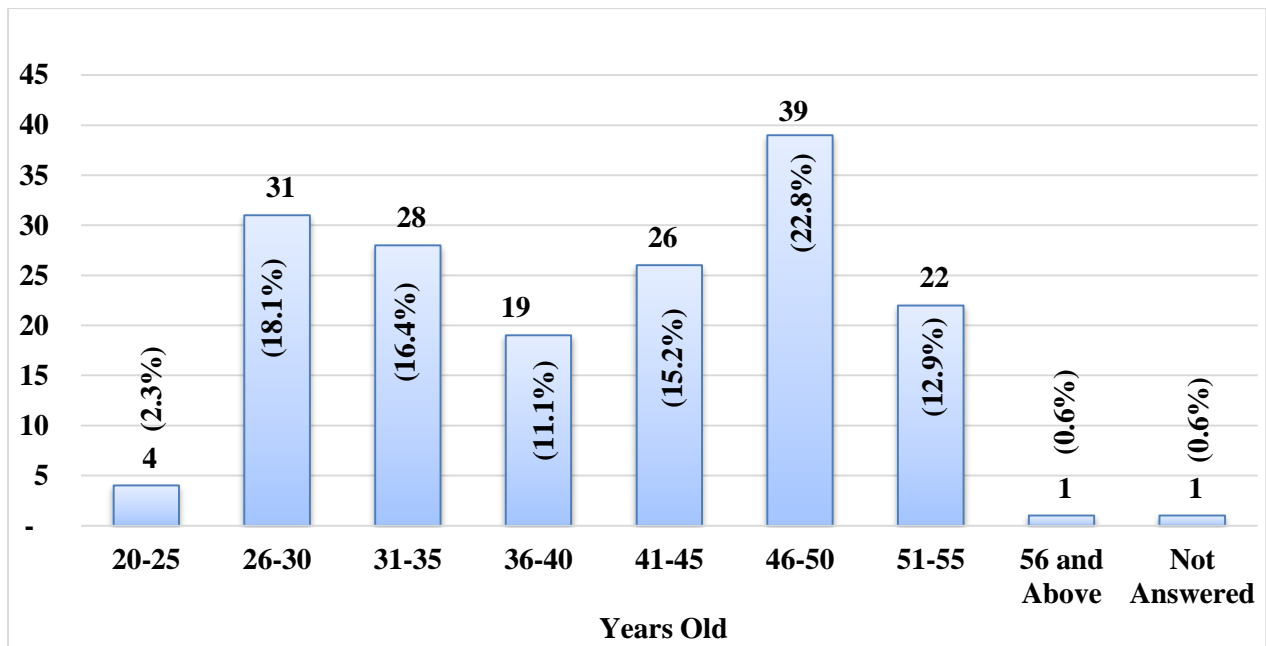


Figure 4.5: Respondents' Age Group



Doing research in Brunei, it was important to adhere to the established conventions, procedures and protocols in a state where politeness and conformance with expectations has always been accorded high priority. For instance, before embarking on the fieldwork, permission was sought for data gathering – beginning with the Public Service Department (which had sponsored the author’s research scholarship). It was also necessary (for protocol reasons) to approach each government department formally by letter to request permission to conduct the interviews (with the letter providing an explanation of the purpose of the research, the fieldwork plans and a statement of the potential contributions and benefits of the study).

With this step completed, the author then prepared introductory letters for each of the individuals listed in Appendix B with whom interviews were to be sought. A further letter was addressed to the Director General of Public Service, Department of Public Service, also introducing the research and requesting interviews with selected staff within various government departments. A second letter was addressed to the Director of Management Services Department, also introduced the research, explaining that it was being undertaken by

an officer from that department, and that it would be very relevant to the department's interests. A third introductory letter was prepared to be used as the researcher's personal reference and for which multiple copies were made (for attachment to other correspondence required for introductions to the research and researcher). In the context of this study, some departments quickly replied to the letter giving permission to conduct the research, but others required follow-up letters and phone-contacts to achieve the necessary responses and permissions.

4.9 Rationale for Selection of the Research Instruments

The research process involved distributing the questionnaires first, which was then followed by the interviews. The case for administering the questionnaires first was their potential in offering an overview of the elements of good complaint management in the twenty departments that were concerned. In addition, the questionnaires provided data of a form that could relatively easily be coded and tabulated as frequencies. The questionnaires also offered anonymity to respondents which was a further advantage in instances where the respondent might have been reluctant to talk to the researcher in person (Kumar, 2011:148).

However, although the questionnaires played an important role in the research, the interviews served a still more important purpose in enabling greater depth of understanding and insight. Considering that this study sought to explore how complaint handling was being undertaken and how learning had been applied by selected respondents, it was considered appropriate to use follow-up interviews to enrich the findings from the questionnaires (Kumar, 2011:149-150).

4.10 Data Collection Procedures

Key issues in the design of both the questionnaire and interview data collection processes concerned ensuring the privacy of respondents, achieving their informed consent to participate in the research and maintaining the confidentiality of the data gathered from them through the subsequent phases of the study. Survey research can be intrusive by nature in the sense that the privacy of respondents could easily be violated in the selection process and then again in asking the series of questions (Bradburn *et al.*, 2004:13). Accordingly it was important to undertake the fieldwork in a principled and sensitive manner (Kimmel, 1998), and strictly in accordance with best practice in this respect and precisely in line with the terms of the ethical approval granted for the research by the University of Birmingham's Ethics Research Committee.

The approach to data collection arrangements were also closely in line with principles described by Burns (Burns, 1997:17); who has argued the importance, before conducting research, of the researcher seeking the participants' informed consent (Malim and Birch, 1997:12; Bryman, 2008:694). According to Kumar (2011:244), "informed consent implies the respondents are made adequately aware of the information that the researcher wants from them, the purpose of the research, how they are expected to participate in the study and how it will directly or indirectly affect them". Bradburn *et al.* (2004: 14) further argue that informed consent implies that potential respondents should be given sufficient information about what they are actually being asked and how their responses will be used. Thus, it is generally thought the amount of information supplied to the respondents should be proportionally to the amount of risk involved. Miller and Bell (2002:53) argued that 'consent' should be on-going and renegotiated between the researcher and the research throughout the research process.

However, it is important that the consent is voluntary and no pressure of any kind is involved (Kumar, 2011:244).

4.11 Questionnaire Distribution

At the beginning of data collection, the number of employees involved in complaint management was unknown. At this time, the researcher also had no clue on how many employees were working on the counter. There is no data available on how much money is being spent for each department to set a complaint management for their department. Therefore it is difficult to compare. From the researcher's experience, the number of employees involved in complaint management could be less than ten people in a large organization compared to a small organization such as the Management Services Department with less than ten people. Since there is limitation on the data especially on how many employees would be involved in complaint management, therefore traditional approach would be used. This approach is distributing the questionnaire as many as the researcher can as long those employees are related to complaint handling in that particular department. This approach is considered better and comparison can be made between the researcher approaches with the expected number of questionnaire that should be distributed in the first place.

It can be argued that only with the right sampling strategies and good questionnaire construction, will the researcher have a good research data collection. In this study, a self-completion questionnaire survey was administered by getting permission first from the head of department, in this case the director or the deputy director, before distributing questionnaires to the relevant officer and staff. Getting this permission was very important and it was necessary to convince the head of the department of the potential benefits of the research for

the organisation (Milla and Bell, 2002:55). In this study, I was using two approaches which are the face-to-face interviews and mailed questionnaires. Face-to-face interviews approach was considered the best because the researcher can explain the purpose of the study, its relevance and importance of the study and can clarify any questions that respondents may have (Kumar, 2011:148).

First, the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire themselves; surveys administered by interviewers in face-to face encounters. Some of the respondents prefer to answer those questionnaires in other time because of some reasons, they were given two options would be introduced. First, the respondents can leave the completed questionnaire and put it in the envelope and the researcher can pick them up later. Second option is that the respondents can mail the completed questionnaire to the researcher office.

4.12 The Structures of the Questionnaires

In a questionnaire, wording for each question is carefully used as small differences in wording can lead to great differences in responses. Therefore the key qualities of writing questions are clarity, brevity, simplicity, precision, freedom from bias and appropriateness (Babbie, 2001:241-243; McNabb, 2002:130-132; and Bryman, 2008:242-243). The main challenge in drafting a questionnaire in this study was that the questions must be arranged in a logical order. In addition, the words used must be clear to respondents of all backgrounds, ages and educational levels (McNabb, 2002:126). A questionnaire was prepared for all the twenty departments (Ministry), all containing similar questions relating to the informal and informal methods of complaints handling together with questions about procedures and problems which were specific to particular departments. This was consistent with the research being done on

complaint handling in local government in United Kingdom (Seneviratne and Cracknell, 1988). To avoid misunderstanding, the definition of “complaint” that was chosen was that used by the Management Services Department. In the event of the head of department not being available to complete the questionnaire, it was agreed that it could be completed by another senior officer.

The aim of the questionnaire used in this study was to understand what constitutes a good complaint management process for Brunei Darussalam. In addition, the questionnaire aimed to explore the way complaint management is being used to benefit organizational learning by the Government Departments in Brunei Darussalam. In this questionnaire, the respondents were asked to think about how their organization’s complaint management processes support and use feedback information for learning about the quality of public service being provided and how to improve.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections with a total of thirty four questions. The first section is about the complaint management processes in the government departments. The second section is about the civil servants attitudes towards complaints. The third section is about the civil servants experience on public sector complaint handling from the user’s perspective. The last section is the background characteristics and other information about the respondent.

In this questionnaire, open-ended questions were used to allow further exploration of the reasons for the closed-ended responses and allow the recording of any comments that people might have (Creswell, 2005:217). Open-ended questions are those which allow the respondents to provide answers freely and in their own words (McNabb, 2002:136). The questionnaire was

designed to allow the respondents to have enough space for a four or five line response in a survey, but no lines should be inserted in the instrument as this can constrain comments (Folz, 1996:80). There are advantages of using open-ended questions in a questionnaire. First, open-ended questions in this kind of research have stimulate the interest of respondents, generate information that no other question type can ascertain and offer insights about issues that preconceived response choices may overlook (Folz, 1996:80). Second, open-ended questions provide an opportunity to identify specific problems or circumstances known only to specific groups of respondents.

In this study, dichotomous questions (i.e. requiring a 'yes/no' response) were also used. These required respondents to select from just two alternative answers (McNabb, 2002:138) or having only two values (Borg and Gall, 1989:341). However, it has also been argued that the most appropriate set in dichotomous questions should consist 'yes/no/don't know' (Folz, 1996:84). In addition, rating types of question were used in the questionnaire by using Likert Scales. The objective of a Likert Scale is to measure the extent of subjects' agreement with each item. The extent is measured on a five-point scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The important of a rating scale is, it can help "to identify a degree of sensitivity and differentiation of response whilst generating the numbers" (Cohen *et al.*, 2003:253 cited in Pengiran Haji Muhammad, 2009). Another advantage of using this kind of scale is that "it provides the respondents with the range of possible answers that they may give" (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001:80; Cohen and Morrison, 2003:253 cited in Pengiran Haji Muhammad, 2009).

Before it was ready for use, the questionnaire needed to be subject to pre-test activity with the potential respondents (Babbie, 2001:250). It was important to conduct a pilot study before

administering a self-completion questionnaire as this would identify any potential problems or sources of confusion and misunderstanding (Bryman, 2008:247). A key aim was to ensure that respondents should be able to absorb the questions quickly, understand their intent and select or provide answers without difficulty (Babbie, 2001:241-244). In this study, the questionnaire was piloted on 10 government employees from director level to front-liners and, after piloting, several improvements were made for greater fluency and clarity, and also to tie some of the questions more precisely to concepts and principles discussed in the published literature. Some respondents had also commented that the questionnaire was too long and some of the questions were repetitive, so effort were made to shorten it and avoid all hints of duplication.

4.13 Translation of the Questionnaire

Since the research was focused on government employees in Brunei but for a UK university degree, it was appropriate for two languages to be used in the questionnaires: Malay and English. Not all respondents could be expected to have a solid grasp of the English language, especially those at more junior levels so, the questionnaire was translated from English into Malay. Four students from Universiti Brunei Darussalam were commissioned to help with the translation into the Malay language, and during this translation process, some further minor modifications were made to achieve optimal compatibility with the English language.

4.14 Research Challenges

During the conduct of this research, several very practical challenges had to be faced in conducting the fieldwork. First, there were occasions when the respondents were unavailable within interview schedule and, in the end, new interview dates had to be arranged. Second, the

collection of the questionnaires was quite time consuming, particularly when a respondent had forgotten to answer it in time. Third, there were several times when it was necessary to visit the departments several times to collect the completed questionnaires.

4.15 The Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted the main aim of the interview is to collect information on understanding in more depth how complaint management contributes to learning in the organization. During the interview, with the interviewee's consent, 58 respondents agreed that the interview session be recorded by tape recorder. One respondent was reluctant to be recorded during the interview session. As a result, note-taking was used and all necessary information for the research was recorded. Another respondent preferred to answer the interview questions by using email because of work commitments during the three months period. However, anonymity of participants during the interviews was also be maintained by assigning a code to each interviewee.

As mentioned above, the main purpose of the interviews was to explore in greater depth the way complaints were handled by the departments in Brunei Darussalam. In addition, a further aim was to explore the way complaints were used as a means for learning about how to improve services. In the interviews, respondents were asked to think about the impacts of their complaint management processes on organizational learning in various levels.

To this end, the interviews were particularly focused on eight issues, namely, client charter (customer orientation), complaints, complaint procedures, complaint process, complaint improvement, complaint training, complaint satisfaction and complaint culture. An extra

question was also used to identify respondents' perspectives on introducing an ombudsman in Brunei.

To have a clear understanding on the customer orientation, the interviews began with general opinion-gathering and asking how the respondents thought about the introduction of the client charter, whether the government was felt to have achieved its objectives of getting closer to its customers and making customers feel more satisfied towards government services. In addition, questions were asked that focused on learning from respondents about other aspects of customer care on which government might usefully focus and which might contribute to enhanced customer satisfaction, and of course, many of the questions were focused specifically on handling customer complaints or public grievances.

4.16 Data Analysis

In the quantitative research, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for computing descriptive statistics and simple analyses (such as cross tabulations). For the qualitative data from the interviews, however, the transcriptions of each interview were converted ⁷ into NVivo10 format for subsequent thematic analysis,⁸.

⁷ Mason (2002:77) claimed that *"A transcription is always partial partly because it has an inadequate record of non-verbal aspects of the interaction (even if you try to insert these in the form of field notes into the transcription afterwards), and also because judgements are made (usually by the person doing the transcription) about which utterances to turn into text, and how to do it"*.

⁸ O'Leary (2004) stressed that *"Computer programs might be able to do the tasks and will surely facilitate analysis, but it is the researcher who needs to work strategically, creatively, and intuitively to get a 'feel' for the data, to cycle between the data and existing theory and to follow the hunches that can lead to unexpected yet significant findings"*.

According to Bryman (2007:700) Thematic Analysis is defined as *“a term used in connection with the analysis of qualitative data to refer to the extraction of key themes in one’s data. It is a rather than diffuse approach with few generally agreed principles for defining core themes in data”*. In qualitative research, validity refers to *“whether the findings of a study are true and certain – ‘true’ in the sense that research findings reflect the situation and ‘certain’ in the sense that research findings are supported by evidence”* (Guion et al. 2002).

The thematic coding was applied where the first step was addressing the cases, which are then interpreted in a series of case studies. A short description of each case will be produced and continuously rechecked, and modification made when necessary during the further interpretation of the case (Flick, 2006:308). The common idea is reading the text and finding the passages which have the same theme and writing the coding on it. The procedure of thematic coding also includes a deep analysis of the single case first, which pursues several aims. . It then develops a system of categories for the analysis for the single case. Here, open coding was used at the beginning and followed by selective coding.

This is also looking at the major thematic ideas in the text and its importance and the crucial importance of that theme. After that, these themes were then categorised in the table based on each particular research issues, and code numbers for the interviews were used for cross checking to what the researcher had done. For instance “RA3” means the Researcher Appointment No.3 where it refers to the third respondent that was interviewed. This can protect the confidentiality on the respondent’s identity where by anonymising it and giving it a code number, the researcher has the full record of the interview.

4.17 Reflexivity in the Research Process

Since all qualitative research is prone to questions about validity and reliability it was important as part of the research design process for a reflective approach to be taken in this research, as advocated by Shacklock and Symth (1998 cited in Hellowell, 2006). One further important consideration in the context of the research design particularly concerned the author's/researcher's role as an employee of the Government and indeed as a senior official in the Management Services Department and the implications here for the independence and neutrality of the research.

Inevitably, there are advantages and disadvantages of being as an 'insider' in research. One of the advantages is that the researcher understands the community well. Another advantage is if the researcher is an officer in government, the treatment would be different compared with when the researcher is an 'outsider'. In this research, the author was considered to be an 'insider' for his own department but an 'outsider' to other departments, though clearly one who had considerable prior knowledge of governmental processes and ways of working in general.

Moreover, other researchers such as Thomas *et al.* (2000) have argued that there is an advantage to those researchers who play role as an 'insider' to the research such as to facilitate data collection because those insider researchers know what is feasible in terms of logistics and what would appeal to prospective participants. Merton (1972 cited in Hellowell, 2006) defined the "insider" as an individual who possesses *a priori* intimate knowledge of the community and its members. The word 'community' here is considered as a wider concept than just an organization and possessing intimate knowledge of it does not necessarily mean the same as being currently a member of the organization being researched (Hellowell, 2006). One example

that explains more on this debate is the argument made by Lewis within anthropology in 1973 where Lewis argued that an outsider cannot produce a valuable research perspective.

However, there are also disadvantages of being an 'insider' in research. The issues of subjectivity, where the respondent might feel uncomfortable in talking to a colleague professional about weaknesses in governmental operations, or if they were seeming not to be telling the truth because of fear of repercussions or their answers being subsequently used against them, had to be confronted. That said, there was also the possibility for the respondent to hear honest answers simply because they believed in the potential of the research to result in improved government performance and better outcomes for citizens (Oliver, 2010:16).

4.18 Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the research design and methods adopted in this research. It has explained and justified the selection of a case study approach based on the Brunei government, and the employment of a mixed methods design based on quantitative analysis of available statistical data on complaints to government departments and qualitative analysis of responses to questionnaires and interviews with officials involved in complaint handling across the departments of state in Brunei. In addition, the chapter has reflected on the key challenges involved in conducting the fieldwork and gathering the required data as well as discussing the associated practical and ethical issues and how these have been addressed. In light of all this, in the next chapter we turn to consider the findings from the research.

CHAPTER 5

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the questionnaire conducted as part of the fieldwork for the research with 20 departments in Brunei Muara District between June 2013 till July 2013. Out of 200 questionnaires that were distributed, 171 were returned to the author, giving an overall response rate of 85.5%. Eight, out of the 20 departments in the study returned 100% of the questionnaires issued to them (these departments being the Electrical Services Department, the Management Services Department, the Brunei Muara District Office, the Labour Department, the Housing Development Department, the Survey Department, the Town and Country Planning Department and the Ports Department).

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first part, the findings on key elements of complaint management practice are analyzed. These include reviewing complaint policies and procedures, the complaint handling processes, complaint communication, visibility and access, responsiveness, complaint training and complaints commitment. The second section looks at the benefits and improvement derived from adopting complaint management within the government departments while in the third part, respondents' experiences of complaint management are analyzed and discussed. A final section of the chapter provides further analysis and offers reflections on the findings about complaint management at a departmental level in Brunei, differentiating between those departments with and without complaint management procedures and practices in place.

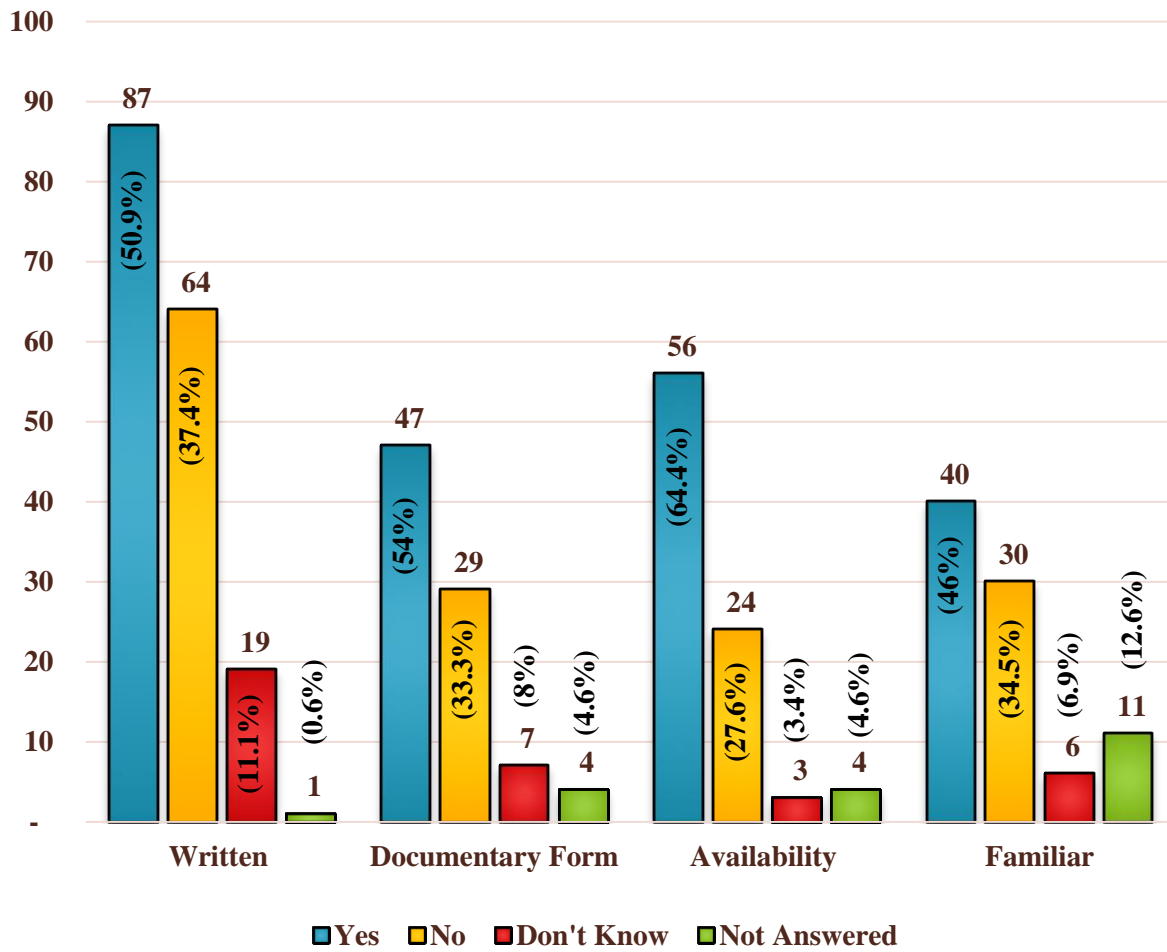
5.2 Analysis on Elements of Good Complaint Management

5.2.1 Complaint Policy and Procedures

One of the research questions for this study concerned how complaints are managed in the Government of Brunei. This question called for an investigation of the existence of written formal procedures because, as discussed in Chapter 2, this has been widely regarded as an important initial step toward good complaint management. It was found that out of the 171 respondents to the questionnaire, only 50.9 % (n = 87) respondents indicated that their department had a complaint policy and associated procedures in place, while 37.4% (n = 64) indicated not having a formal complaint policy or procedures in place (see Figure 5.1). In addition, 19 respondents replied that they did not know whether they had such written policies and procedures (itself an indicator of the limited importance attached to complaint handling in many government departments).

Although the published literature emphasizes that complaints procedures can help to ensure effective monitoring of organizational and service provision performance, it was further revealing that only 47 out of those 87 respondents indicating having written policies and procedures, (or 54%) stated that they were held in written in documentary form. A further 29 of the respondents (33.3%) understood their department's complaints policy and procedures not to be officially documented while 7 others were unsure of the position. While fully documented complaint policies and procedures would generally be likely to make it fairly easy for employees to deal with complaints in a standard way, without such documentation, there would be risks of confusion and variance in the handling process of complaints, with different members of staff applying their own individual experience and judgement.

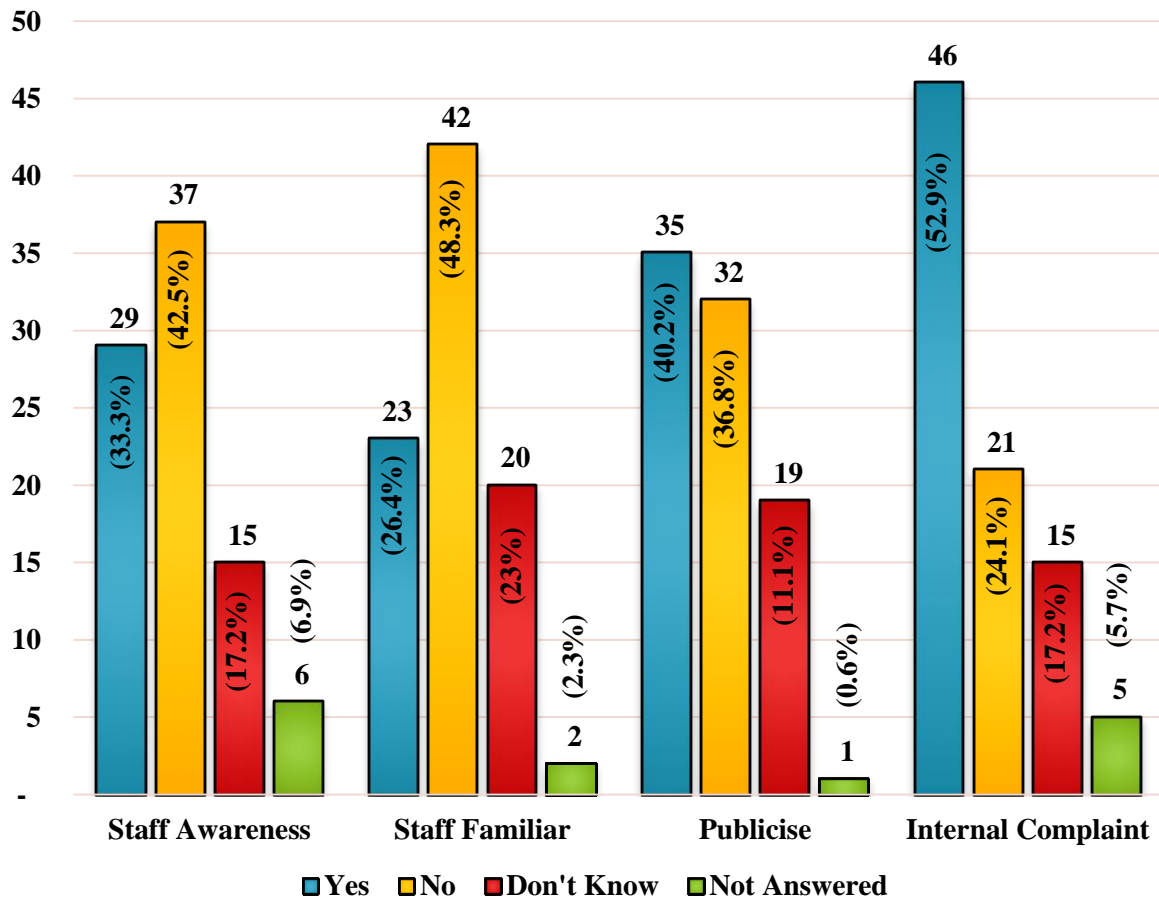
Figure 5.1: Complaint Policy and Procedures (Departmental Level)



As well as the benefits of having complaint policies and procedures in a documentary form, it would also ofcourse important that all staff knew this and where to access the formal written procedures to be followed. But on this question of document accessibility, out of 87 respondents, only 56 (64.4%) indicated having access to the documents while 24 (27.6%) suggested they policy documents were not available to them personally. Moreover, only 40 respondents (46%) claimed to be familiar with the details, the main reason being, as indicated, because of a lack of access.

Only one third of the respondents (n = 29) considered that all the complaint handling staff were aware of the complaint policies and procedures and were well-informed about them. However 42 (48.3%) felt that complaint handling staff would be reasonably familiar with the details (as shown in Figure 5.2). Again, this all highlights weaknesses in the way complaint management has been conducted within many government departments. In terms of publicity, 35 respondents (40.2%) felt that their organization publicised its complaints policy and procedures effectively enough to the public, and while this number might seem low, it is hardly out of line with findings from other research as reported in the published literature where it has been suggested that many organizations prefer not to publicize their complaint procedures for fear of it resulting in encouraging more complaints (Stone, 2011).

Figure 5.2: Complaint Policy and Procedures (Staff Level)



5.2.2 Reasons on Why the Organization Did Not Have Complaint Procedures.

Some 41 respondents provided reasons as to why their departments did not have complaints policies and procedures, and the responses here fell into three categories of explanation: respectively relating to management oversight, perceived lack of opportunity to develop the policies, and preference for reliance on other departments.

First, in term of management issues, it was argued by several senior managers that, since most complaints had been sent directly to themselves (or to the director of the department), the view taken was that it hardly seemed a high priority to develop complaint policies and procedures. That said, several middle managers suggested that rather than this, the real reason why top management had not developed documented policy and procedures was because there was not the commitment to complaint management at that top level. Indeed, it was suggested that, at the top level, there was insufficient interest or courage to take responsibility for the complaint policy and procedures, and, much in line with Stone's argument (Stone, 2011) that top managers were keen to avoid promoting complaint-making. According to several middle management respondents, in any case, most complaints were not addressed to top management but to the division / unit where the problem had arisen in the first place.

The second category of response as to why complaint policies and procedures had not been instituted concerned the failure to take the opportunity to form a group or committee to do the policy development work, and instead to continue to rely on the customer service units or public counters to handle complaints in their own ways. Generally, most front-line staff and middle managers indicated feeling quite disempowered in this respect, and indeed, many had not felt able to raise their concerns about the lack of staff in the department who could be relied upon to handle complaints effectively. Another reason cited in this context was the failure of

senior/top management to invite comment or discussion about the issues of complaints and the feeling among more junior staff that it was not their place to voice their concerns, still less, initiate proposals for introducing policies and procedures in their departments. In many instances, then, complaints were being dealt with in no specific or structured manner, and the over-riding impression from many departments was of random processes that might or might not prove effective in dealing with particular complaints depending on who happened to be on the receiving end of the complaint

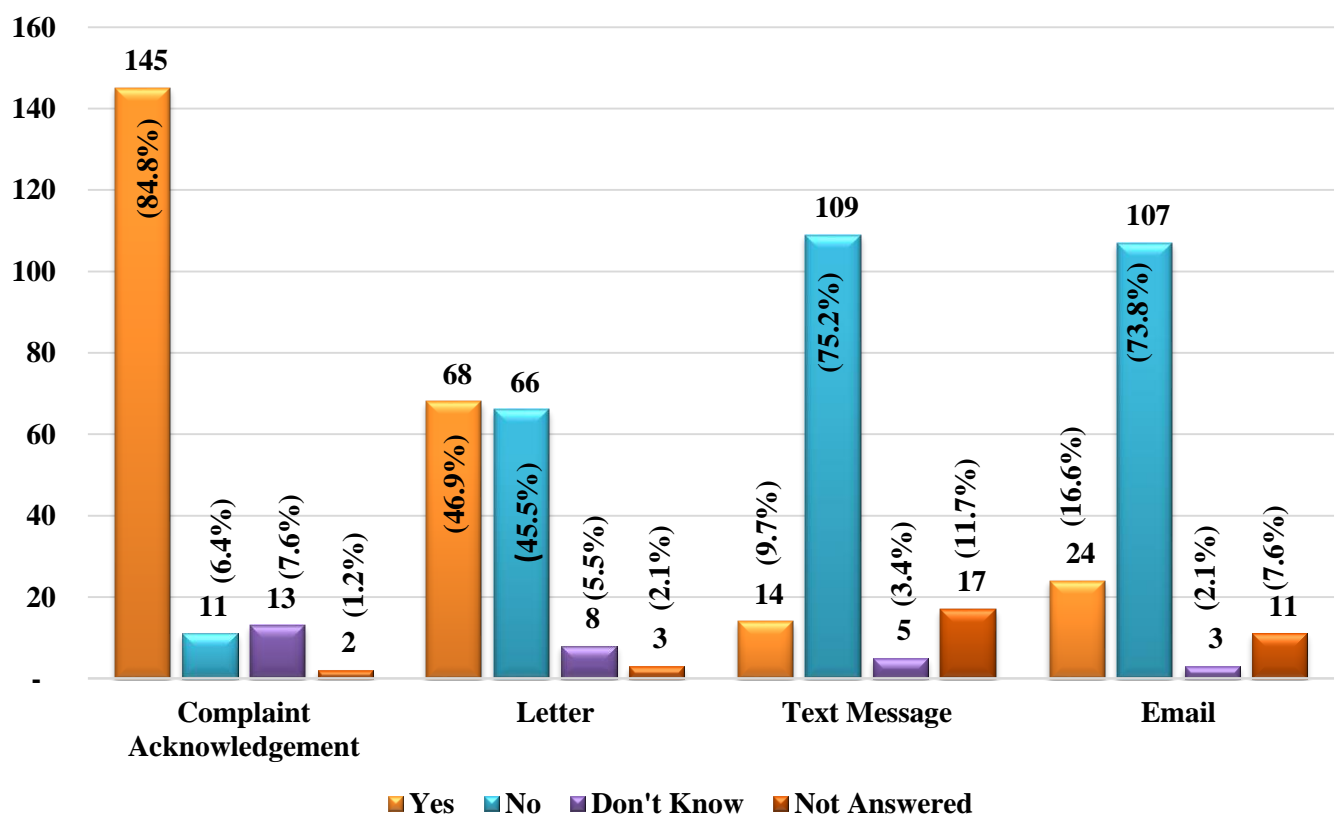
Turning to the third category of reason for not having developed policies and procedures for complaint management – the viewpoint that it would be better to rely on other departments – the questionnaire responses suggested strongly held perspectives, particularly at middle management levels, that the Management Services Department was the leading agency for handling complaints in Brunei and that therefore there was no requirement on their own department to take initiative in preparing policies and procedures for complaint management. Several respondents also pointed out that their departments already had a public hotline or a call-centre, so there was no need to take a more bureaucratic approach by developing policies and procedures as well. This, they felt, was a task for one lead department – like Management Services – to undertake, and so avoiding a plethora of slightly different sets of policies between departments.

5.2.3 The Complaint Process

Although, as discussed in Chapter 2, many researchers have emphasized the importance of written procedures as one of the important elements of good complaint management, it was nevertheless important in this research to look closely at how well or otherwise departments

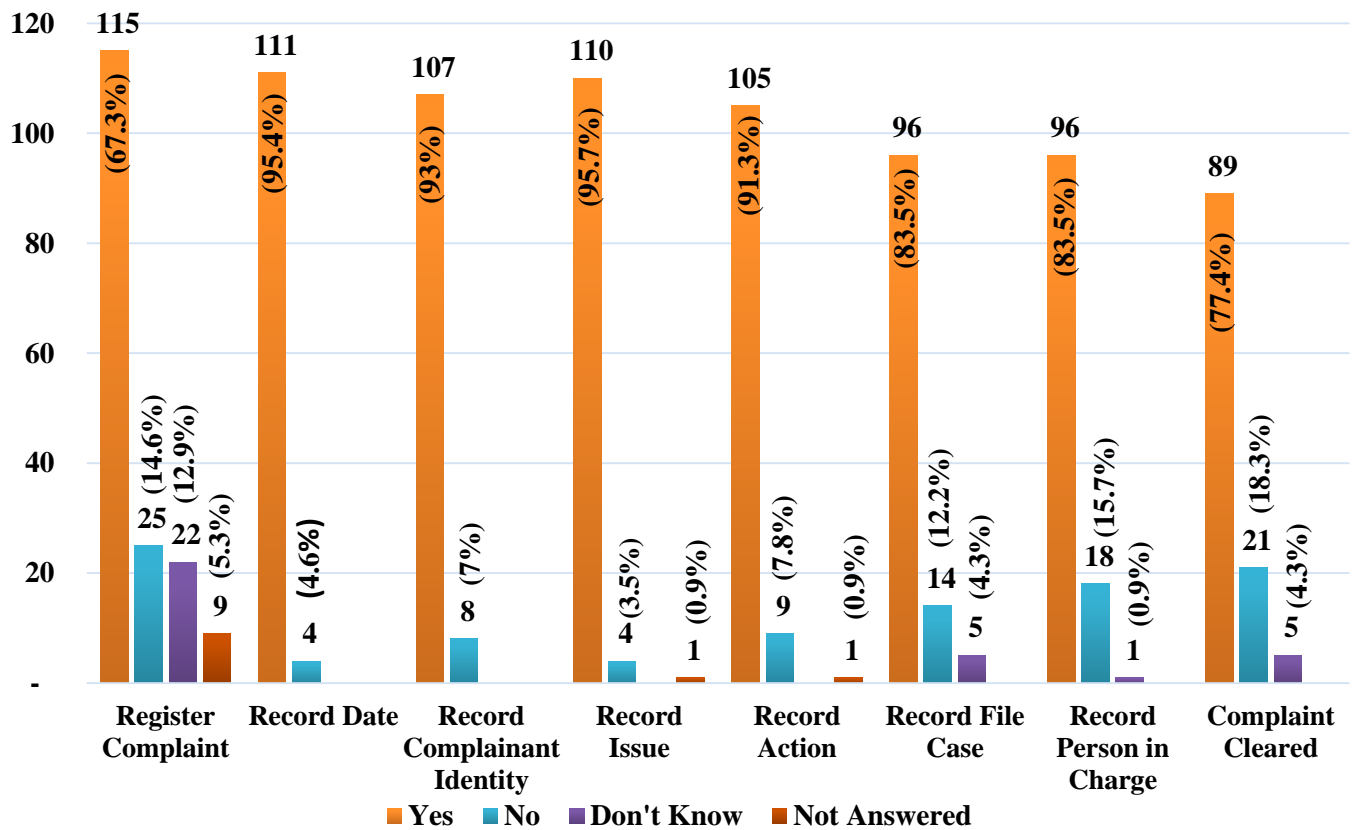
without formal policies and procedures handled the complaints they received. Therefore a second element of the questionnaire used in this study sought responses to questions about the steps being taken following receipt of a complaint, e.g. providing an acknowledgement of receipt and of logging/recording it in some way for attention and action. As Figure 5.3 shows, it was found that, out of the 171 respondents, a strong majority (84.8% or 145 respondents) claimed that their departments did indeed acknowledge the receipt of each complaint (whether by a standard acknowledgement form, or by personal letter, text or email). While only 11 respondents (6.4%) indicated providing no acknowledgement, and 7.6% did not know whether their organization issued acknowledgements or not, 145 others (46.9% (n=68) reported sending acknowledgement letters while 14 (9.7%) said they sent a text message, and 24 (16.6%) responded by email.

Figure 5.3: Acknowledging Complaints Received



Interestingly, rather less numbers of respondents reported that complaints once received were formally recorded/registered with just 67.3% (n = 115) suggesting this was done (see Figure 5.4). While almost all such respondents claimed that the date of receipt was recorded (n = 111) and a similar number the nature of each complaint, rather less indicated using the same register to record the actions taken subsequently.

Figure 5.4: Complaint Process on Registration



5.2.4 Reasons for Not Registering Complaints Received

Some 17 respondents gave reasons as to why their organization did not register their complaints which again fell into various categories and seemed much akin to the reasons for having

policies and procedures in place. First, the general perspective from senior/top management was that formal recording (and analysis) of complaints, other than those lodged with their own department's customer services/care centre was more a responsibility for ministerial level and for a ministry like Management Services than for themselves. However, several middle management and front-line respondents also highlighted the lack of a specific unit for complaints in many of the departments as a prime reason for limited or no recording/registering of complaints.

Those departments without a complaint unit, the responses revealed, also tended mostly to be the ones without written policies and procedures and which seemed weakest in relation to complaint management as a whole. Several respondents also cited as a reason for not recording complaints formally shortages of time and staff, and particularly the insufficiency of specialized and trained personnel to handle complaints

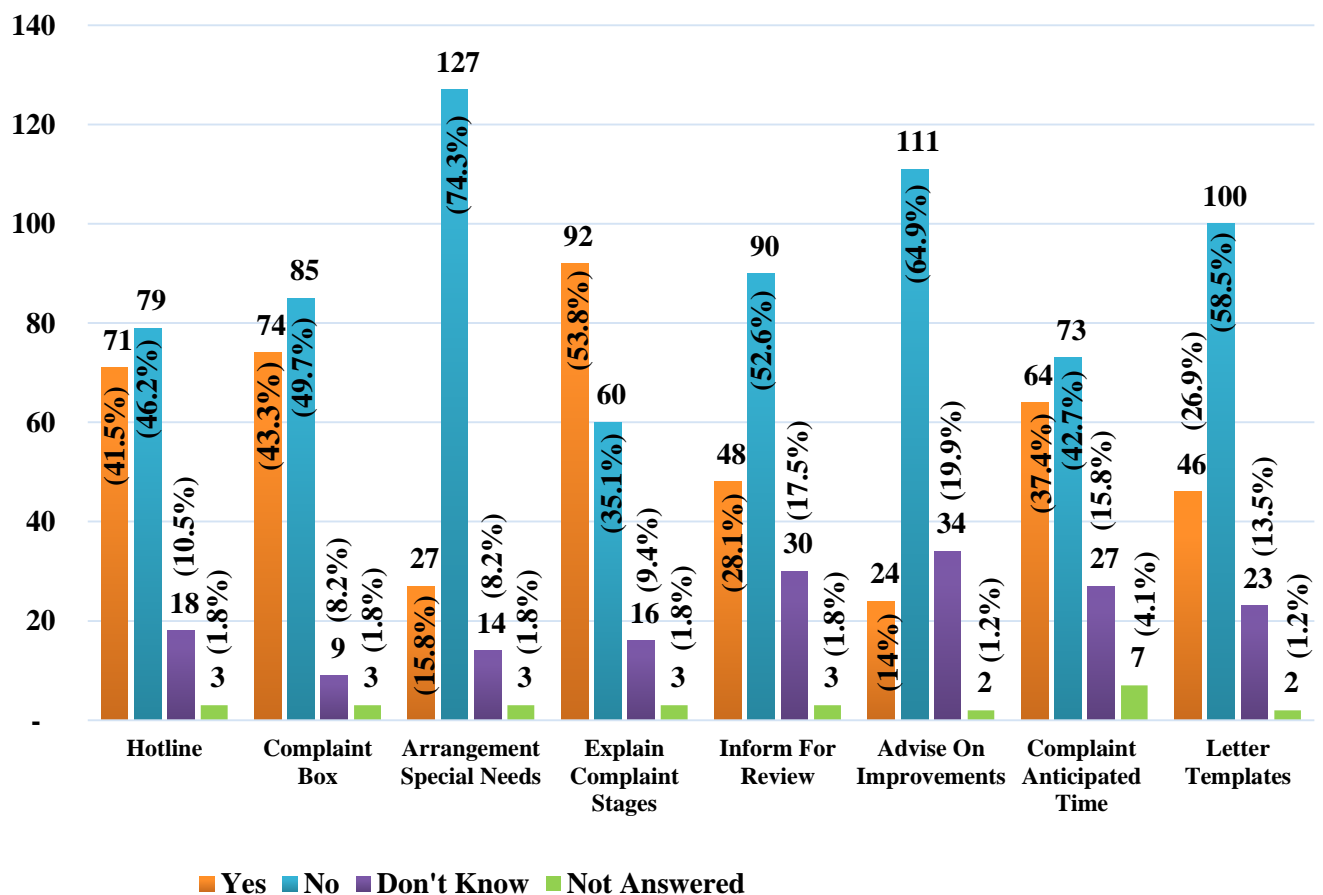
5.2.5 Complaint Communication

Communication with the complainant has, as discussed in Chapter 2, been widely cited as a further important aspect of effective complaint management, and as can be seen from Figure 5.5, of the 171 civil servant respondents, 41.5 % (n = 71) indicated that their department offered free-phone hotline numbers (i.e. without incurring a charge) connecting directly to a complaint-handling section (the other 79 respondents (46.2%) stating otherwise. Just under half of the respondents (n = 85) stated that their departments did not have a special facility or unit for complaint-making, with any such grievances being handled by front-line staff dealing with all queries and other transactions. In addition, some 74.3% of respondents reported that their

departments did not provide special facilities and for customers with special needs (e.g. wheel chair access or with hearing impairments).

Although half of the respondents (53.3%) stated that their department claimed to provide information to complainants about the process involved (e.g. the complaints stages), either verbally or writing, as many again stated that their department did not routinely inform complainants about their rights to internal or external review of their cases. Likewise, 111 respondents (64.9%) claimed not routinely to advise complainants of any improvements that had subsequently been made in light of their complaints, instead leaving any such reporting to coverage in the Annual Report or other such general publication.

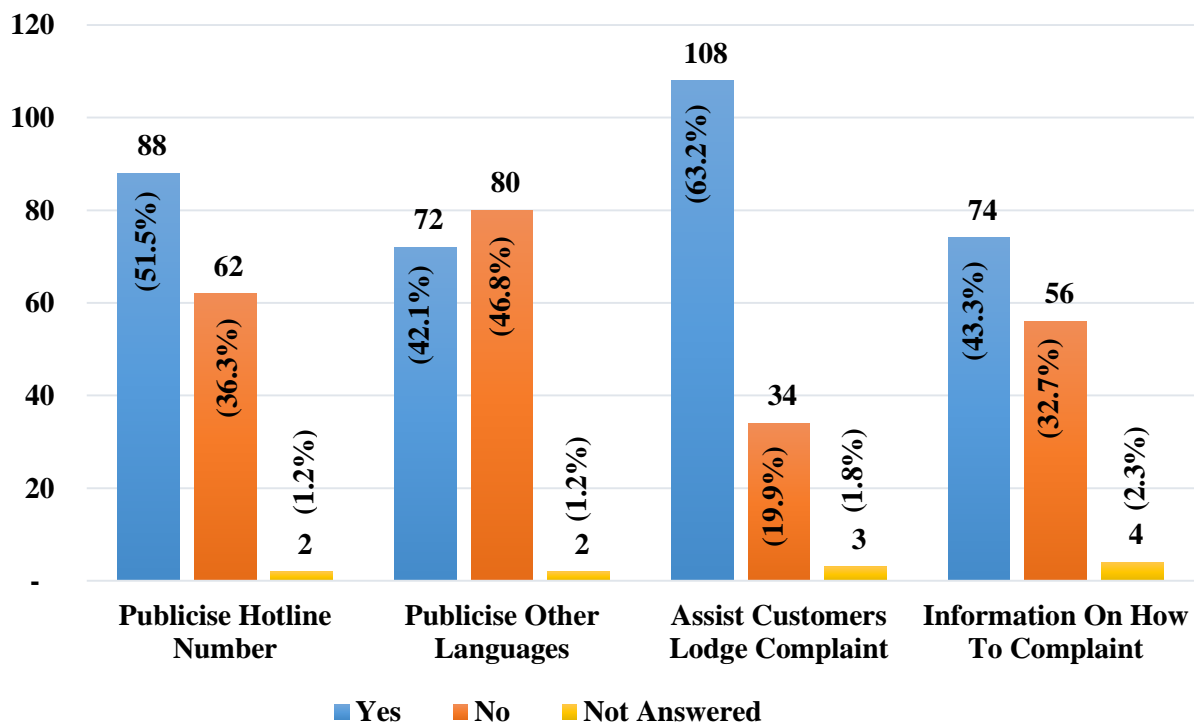
Figure 5.5: Complaint Communication



5.2.6 Complaint Visibility and Access

Half of the respondents (51.5%) indicated that their departments publicized a special telephone number or hotline for complaints whereas 36.3% claimed not to do this (the rest not providing information in this respect). Moreover, 72 respondents (42.1%) indicated making information in other languages than Malay (English, for example) and about how and where to make complaints, again a similar proportion suggesting that such assistance was not provided (see Figure 5.6). Again all such evidence tended to underline the relatively under-developed approach in many Brunei government departments towards complaint management as an element of customer-orientation.

Figure 5.6: Complaint Visibility and Access

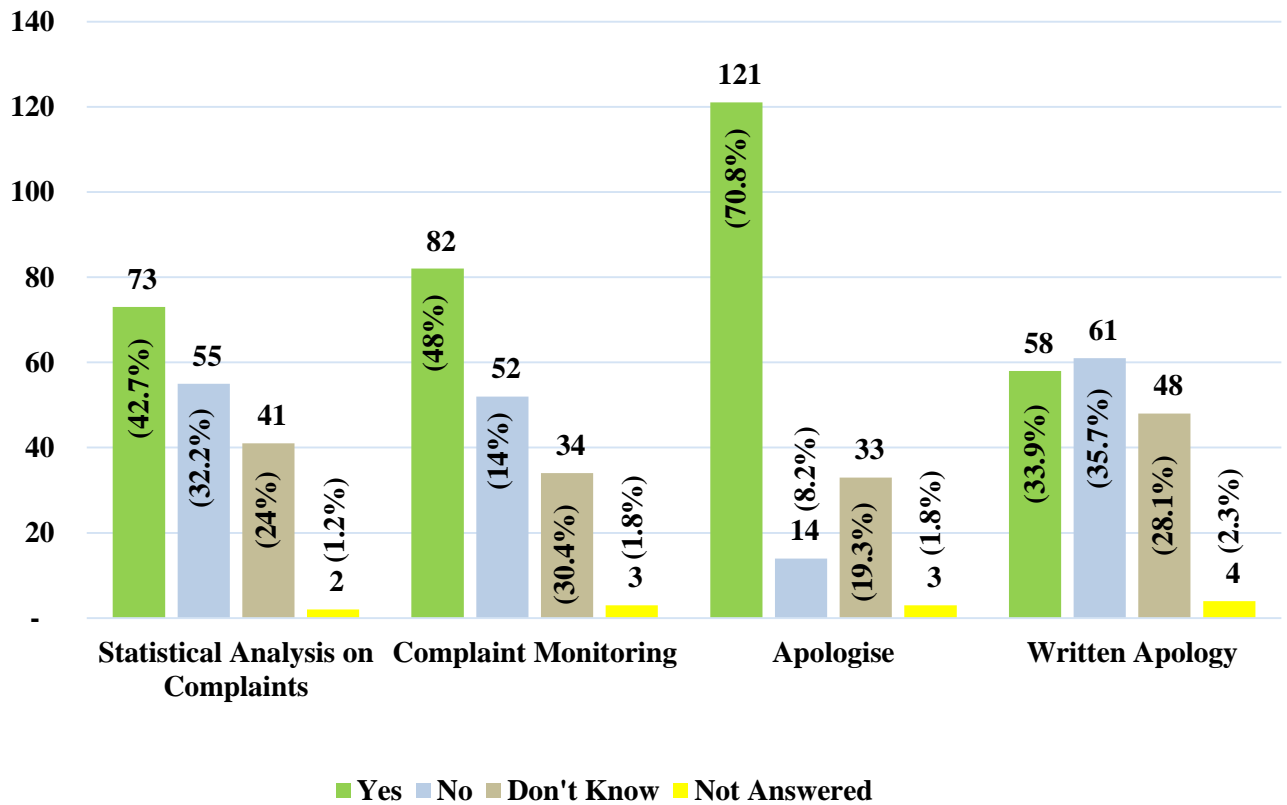


5.2.7 Complaint Responsiveness and Fairness

With regard to responsiveness and fairness in relation to complaints, just 42.7 % (n = 73) indicated that their department routinely undertook statistical analysis on complaint patterns while slightly more (48%) reported monitoring the complaints they received and advising complainants on progress, and on any reasons for delay or likelihood of exceeding the target timelines (see Figure 5.7). In addition, 14% of respondents indicated no monitoring on complaints had been undertaken and almost a third did not know whether or not their departments monitored complaints. Although 70.8% claimed that their department were content for employees to apologise to the complainant if it was felt a mistake had been made or the department was clearly at fault, but more than a third (n = 61) stated that their department did not, as a matter of practice, offer written apologies to customers when a problem had been encountered and the expected standard of service was not experienced.

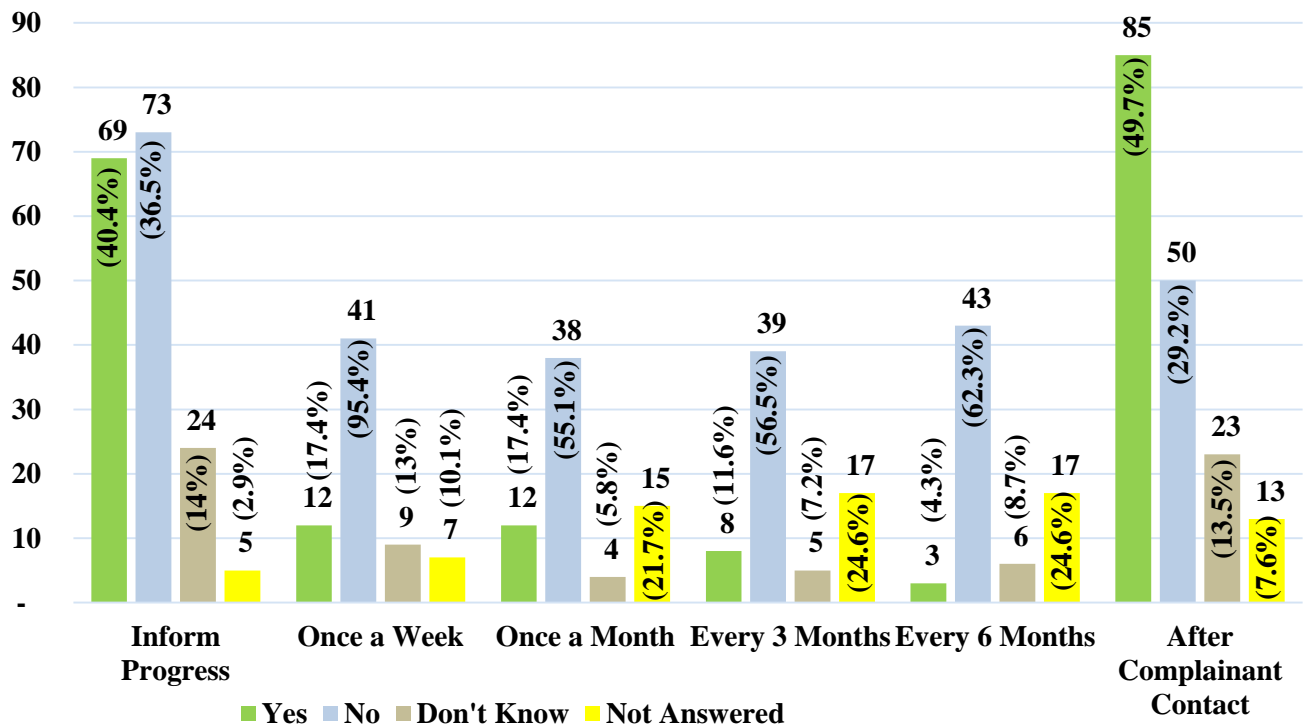
As we saw in chapter 2, the literature argues strongly that an apology can act as invaluable compensation and can go far in improving the relationship between the organization and its customer, but seemingly in many Brunei government departments this argument has not been widely identified or put into practice. Similarly, the message that the collection and analysis of statistics on complaints is important to ensure regularly occurring problems are addressed and eradicated (see for example, Lyon and Powers, 2001), seemed, from the questionnaire responses at least not to have been taken into account either in many departments.

Figure 5.7: Complaint Responsiveness and Fairness (Complaint Monitoring)



As shown in Figure 5.8, only 69 respondents (40.4%) stated that their department informed complainants about the progress of subsequent investigations. Moreover, of those only 17.4% stated that their department provided information updates on a weekly basis while a similar number indicated doing so just once per month, and only 11.6% acknowledged doing so every 3 months. Then again, of the 171 respondents, just less than half (n = 85) indicated that their department would only inform of progress when the complainant had contacted their department to ask.

Figure 5.8: Complaint Responsiveness and Fairness (Complaint Progress)



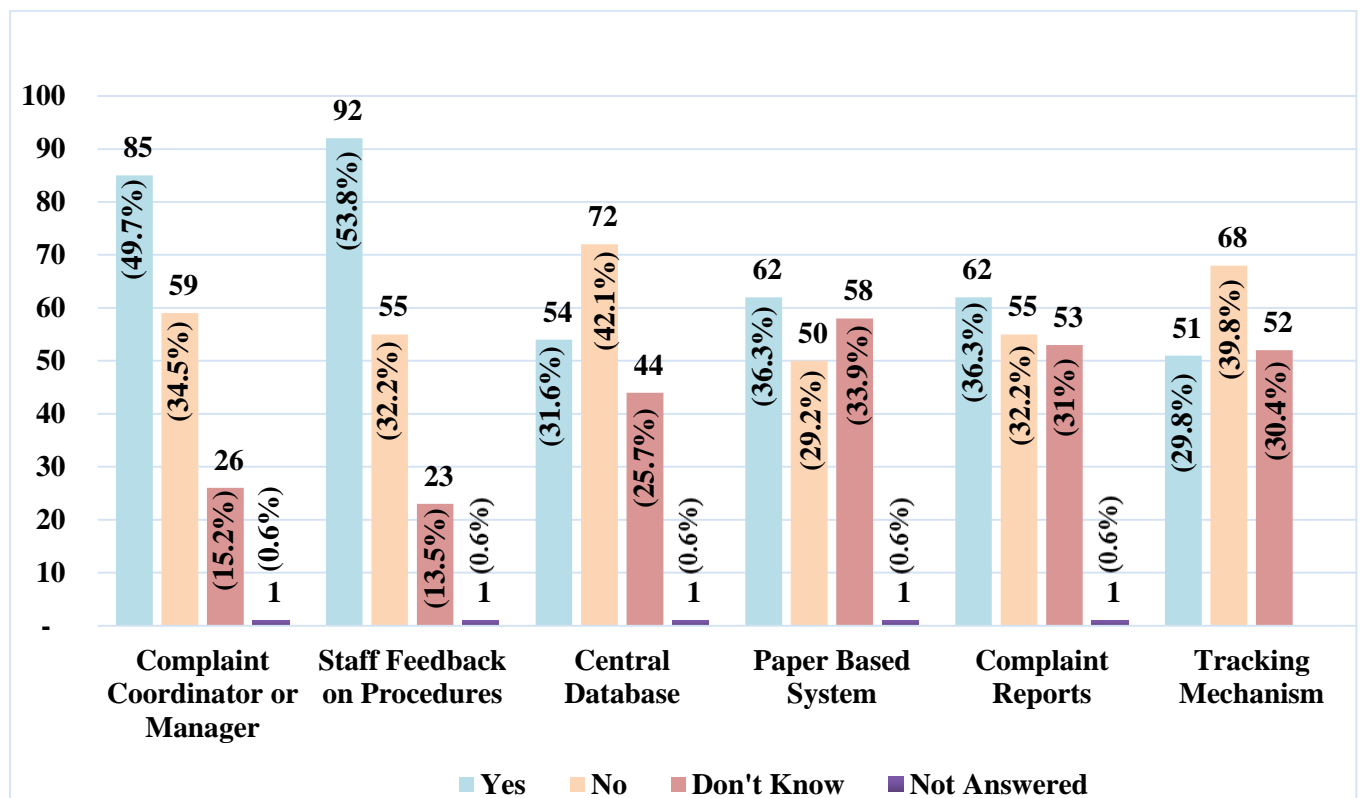
5.2.8 Complaint Resources

As can be seen from Figure 5.9, 85 of the 171 respondents (about half) indicated that their department had a complaints coordinator or an assigned manager who was responsible for ensuring consistency, timeliness and quality in handling complaints, while more than a third reported that their departments did not have such a complaint manager. In addition, only just over half (53.8%) stated that their departments regularly sought feedback from staff involved in complaint handling on the effectiveness of the current procedures. Only about a third (n= 54) indicated that their departments recorded complaints⁹ information electronically on a

⁹ Besides an effective complaint handling procedure is vital, it is also essential to use complaints as a form of research that enables the organization improve their products and processes. By doing this, the organization need to ensure that all complaints are recorded. Identify the source of the complaint and assess whether corrective action is needed. Monitor the frequency of different types of complaint and monitor product and process performance after corrective action has been taken (Linton, 1995:151)

central database; meanwhile, about 36.3% (n = 62) stated that their departments provided reports (and a further third claimed not to know whether their department did so or not). Again, such responses all tended to indicate weaknesses in the organization and provision of complaint management, particularly in the handling of cases.

Figure 5.9: Complaint Resources

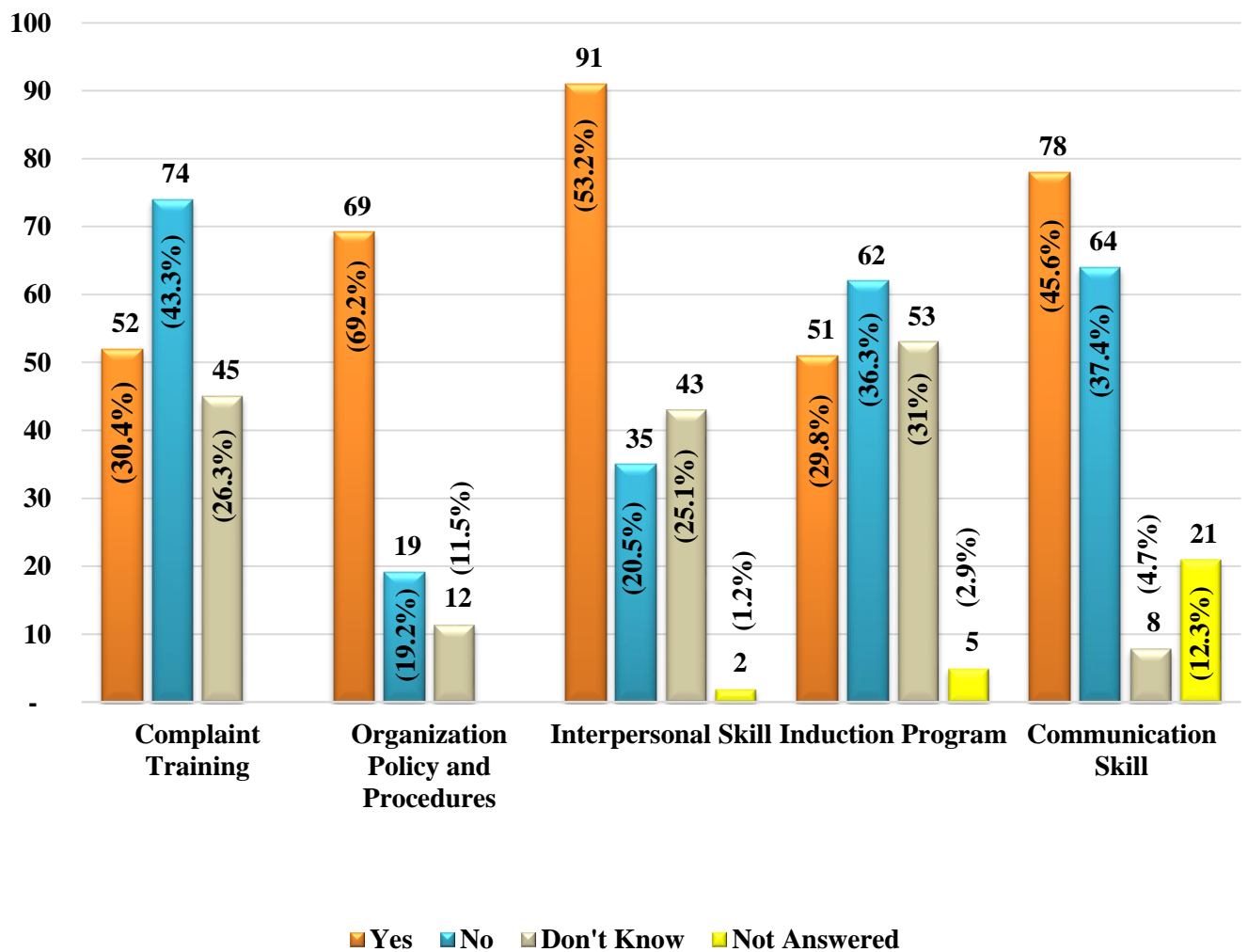


5.2.9 Personnel and Training on Complaint Management

Of the 171 respondents, only about a third (n = 52) stated that their departments provided training to those staff involved in handling complaints, 43.3% stated that no such training was available and another 26.3% indicated being unaware of what, if any, training was provided (Figure 5.10). However, of 52, 36 (69.2%) did at least indicate that, during training, the trainer had worked carefully through the department’s policies and guidelines to ensure that staff fully

understood the procedures, the roles and expectations. Overall, some 45.6% (n=78) of respondents claimed that they had attended relevant skills training sessions, such as on customer communication skills.

Figure 5.10: Complaint Training



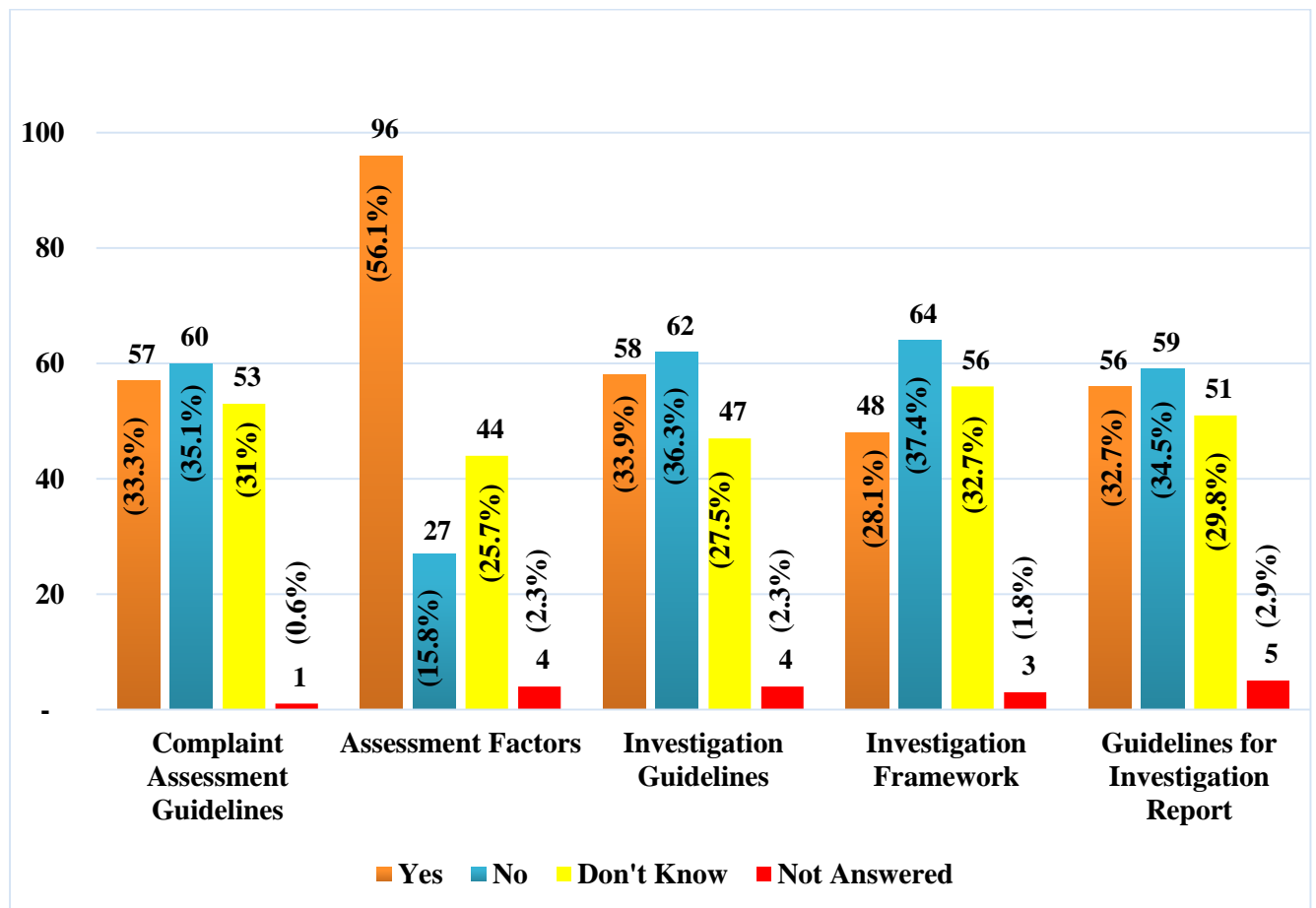
5.2.10 Complaint Assessment and Investigation

In Figure 5.11, it can be seen that a third of respondents had indicated that their departments had established guidelines for the assessment of complaints that identified different categories of complaint and how they should each be dealt with (and a further third indicated being unsure whether or not such guidelines were available). Likewise, about half (n = 96) reported that factors such as ‘complaint seriousness’ were included in the assessment.

Some 62 respondents (36.3%) reported that their departments did not have guidelines explaining the role of the investigating officers to the public and complainants, and indeed a very similar proportion did not provide guidelines for the investigating officers themselves to help them in the conduct of interviews and inspection of sites and documents etc. A further 51 respondents (29.8%) said they were unsure if such guidelines existed or not, and if so, whether they had ever been used within the organisation.

The literature argues that assessment and investigation are two particularly important elements of any good complaint management, and for which guidelines for the process would seem vital to ensure thoroughness and consistency. Without a proper assessment being made, it would be very difficult for any organization to identify the contributory factors in relation to complaints or to be able to make useful recommendations without the benefit of a thorough investigations report, or indeed, to prevent similar complaints arising in the future. Accordingly, it was somewhat surprising that the questionnaire revealed such a low proportion of respondents (barely a third) indicating the availability of such guidelines.

Figure 5.11: Complaint Assessment and Management



5.2.11 Management Commitment on Complaint

On the other hand, a rather higher proportion of respondents, (68.4%) stated that their department’s senior management did discuss the purposes and need for complaint management with staff at all levels (see Figure 5.12) – with just 8 respondents claiming that such purposes and objectives were never discussed with staff. In addition, about 76.6% (n = 131) of respondents agreed that their senior management did view complaints as an important opportunity for learning about and improving organisational performance.

But then only 53.8% of respondents stated that complaints staff were empowered to exercise authority and to take action to remedy complaints, and to make or recommend changes to procedures and practices. Furthermore, only 79 respondents (46.2%) believed that their senior management regularly reviewed the complaint system’s effectiveness and that, only 36.3% (n = 62) were aware of review details and actions taken as a result of complaint investigations being notified to all staff (and where appropriate to the public) (see Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.12: Management Commitment on Complaint Staff

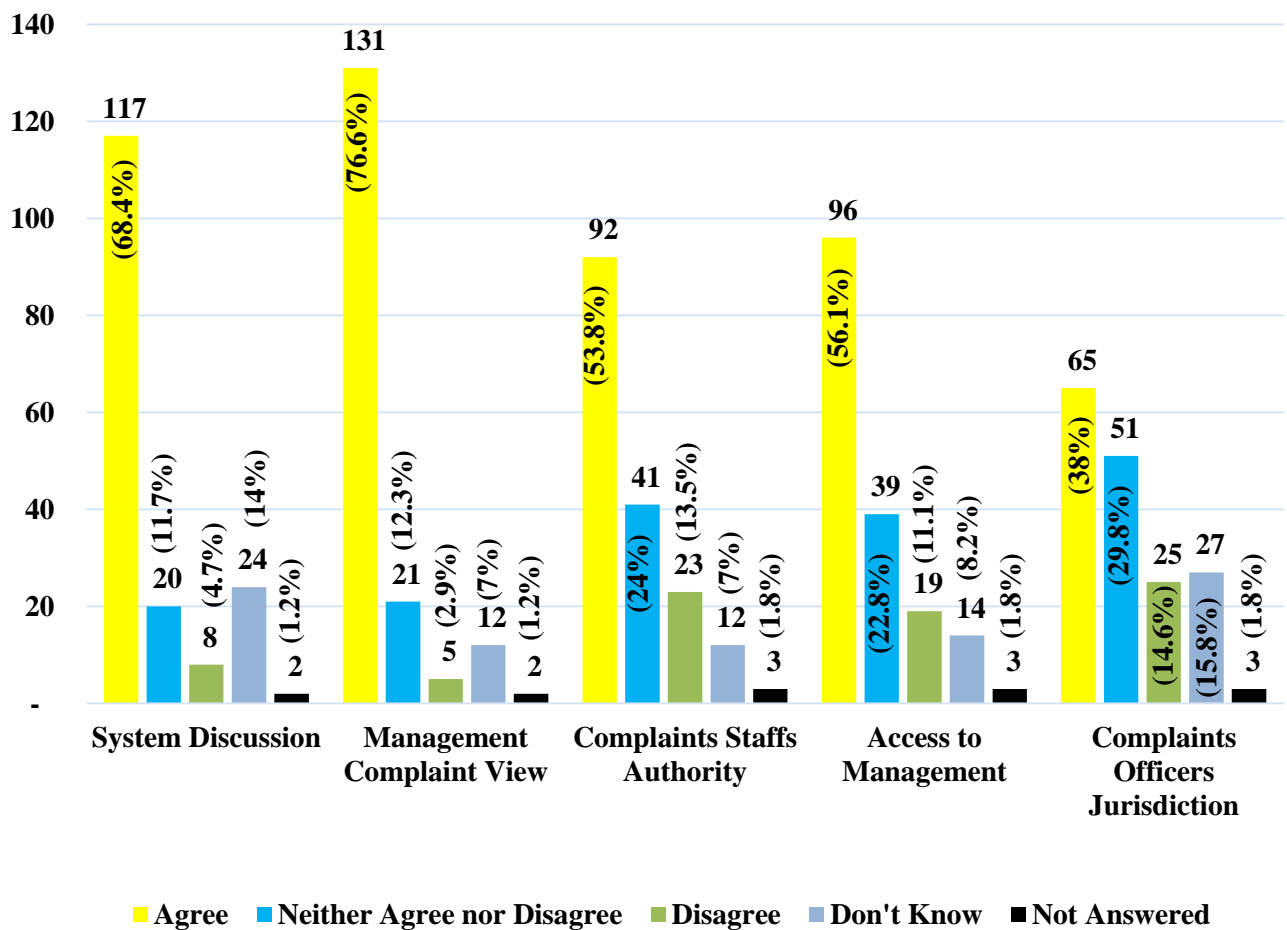
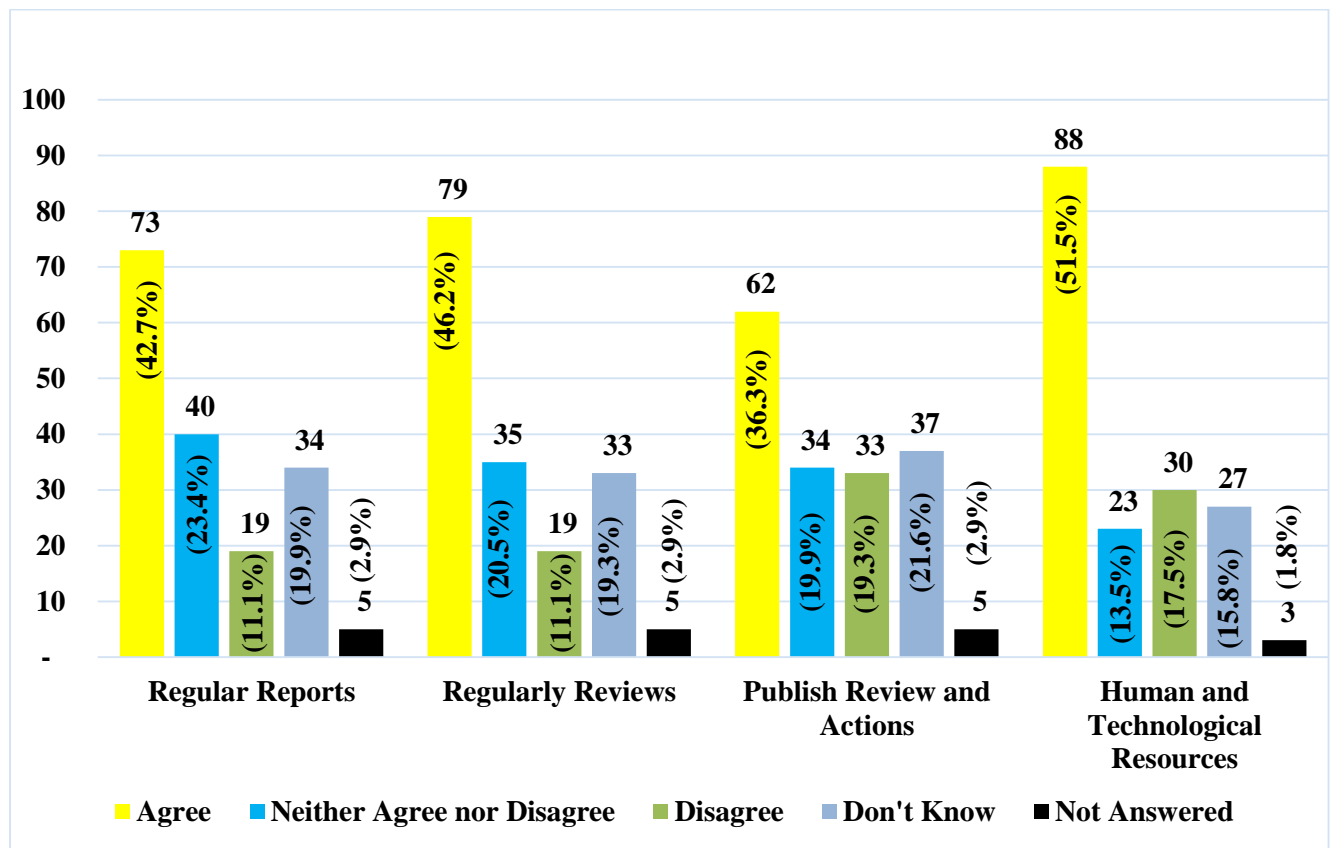


Figure 5.13: Management Commitment on Complaint Reports



5.3 Complaint Contributions

5.3.1 Complaint Benefits

In the academic literature, as discussed in Chapter 2, complaints are widely seen as having the potential to bring benefits to the organization. Accordingly, scoring systems have often been devised and used to identify the extent to which information and actions arising in response to complaints have benefited the organization. Thus in this research the questionnaires to Brunei civil servants included a series of questions about various benefits from complaints (scored on a five-point Likert scale – where 5 meant strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree). The average scores from the respective responses are summarised in Table 5.1 where it can be seen that respondents nearly all agreed that complaints

would be of potential benefit to their departments in such ways as learning from mistakes by improving work processes, in helping to achieve customer satisfaction, and in improving the department's image. Interestingly, there was less uniformity and clarity as to whether such complaint information had helped their department in policy and customer retention, or indeed as to whether or not costs would have been reduced. There was also some disagreement as to whether or not complaints information has increased the department's revenue.

Table 5.1: Complaint Benefits

No.	Benefits of Complaint to the departments (n:171)	Average Score of Agreement
1	Learning from mistake	3.87
2	Improve work processes	3.77
3	Achieve customer satisfaction	3.60
4	Improve image	3.49
5	Policy formulation	3.27
6	Customer retention	3.21
7	Reduce cost	2.46
8	Revenue increases	2.36

5.3.2 Complaint Improvement

More than half (59.6%) of the respondents claimed that their organization had taken steps to prevent complaints re-occurring by making relevant changes to policies and procedures. Yet some 42 respondents (24.6%) indicated not knowing whether such improvements have been made. In terms of giving feedback to complainants, some 65.5% of respondents said their

feedback on service improvements was welcomed although many (some 48.5%) indicated that they were not personally involved in work on compiling and responding to complaints reports for senior management.

Similarly, about 54.5% (n = 109) of respondents claimed that they were not involved in the analysis of the complaint data or in formulating recommendations for action or indeed for complaint reduction strategies (see Figure 5.14).

Overall, the evidence in Figure 5.15, shows that 46.2% of respondents believed their organization had used complaint reports and recommendations to target areas and to improve their department's policies and procedures. This was supported by 66 respondents (38.6%) who claimed that their departmental complaints management system had strengthened the contribution of complaints to service improvement. However, that still left a slightly higher proportion (40.4 % to 44.4%) who indicated not knowing about the impacts of their complaints reports and recommendations on policies and practices, or indeed how thoroughly they had been considered by senior management.

Figure 5.14: Complaint Improvement and Recommendation

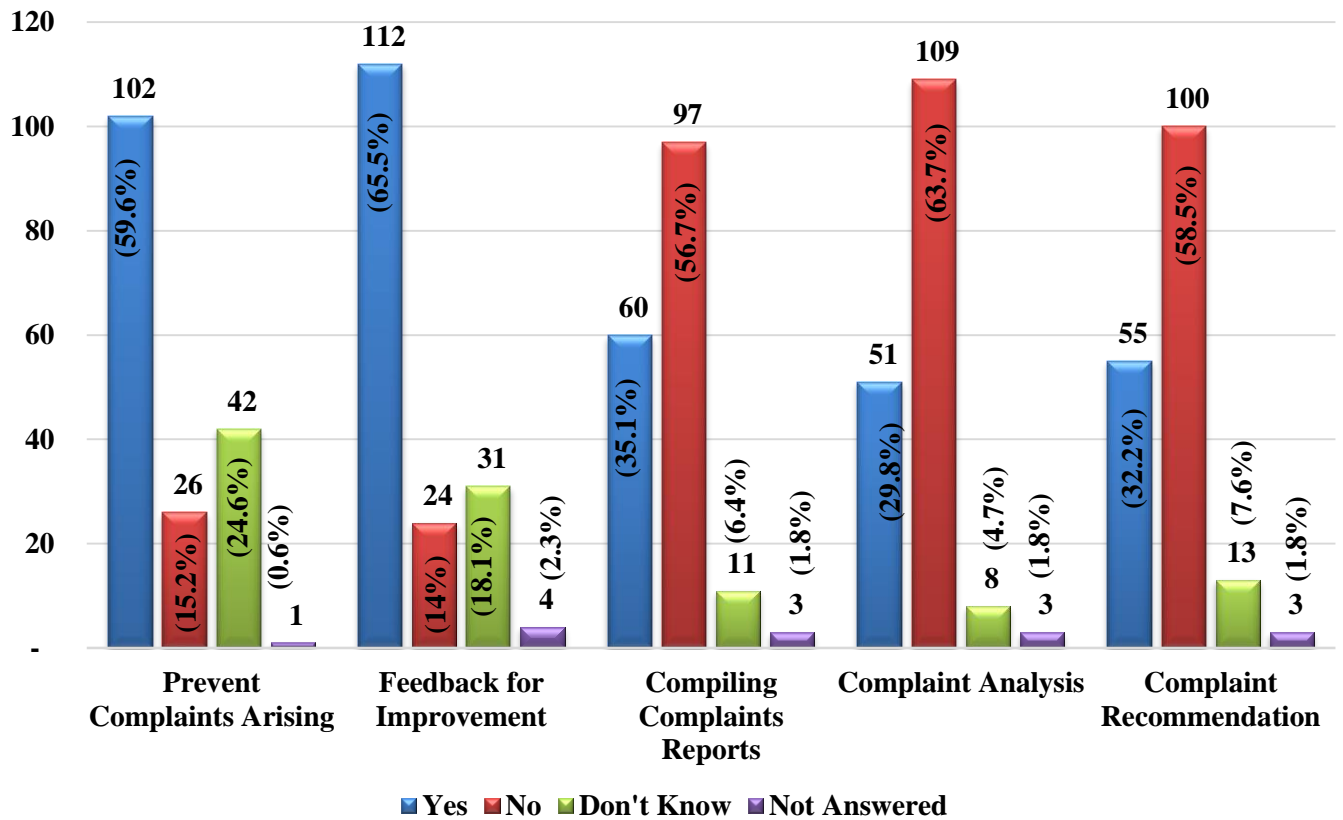
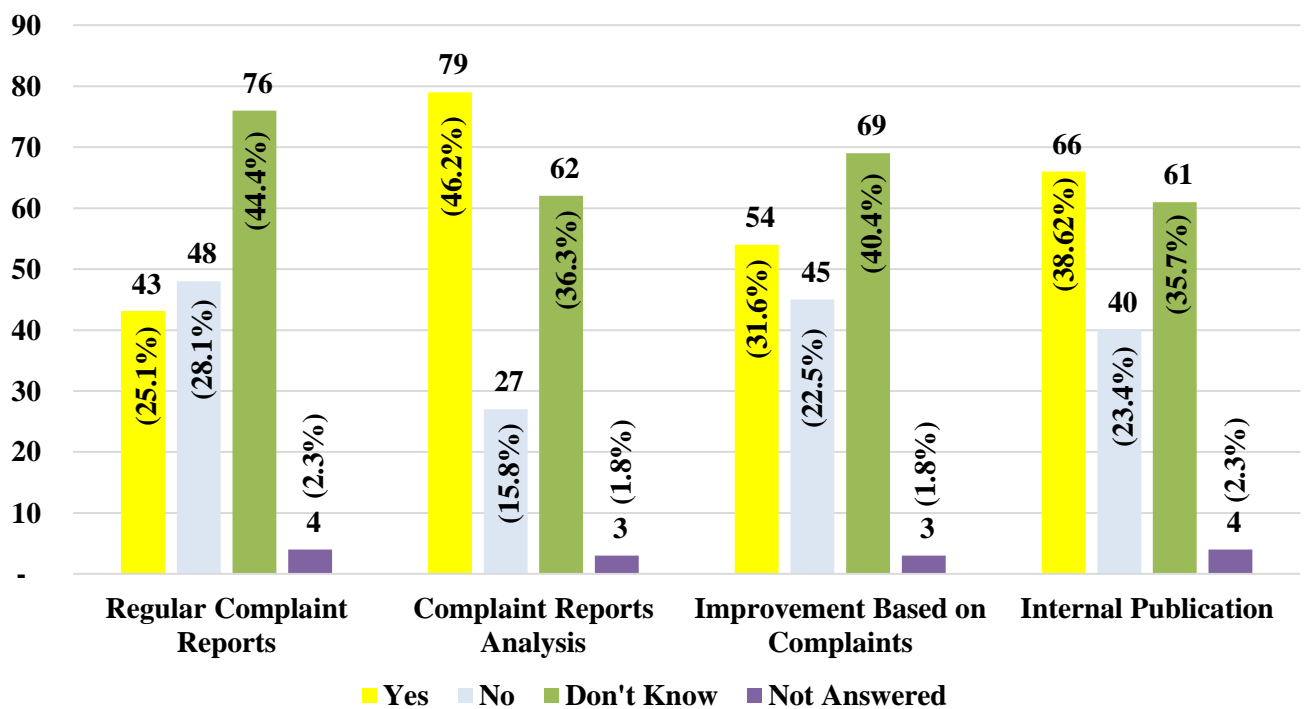


Figure 5.15: Complaint Improvement on Reports



5.4 Civil Service Attitudes towards Customer Complaints

In the academic literature, management's attitude towards complaints plays an important role in determining the success of complaint management in the organization. This is a theme that was examined in the research and the findings for which are summarized in Table 5.2. Here, the average scores were computed in relation to a series of statements for each of which respondents were invited to express their agreement-disagreement (again as measured through a five-point Likert Scale). The key findings were that respondents tended to agree that complaints do indeed represent a critical element of the voice of the customer and that complaints provide opportunities to improve service quality (these emerging with the highest average scores). In addition, however, respondents almost all agreed with the potential of complaints in extracting valuable information and providing insightful knowledge.

Moreover, there was a strong measure of agreement with the idea that complaints provided a means for promoting continuous improvement and as opportunities to learn. Here many respondents also agreed that it was important that the numbers of complaints should be reduced. On the other hand, there was less consensus about the status of complaint management in any marketing strategy, or indeed, as conveyed in the literature, that a complaint could be seen as a statement about expectations that have not been met. Moreover, when asked about negative attitudes towards complaints, respondents tended to disagree about the proposition that complaints are stressful to deal with and to be seen as a problem.

Table 5.2: Respondents Attitudes towards Customer Complaints

No.	Respondents' attitudes (n:171)	Mean
1	Complaints are a critical element of the voice of the consumer.	4.01
2	You see complaint as an opportunity to improve quality	4.01
3	Complaint is used to extract valuable information and gain insightful knowledge.	3.95
4	You see complaint as a way of striving for continuous improvement	3.94
5	You see complaint as an opportunity to learn.	3.87
6	Complaints must be reduced.	3.67
7	Complaint is an important part of marketing strategy.	3.30
8	Complaint is just a statement about expectations that have not been met	2.93
9	Complaint is a stressful thing to deal with.	2.81
10	You see complaint as a problem and threatening issue.	2.37

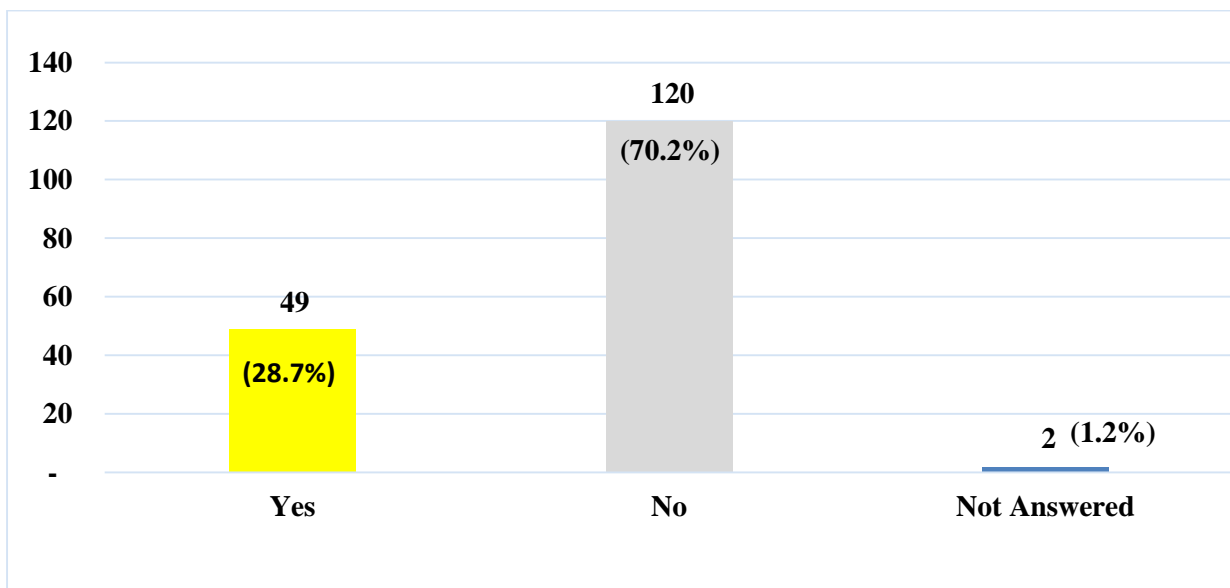
5.5 Customer Experience of Government Departments of Complaint Management

5.5.1 Lodging a Complaint

A further part of the questionnaire survey was aimed at examining awareness levels among civil servants as service users themselves and in gathering perspectives of service quality as they themselves experienced it as citizens and customers in Brunei. The survey also focused on the circumstances in which they themselves might feel compelled to complain and of respondents' experiences if and when they had done so.

Out of the 171 respondents, some 70.2 % (n = 120) stated they had never yet made a complaint to a government department (though 28.7% (n =49) had done so at some time or other (see Figure 5.16). It is axiomatic, of course, that complaint management will be ineffective if customers do not lodge complaints (Hsieh, 2010).

Figure 5.16: Respondents Lodging a Complaint



5.5.2 Reasons for Not Lodging Complaints

Even though the majority of respondents did not lodge any complaints (to government departments) it was important to understand the reasons for not complaining, just as it was of interest to understand why others did indeed make complaints. Table 5.3 summarises the key reasons that were cited in this context. Highest average scores here suggested that respondents were only likely to lodge a complaint if they thought the outcome would be positive – a finding that is consistent with Oster’s (1979) argument in consumer research that consumers complain only when the expected benefits of so doing exceed the costs involved.

A second high-scoring factor was that most respondents would prefer to raise their concerns informally rather than by making informal complaints, while a third reason was that they did not know to whom complaints should be addressed.

The research identified some differences of viewpoint about other factors why they might not lodge a formal complaint, for example, concerning how 'worthwhile it would be' 'whether anything would change as a result', what, if any, might be the repercussions' and 'whether or not any action could be expected'.

Mostly the civil servants preferred not to send their complaints to other agencies such as the Management Services Department or indeed to inform the mass media about their grievance. And interestingly, such findings were much at odds with arguments presented in the published literature as being important in determining whether or not people make formal complaints. (see, for example: Gronhaug and Arndt, 1980; Seneviratne and Cracknell, 1988; Oren, 1992; Brennan and Douglas, 2002;. Johnston and Clark, 2005:404)

From all this it might perhaps be concluded that consumers in Brunei are more "passive" than dissatisfied consumers in other contexts and are rather less likely to take actions based on a bad or unfavourable experience (Taleghani, 2011).

Table 5.3: Reasons Not To Lodge Complaint

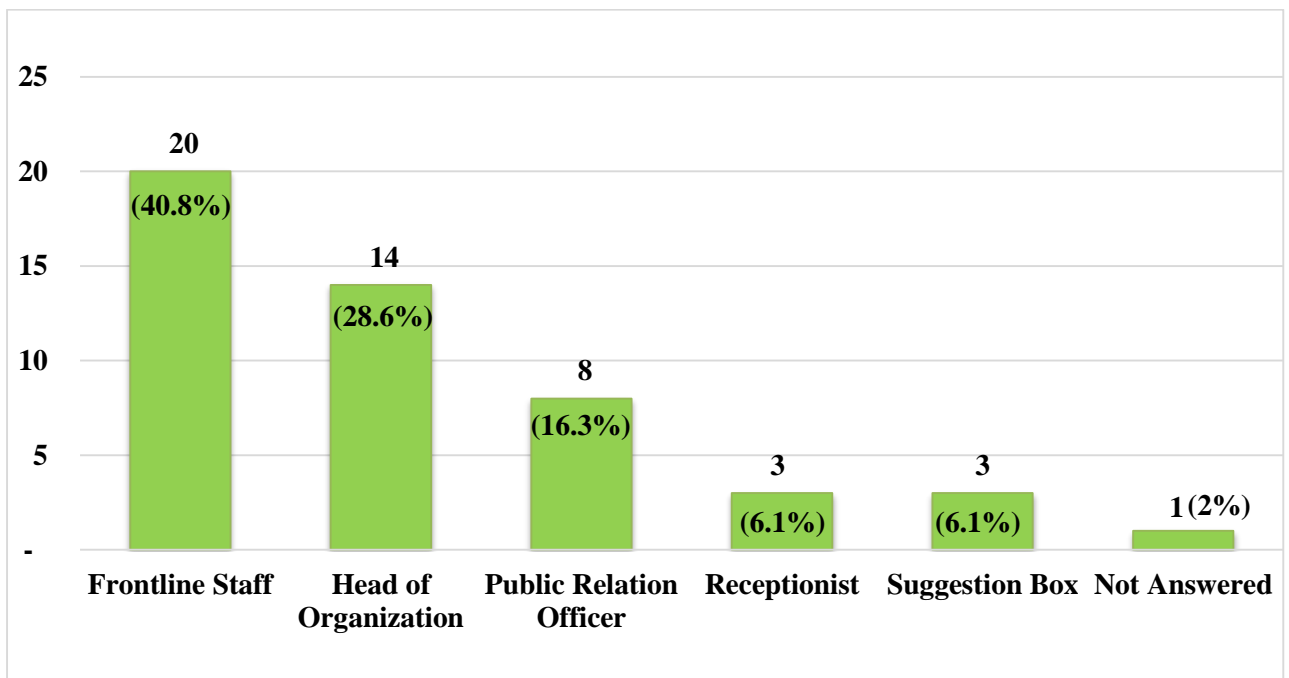
No.	Reasons not to complaint (n:120)	Average score of
1	You will only lodge complaint if you think the outcome will be positive	3.36
2	You would rather make informal complaints	3.05
3	You do not know to whom to complain	2.92
4	The public service delivery is meeting your expectations	2.92
5	You think it is not worth to make a complain	2.86
6	You think that the organization would not actually change anything	2.86
7	You are afraid you will end up with more trouble	2.85
8	You think that no action will be taken by the organization	2.77
9	You do not know how to make a complaint and not aware about the complaint procedures	2.73
10	You do not bother to make any formal complaints	2.73
11	You do not know where to lodge complaint.	2.69
12	You would rather send your complaint to other agencies such as Management Services Department	2.69
13	You think that it would not do any good to you	2.68
14	You would rather send your complaint to mass media such as newspaper	2.07

5.5.3 Complaint Submitting to Government Departments

Out of 49 respondents who had made an official complaint to a government department, 20 of them (40.8%) stated that they had submitted their complaints to the frontline staff (see Figure

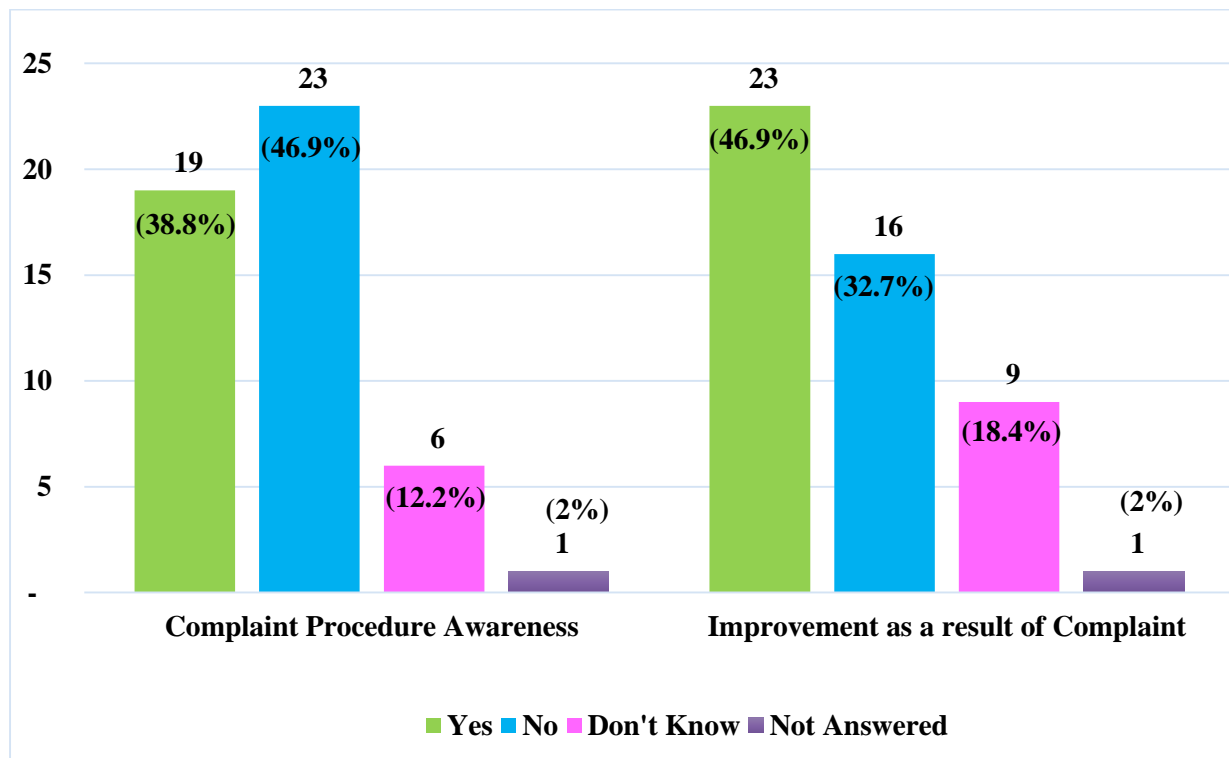
5.17). Meanwhile, a further 14 (28.6%) said they had submitted their complaint to the head of the organization and a further 8 (16.3%) to a public relation officer. In addition, 6.1% (n = 3) had submitted their complaint to the receptionist in the particular department, and a similar number had simply posted it in the ‘suggestions box’.

Figure 5.17: Where Complaints are submitted



In terms of complaint procedures, 19 respondents (38.8%) had indicated being fully aware of the complaints procedure while rather more (46.9% or n = 23) claimed they are unaware of it (with further 6 respondents indicated being unsure about it (see Figure 5.18). Nevertheless, nearly half of the respondents (46.9% or n = 23) claimed that they felt improvements had been made by the government department after lodging their complaints, although, a third more (n = 16) considered no such improvement had followed.

Figure 5.18: Complaint Procedure Awareness and Improvement as a result of complaint



5.5.4 Complaint Handling by Government Departments

In the literature, as discussed in Chapter 2, complaint satisfaction is generally portrayed as playing a crucial role in determine the effectiveness of any complaint management process, i.e. not necessarily a wholly positive outcome but at least a positive experience of the complaint handling process. Here again, responses to a series of questions to those civil servants what had complained about their satisfaction with the complaint handling process generated some interesting results (see Table 5.4). As can be seen, highest scores in this respect related to dissatisfaction with the final outcome of the complaint, while the next highest concerned dissatisfaction with the way their complaint was managed. The third highest score arose from dissatisfaction at the explanation given of the complaint handling process, while the fourth concerned dissatisfaction at the poor speed of response.

Table 5.4: Complaint Satisfaction

No.	Complaint Satisfaction (n:49)	Average score of Satisfaction
1	The final outcome of your recent complaint.	2.84
2	The way in which your complaint was managed?	2.84
3	The explanation on the complaint handling process	2.82
4	The speed of the organization's response to your complaint.	2.55
5	The way they keeping you informed during the process	2.47
6	The speed on whole the complaint handling process in this organization?	2.45
7	The way they think that your complaint being given a fair hearing.	2.14

5.5.5 Experience in Submitting Complaints to Government Departments

Table 5.5 shows the average score of the measure used to capture the levels of satisfaction among the respondents who submitted complaints to government departments. Respondents, on average, reported feeling some level of satisfaction because the staff mostly handled their complaints with politeness and provided individual attention and a generally good quality of service. On the other hand, scores for the celerity of the process and the time that it was necessary to wait to be served were somewhat lower Overall, the scores were hardly to suggest the experience was poor, but nor indeed did they suggest exceptionally good complaint handling – or in other words, there was significant scope for improvement.

Table 5.5: Complaint Experience

No.	Complaint Experience (n:49)	Average score of experience
1	The employees who handled your complaint were polite.	3.55
2	The employees who handled the complaint gave you individual attention.	3.37
3	Quality of service provided	3.37
4	Polite and pleasant manner of the officers / staff during the interaction.	3.35
5	The employees who handled your complaint seemed very much concerned about your problem.	3.31
6	Response officers / staff of an inquiry / request. /	3.31
7	Friendliness and warmth of officers / staff when serving you.	3.29
8	Attention has been paid when attending to your case.	3.27
9	Manner and tone of the officers / staff when serving you.	3.22
10	The presences of officers / staff (always at work) easily obtain information needed.	3.04
11	Ability of officers and staff to deal with queries / problems raised	3.02
12	Urgency to fulfil what was desired	2.94
13	Time waiting to be served.	2.94

5.5.6 Key Elements for Citizens/Customers when Pursuing Complaints

Table 5.6 sets out the average scores that captured the level of importance attached to different aspects of complaint-making as indicated by civil servant respondents (when thinking of

themselves as citizens and government customers). Once again, the a series of aspects were scored with a five point Lickert Scale (with highest score indicating most importance) Interestingly, the highest rates, and therefore the factor of most importance to respondents was that the complaint should lead to an improving service – in other words, that the problem would not recur for others and that, as a result, the complaint would have been productive and worthwhile. But only slightly less important was the aspect of helpful staff during the complaint process; then came the fairness of the complaint procedure and the ease of making the complaint.

Table 5.6: The Importance of Different Factors to Complainants

No.	The most important to Respondent when submitting complaint to public organization (n:49)	Average score of Importance
1	Improving the service	4.29
2	Helpful staff	4.24
3	Fairness of the procedures	4.02
4	Ease of use of the procedure	3.96
5	Providing a speedy response	3.96
6	Keeping your informed	3.94
7	Apology	3.82
8	Written explanation	3.76
9	Compensation	3.47

5.6 Conclusions

This Chapter has provided a discussion of the analysis of good complaint management. It has identified a number of weaknesses in the establishment of complaint management across many of the government departments in Brunei. The research found that while some departments have instituted reasonably strong complaint management processes others have not. It also found that while all departments recognized the potential value of complaints as a source of learning and organisational development, relatively few were actually realizing that potential to any significant degree. Overall, the research has identified considerable scope for departments to strengthen their commitment to learning from complaints, and for which purpose, investment of time and process development with regard to complaint management seems an urgent priority. In the next chapter these conclusions from the quantitative analysis will be elaborated further by focusing on the findings of a series of face-to-face interviews with the sample of civil servants.

CHAPTER 6

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: THE INTERVIEWS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted with government officials in Brunei Darussalam between June and August 2013. The main aim of these interviews was to explore the ways complaints are handled by different government departments. In addition, a further purpose was to explore the ways complaints are managed as a means of learning about how to improve services. In this regard, the government employees, or civil servants, were asked to think about their organizational complaint management processes and the way in which feedback information was being used for organizational learning at various levels.

The chapter begins with a discussion of motivations for complaint management in Brunei. This is followed by an account of the findings from the sixty interviews undertaken with government officers and staff as introduced in Chapter 4. Three employees were selected from each of twenty departments (creating the overall sample of 60 civil servants). In order to capture the information from top to bottom of each department, one employee from each department were selected from top management, one from middle management/supervisory level and one from the front line (junior level). The responses to interview questions were subsequently categorised into key themes (through a coding process that was outlined in chapter 4).

A key part of each interview focused on the motivation in each department associating with complaint management as a mechanism for learning from citizens / customers about their experiences of public services. Subsequently the interviews centred on the perceived benefits of complaints management as a means of driving improvement within departments and in the quality of public service provision. An important strand of the research was also focused on differences between governments departments in this respect and to understand the drivers and obstacles that accounted for any such variance.

The chapter also presents the findings on the key elements of complaint management, including the nature of complaint policies and procedures, the processes involved in handling complaints, the extent of support and empowerment for complainants, and the provision for staff training in complaint-handling. Finally, the chapter compares the findings in these respects with best practice standards as highlighted in the conceptual framework introduced at the end of Chapter 2.

6.2 Reasons for Operating Complaint Management Processes

In many countries governments are motivated to take care of their citizens because it is they who have voting power and the potential for regime change, and because they also finance government activity through being taxpayers. In such circumstances, governments have little choice but to listen to the people or, face legitimacy difficulties. However, such mechanisms of accountability do not exist in Brunei which is, as indicated, a Monarchy without elections. Indeed, the nearest element in Brunei to the conditions that pertain in a typical democratic state context is the Legislative Council meeting which is held once a year to discuss issues of public interest including any significant public grievances.

That said, and as discussed previously, there are other motivational factors towards complaint management to be considered besides those of public accountability (see for example, Dingemans, 1996; Johnston and Mehra, 2002, Stauss and Seidel, 2005:31; Vos *et al.*, 2008) and such other factors could also be seen as potentially powerful forces, especially if there are significant organizational benefits (e.g. for government departments).

Indeed, according to several scholars writing in the academic literature, citizen feedback is often seen as an effective means for informing government about the quality of public service delivery especially when there are no alternative providers due to monopolistic supply by government (see for example, Lewis and Pattinasarany, 2009; Holland, 2010; Deichmann and Lall, 2003).

As one of the Islamic states and with a history of political stability and economic strength, the government of Brunei can, in theory at least, do mostly whatever it wishes and citizens have no presumed right to complain about the public services rendered especially since these are given free in this tax-free state, or are greatly subsidised by the government. However, in practice, as was suggested earlier, this is not the reality in Brunei because this is a place where the government always wants to do its best to take care of citizens, an approach that derives particularly from the King himself. As was discussed earlier, the King of Brunei regularly makes surprise visits to government departments to see how His Majesty's Government is running. In addition, the King also makes many visits to the villages to find out personally about his subjects, their standards of living and whether or not they are happy.

The findings from the interviews with civil servants, as reported in this chapter, provide valuable new insights on such motives for focusing on citizen/customer satisfaction with public

services from different government departments and for taking customer complaint management seriously. The findings on the perspectives of civil servants who were interviewed are discussed under thematic headings in the subsequent sections – the thematic structure deriving from the framework discussed in Chapter 4 and as set out in Table 6.1 below – in turn focusing on 1. Bruneian culture, 2. Citizen care, 3. Better Public Management, 4. Political stability, 5. Prosperous life, 6. Customer demands for better services and 7. Service users. Each such theme is described in turn in more detail in the following seven sections.

Table 6.1: Reasons for Operating Complaint Management Processes

Interview No.	Theme	Remarks
RA3, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA12, RA13, RA16, RA19, RA22, RA23, RA26, RA27, RA28, RA30, RA31, RA32, RA35, RA40, RA41, RA47, RA50, RA53, RA54, RA56	Citizen care	The King as citizen-oriented, willing to listen to the public, a caring monarch, who always cares about the citizens' welfare, heart for the people with charismatic leadership.
RA18, RA21, RA36, RA48, RA55, RA58, RA60	Better Public Management	Complaint management would improve department administration and ensure more systematic approach to learning through complaints.
RA11, RA15, RA42, RA43, RA44, RA45, RA49	Political Stability	Any dissatisfaction among the citizen should be handled properly because otherwise political instability might be the result.
RA14, RA24, RA25, RA33, RA39, RA51	Bruneian Culture through the Malay Islamic Monarchy Concept	The polite culture has been practiced by the Brunei citizens for so many years and that in return, the government too needed to take care to handle public complaints sensitively and supportively.

RA8, RA9, RA34, RA52	Ensuring a Prosperous Life for Citizens	Viewpoint that every citizen is entitled to receive a comfortable life, a high standard of living – at least comparable with other developed countries.
RA2, RA17, RA57	Public Pressure for Better Public Services	View that, since the citizens or businesses pay their building taxes, they can reasonably expect better services from the government. All the civil servants are also service users, So the same issues apply to them as to other citizens.

6.2.1 Citizen Care

Twenty four civil servant respondents from fourteen different departments offered their perceptions on why they considered the government to be working hard to take care of its citizens. All such respondents perceived that caring did not only come from the Brunei Government but that it came from the King himself and his desire that his government should be a caring government. In addition, it was suggested that citizens saw the King as ‘an umbrella’ for them – providing protection and, because of this, they could legitimately submit their concerns and complaints to the King himself. All respondents described the King as citizen-oriented; as a ruler who was always willing to listen to the public; a caring monarch, who always cared about the welfare of citizens, and one who worked for the people and provided charismatic leadership. Careful complaint management was seen as part of this attitude of mind and was felt likely to trigger greater public trust in the government. For this reason government departments acknowledged the need to implement such processes and to learn from other countries about how responsiveness towards complaints would be helpful and lead to improvements for the benefit of our citizens. Complaint management, it was suggested,

could prevent difficulties for the government, especially when citizens were dissatisfied with particular public services.

The government was seen as a key pillar of the country. Respondents also took the view that the King expected his government to take care of citizens, as evidenced in many of his speeches (Titah) where he repeatedly stressed the importance of providing good public services and for government departments to deal sensitively and respectfully with members of the public. Several interviewees suggested that many such members were uncertain where else to complain to except to the King himself. While acknowledging that by not having to pay income tax and since public services were greatly subsidised, there was limited public accountability in relation to public provision, the widespread view was that government still sought to satisfy its citizens and customers, and that there were pressures and incentives to improve services, including in the ways public services were being delivered (Stewart, 1988:3). Many respondents also expressed a view that government departments recognised the importance of good communication with citizens and customers, for example, prompt responses on whether or not their applications and service requests had been successful. It was suggested by one respondent that “the government needs citizens just as the citizens need the government to flourish”.

6.2.2 Better Public Management

Apart from these issues about motivation provided by citizen care, seven respondents from five departments discussed how complaint management had helped their administration to be more effective in their management and organization. They argued that this placed their departments in a good position in terms of departmental performance and good governance. It was also

suggested that it helped protect the image and reputation of the government as a whole. According to these respondents, the King himself did not want people to suffer and wanted to make sure that his departments of state were working effectively and doing a good job. It was argued that new ideas and improvements in public services were constantly sought and all government departments were expected to be more customer focused.

6.2.3 Political Stability

In addition to the aspects discussed above, seven respondents from five departments indicated that they believed the ultimate goal for customer-centricity and effective complaint management was to ensure political stability in the country. Moreover, since the majority of citizens were employed in government and working as civil servants, giving satisfaction to employees through good public services was felt to make sense as a strategy and with effective complaint management providing a useful mechanism for building good relationships between government and the people. For many respondents, any dissatisfaction among the citizens was seen as meriting careful handling to ensure a harmonious and supportive people. In Brunei, it was said that the intention is definitely that all services should be provided to the best standards possible in terms of quality, and that doing so is, above all, important in keeping a harmonious relationship with the public.

6.2.4 Bruneian Culture through Malay Islamic Monarchy Concept

The research findings from the interviews identified that culture is additionally felt to play an important role in complaint management, a point emphasized by McCole (2004). Six respondents from six departments in fact viewed culture – and particularly with reference to

the traditional ways of life - as being important here. Indeed, six respondents referred to their view that it was part of Brunei culture for people to be polite and not to be difficult or argumentative and that, in return, the government, too, needed to take care to handle public complaints sensitively and supportively. In addition, it was suggested that the way that most Brunei citizens had been brought up by their parents was to value politeness and courtesy. These respondents pointed out that this “polite” culture was often apparent in the courtesy shown by departmental staff towards members of the public when visiting their departments.

6.2.5 Ensuring a Prosperous Life for Citizens

Another important reason why it was suggested that the government needed to take complaint management seriously was the argument that, by taking care of the citizens in Brunei this helped to ensure a prosperous and satisfying life for all. Four respondents from three different departments suggested that most of the things that the government had done to date had been with the aim of making the country and its citizens more prosperous and motivated by a desire that every citizen should enjoy a comfortable life, and a high standard of living, comparable to other developed countries. This, it was suggested, was to be done through active listening to the citizens and taking steps to develop both the economic and social infrastructure of the society. In addition, it was strongly felt that a prosperous country made for a happy people, although this was in some contrast to the research finding of Easterlin (2003), who identified no correlation between the trend in economic prosperity and happiness or subjective well-being (referred to as the Easterlin Paradox) .

6.2.6 Public Pressure for Better Public Services

Another important reason cited by several government officials in the interviews for the provision of complaint management was in response to rising expectations about standards of public services. As argued in the literature review chapter, since private (commercial) services have become more customer-focused and more market-oriented, so citizens' expectations of public services have increased (Sitkso-Lutek *et al.*, 2010), and indeed, so the number of complaints has grown too. This theme, too, was prominent in the responses of two interviewees in particular (from two different departments) in explaining why the government was striving for better customer service and to learning from customer complaints. Both respondents argued that this was important from the viewpoint of public accountability, especially, as indicated, given the lack of democratic elections to pressurise governmental action on public services. Several other respondents also commented that the statement often heard in the commercial sector – that “the customer is always right” – was now increasingly applicable in the public sector as well.

6.3 The Benefits of Complaint Management

Related to the motivation for complaint management processes, most interviewees emphasised the point that responding to complaints, and learning from them in particular, generally brought positive impacts for the government organization. This theme, then, is about those benefits that might be derived from complaint information. In this respect, various scholars have undertaken research on how private sector businesses learn from complaints, but while there is relatively little such research on public organizations, there has been increasing awareness on the part of government departments that learning from complaints can realise many valuable benefits.

In this respect it was suggested that if public organizations view complaints in a positive light, they are more likely to learn from them than if they regard them only as criticisms and as expressions of negativity. Here the findings from the interviews also revealed that many departmental staff perceived complaints in a poor light because they saw them creating additional cost pressures, and requirements for extra budget from the central exchequer. In this study, six key themes of complaint management systems were derived from the interviews as shown in Table 6.2 as follows:

Table 6.2: The Perceived Benefits of Complaint Management

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA1, RA2, RA4, RA8, RA9, RA12, RA13, RA27, RA53	Review, identify and wake up call for the current services	Complaints help to highlight problems and can be wake-up calls for the government as it evaluates the quality of its services being provided. Besides, they can also help improve interactions with the public
RA3, RA19, RA31	Protecting Image	Complaints can provide opportunities for protecting and addressing the image of the government.
RA22	Affect Income	Complaints can affect budget costs income if not handled properly.
RA2, RA8, RA9, RA10, RA15, RA25, RA26, RA28, RA31, RA32, RA41, RA44,	Improvement	Complaints are likely to lead to improvements in areas brought into question.
RA53	Increase Budget	Complaints are often associated with inefficiency and unnecessary expenditure

RA14	Increase Cost	Complaints also impose operational costs on the government.
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6.3.1 Reviewing and Developing Current Services

Eight interviewees expressed the view that complaints had helped their departments to identify service provision problems and to implement improvements that were expected to resolve the problems identified by complainants. One of the benefits of complaint management, they acknowledged, is that the process of analysing and responding to particular complaints helps more generally to focus on and review the services more thoroughly and fundamentally. An example given was from the utilities sector, where it was said that information from the public had guided engineers to seek to identify where damage to the transmission system had occurred. According to the interviewees, without the complaint in the first place, the problems would have remained unrecognised within the department.

In addition, it was recognised that complaints were a valuable source of feedback to target improvements. With all such complaints, interviewees argued that they were better able to assess to what extent their services had met customers' requirements. Moreover, by being seen to have reacted to complaints, the interaction between government departments and the public was felt to have improved. On other occasions that were discussed, government departments were said to have had at least the chance to explain the reasons why their services were not performing as well as expected. Such comments thus provided good evidence from within the public sector in Brunei not only of customer service being measured through complaints but

also of the volume of complaints acting as an indicator of how well departments were doing in the pursuit of service excellence (Faulkner, 2003:91).

6.3.2 Protecting and Enhancing the Reputation of Government

Another benefit of complaint management that was discussed by interviewees concerned the potential to protect and enhance the image of government departments. This was particularly highlighted by three interviewees. Each commented that when a citizen made a complaint or expressed dissatisfaction with an aspect of service being delivered, this would negatively affect the reputation of the government, and could be especially damaging if, as likely the case, the complainant were to discuss their experience with friends and colleagues. The departmental public image or reputation was considered by all three interviewees to be an important aspect to protect because of the implications for public trust. It was acknowledged that for a public organization, protecting reputations was vital in sustaining citizen confidence in government as a whole, with complaints having the potential to do great harm on a department's reputation for competence and as a caring public organization.

6.3.3 Complaints as Drivers for Public Investment

A number of interviewees suggested that complaints had the potential to generate pressure for increased budgets – interestingly, a point hardly touched upon in the published literature. One interviewee, for example, stated that several of the complaints he had received had been helpful to him as a manager in providing the evidence base for additional resources to make improvements that he had been wanting to make for some time. The same interviewee, like

many others, also emphasised the argument that it was often impossible to solve the problems underlying public complaints without extra budget provision.

6.3.4 Cost Increases

As indicated, several interviewees highlighted the fact that resolving complaints had often meant increased costs and spending. However, in the literature, complaints are more commonly presented as a means for reducing costs, for instance, through enhancing efficiency or productivity through redesigning a service provision process. The finding in this study that, in practice, complaints more often than not work in the opposite direction and impose cost increases on departments was both interesting and plausible, especially perhaps in an economic context where government departments are only rarely charging the real service costs to users or to the wider public.

6.3.5 Impacts on Revenue Generation

In the academic literature, one of the commonly discussed benefits of complaint management concerns the impact on a service providing organisation's revenue, particularly of commercial businesses (Lyon and Powers, 2001). However, in this study, only one respondent raised this matter. Although it was suggested that complaints might well indicate areas in need of improvement, it was also pointed out that there were risks in seeking to respond with plans for improvement, and that doing so could as equally result in less revenue generation from service users than before, if the service changes proved less satisfactory than intended.

6.3.6 Complaint-Driven Service Improvements

Out of the sixty interviews, in only fourteen was reference made to the importance of service improvements as being a key benefit of complaint management. Instead, many interviewees simply commented that complaints were likely to identify problems that merited improvement – but not necessarily that they were beneficial or significant in driving improvement processes. This was also the case with regard to improvements in terms of management development and training (see for example, Söderlund, 1998; Dalrymple and Donnelly, 1997; Slack *et al.*, 2010:544). Possibly this reflected inertia within government departments that were less improvement-minded than perhaps citizens (and the King) might have wished of them. While acknowledging that complaints would tend to help departments identify specific problems in their services to be addressed, there appeared to be little in the way of a more strategic and proactive approach to using complaints to drive improvement planning in more fundamental or holistic terms.

6.4 Complaint Management as a symbol of Customer Orientation

In the academic literature many references are to be found to the idea that complaint management potentially provides a key pathway to stronger customer orientation and with complaints being considered as the voice of customers. To be customer focused, government departments must listen to their customers and treat complaints positively as vital intelligence for the organisation (Linton, 1995:145). However, this perspective was hardly apparent from the research in the Brunei government where, indeed, it seemed that several departments had not yet really recognised the notion of customer focus.

Here while many of the interviewees claimed that they believed in the importance of complaint management as a key part of customer focus, it was also evident from their responses that even basic complaint management mechanisms were, in reality, hardly in place. While all the departments were able to evidence their compliance with the requirement to have a client charter, as far as complaint management processes were concerned, many clearly had yet to begin work in this respect and most were unable to demonstrate any substantive progress in instituting systematic procedures and routines to demonstrate their customer-orientations.

This, indeed, is an issue that merits further development and examination to understand better the perceptions and perspective of interviewees as to the link between customer orientation and complaint management processes. In particular, it was considered important to understand how civil servants within particular government departments saw the importance of complaint management as part of overall customer orientation. In this respect, the majority of the interviewees (fifty eight) certainly highlighted in one way or another the importance of complaint management as part of a customer focus strategy as shown in Table 6.3 below:

Table 6.3: Perception of Complaint Management as Part of Customer Focus

Interview No.	Theme	Remarks
RA2, RA3, RA4, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA8, RA9, RA10, RA11, RA12, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA16, RA17, RA18, RA19, RA20, RA21, RA22, RA23, RA24, RA25, RA26, RA27, RA28, RA29, RA30, RA31, RA32, RA33, RA34, RA35, RA36, RA37, RA38, RA39, RA40, RA41, RA42,	Customer Focus	The organization pays more attention to customer. Complaint is also part of customer focus, however, it depends on the mind-set within the government departments, if they take it positively then it will give positive and vice versa. On the other hand, complaint is seen as part of the customer focus because they can benchmark on their services.

RA43, RA44, RA45, RA46, RA47, RA48, RA49, RA50, RA51, RA52, RA53, RA54, RA55, RA56, RA57, RA59, RA60		
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The majority of the interviewees argued that managing complaints was indeed a key part of a customer focus strategy, irrespective of the particular governmental service of function, and that each department needed to take seriously all the customer feedback it received (including complaints) as part of its commitment to service improvement. A customer-focused organization, several managers suggested, needed to be interested in how customers saw the organization, and that being customer-focused without taking account of the customer experience simply did not make sense. Complaint management, they suggested, should help to improve the department in its bid to be more customer focused in the longer run.

Several interviewees claimed that their departments always made sure they met complainants personally when a complaint was lodged in order to gather as much feedback as possible. However, others argued that first it was necessary to ensure that the complaints were indeed genuine, and that there was likely to be beneficial learning to be gained from meeting the complainant (i.e. with prospects for improvement for all customers, not just redress for the individual complainant).

6.5 Different ‘Routes’ for Complaint Management

As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature on complaint management discusses various ways of undertaking and organizing complaint management (see for example, Cook and Macaulay,

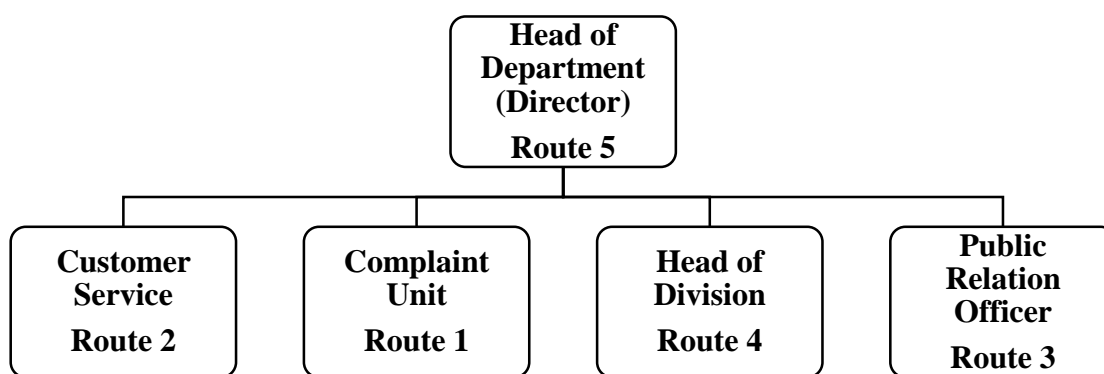
1997; Van Ossel and Stremersch, 1998:172; Lyon and Powers, 2001). However, with no one model appearing to enjoy recognition as the optimal one, it was decided for the purposes of this research to develop a special categorisation of different complaint management “routes” that might best be followed. In this respect, the literature was helpful in suggesting the importance of complaint management being seen both as a dynamic process in which managers would facilitate the transfer of information from complainants to those in positions to take remedial actions and also as one that would engage staff in a constructive learning process (Lam and Dale, 1999).

Accordingly, five key routes were identified through which most public complaints in Brunei tended in practice to be received and acted upon. Here, as Figure 6.1 suggests, complaints from the public were typically received or managed either by departmental directors/heads of department, by a departmental Public Relation Unit, Complaint Unit or Customer Service Unit, or by the Head of Division to which the matter particularly referred. In fact, however, at the time of the research, only two departments (the Management Services Department and the Brunei Muara District Office) had an established a complaint unit (– this being labelled as **Route 1**).

Only one department (that for Water Services) was identified as handling public complaints through a Customer Services Unit (this being labelled as **Route 2**). **Route 3**, was the approach illustrated by the Survey Department that was handling public complaints through a special post of Public Relations Officer. Meanwhile, the Brunei Industrial Development Authority (BINA) and the Ports Departments were both categorised as operating **Route 4** where public

complaints were handled directly by the director or head of department¹⁰. Meanwhile, in the Public Service Department and the Town and Country Planning Department (neither of which had a customer service or complaint unit), public complaints were handled by the head of division (i.e. the most senior appointee) and which was classified as **Route 5**.

Figure 6.1: Different Routes of Complaint Management in Brunei Government Departments



That said, the patterns identified were somewhat more complex than this in that several departments tended to handle complaints through more than one route in practice. For instance, some complaints might be directed towards the public relations officer while others were handled by the customer services unit - and such multi-channel approaches were labelled as additional routes. The electrical services department, for example, was found to operate both such channels and was labelled as **Route 6**, while in the case of the Postal Department (categorised as illustrating Route 7) public complaints were gathered by both the customer service unit and the Head of Department. Another categorisation again, described as Route 8 involved complaints being handled both by the customer services unit and the head of division

¹⁰ Cunliffe and Johnston (2008) claimed that customers believed that the top management level such as CEO has positional power, access and control over information and access to senior management and other senior staff. Thus, by complaining directly to the CEO, the complainant will have better outcome.

- the Treasury Department and the Royal Custom and Excise Department being examples of this combination. Then three departments, namely the Agriculture and Agrifood Department, the Land Transport and the Community Development Department were identified as practising **Route 9** - where complaints were being handled by both the head of division and the head of department. Finally, the study identified examples where, in the absence of a complaint unit or a customer service unit, complaint management was being undertaken by a combination of three different functionaries – the head of department, the head of division and the public relation officer – and this being labelled as **Route 10** - , and of which was characteristic of three departments; the Labour Department, the Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan and the Housing Department.

Table 6.4 summarises and describes these different routes; each of which was said by different interviewees to offer particular advantages. For example, in one department the case was made strongly for complaints being handled by a dedicated complaints unit, working closely with, but distinct from the customer service team. However, only two of the departments in the sample operated this Route 1 approach (Management Services and the Muara District Office) while a total of six departments operated with combinations of other approaches (as Routes 9 and 10) and felt this to be an effective way to handle the complaints they received. Different again were the initiatives taken in five departments (the Water Department, the Electrical Department, the Postal Department, the Treasury Department and the Royal and Custom and Excise Department) to establish customer services departments to handle their complaints.

Table 6.4: Routes of Complaint Management by Departmental Level

Type	Routes of Complaint Management	Department
1	Complaint Unit (CU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management Services ▪ Brunei Muara District Office
2	Customer Service (CS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water
3	Public Relation Officer (PRO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey
4	Director / Administration (DA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BINA ▪ Ports
5	Head of Division (HOD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Services ▪ Town and country Planning
6	Combination of Routes 2 and 3 [CS & PRO]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrical Services
7	Combination of Routes 2 and 4 [CS & DA]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postal
8	Combination of Routes 2 and 5 [CS & HOD]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Treasury ▪ Royal customs and excise
9	Combination of Routes 4 and 5 [DA and HOD]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agriculture and Agrifood ▪ Land Transport ▪ Community development
10	Combination of Routes 3, 4 and 5 [PRO, DA, HOD]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labour ▪ Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan Land ▪ Housing

6.6 Complaint Management Procedures

Some, but not all, of the government departments had formal complaint procedures in place, as can be seen in Table 6.5 below:

Table 6.5: Complaint Management Procedures

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA2, RA3, RA9, RA19, RA22, RA23, RA26, RA32, RA44, RA55, RA56, RA60	Have complaint procedures	Some department have complaint procedures. Respondents stated that the procedure was not either ready, not been endorsed and have little knowledge on the complaint procedure.
RA1, RA5, RA6, RA8, RA10, RA11, RA12, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA16, RA18, RA21, RA24, RA25, RA27, RA29, RA30, RA31, RA33, RA34, RA35, RA36, RA42, RA48, RA49, RA50, RA51, RA52, RA53, RA54, RA55, RA57	No Complaint Procedure	Have not seen the actual work process of receiving complaints. The departments does not have people to look into it although they have talked about it several times with top management, but until now, they have not seen one including the documentation.

One interviewee explained that, on receiving a complaint via their department's hotline, the matter would be directed to the particular section to which it related, for example, a complaint about standards of maintenance, cleanliness or a mechanical defect would be referred to the estates or housing division within the department. Some of the interviewees also explained that, while they had procedures for most activities, they did not have one specifically for handling complaints. Others, however, suggested that their complaints procedure complied with the

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification that emphasises transparency to customers.

Others again pointed out that although their departments had a complaints procedure, until now, it had still never been used. Some also acknowledged that their procedures had not yet been endorsed by top management. Another interviewee admitted that his department did not have much knowledge on complaint procedures and that any complaints received would normally be sent to the relevant administration section. Several also accepted that their top managements were not seriously focused on complaint management, and that while there had been talk about introducing a procedure, nothing firm had yet been decided.

Overall, out of sixty interviewees, some thirty three (55%) stated that they had no complaint procedures in their departments. A small number were not sure whether or not they had, pointing out that their departments tended to rely on their call centres for such matters. Some also admitted that they had not personally seen their department's complaints procedure although were aware of their existence. One interviewee acknowledged that his department did not attach sufficient importance to complaints and to having a formal procedure.

In many instances, the research revealed, when a complaint was received within a department, staff tended just to follow their own instincts and habits in passing it on or seeking a resolution. It was also apparent that a further significant barrier for many staff was the tendency of their departments to seem overly bureaucratic in relation to such matters; thus discouraging formal reporting or recording of any complaints received and instead simply dealing with them as best as they could themselves. Moreover, with most departments claiming to be quite burdened with workload, it was suggested that few senior staff had shown willingness to design a proper

complaints procedure thoroughly. From the viewpoint of most interviewees the issue had simply not been a top priority in their departments, even though there was acknowledgement that it was an important matter and one worthy of attention.

One commonly cited excuse that was offered in this context was that complaints were received only sporadically, rather than on, say, a daily basis. One interviewee responded by pointing out that *“So far we have no written procedures, frankly speaking when it comes to a complaint, we will settle it through discussion....why don't we have a complaint procedures? I won't say because of workload but because the number of complaints we receive is just the minimum that can be dealt with”*. Moreover, in many instances it was clear that it was only during the interviews that the staff concerned began to think about the issues in any detail and to realize that having a complaints procedure might be a good idea.

6.7 Complaint Management Processes

As the literature on complaint management suggests, the process is supposed to provide a clear record of the steps that have been taken and the information gathered along the way. In the literature, the importance of following a systematic process in this respect is widely emphasised (see for example, Goetsch and Davis, 1997:167; Lyon and Powers, 2001; Marra, 2005; Henneberg *et al.*, 2008). In Brunei, however, it was found that unequal numbers of interviewees mentioned different steps in their complaint processes. For instance some thirty two interviewees mentioned that they followed up on complaints, only nineteen indicating the formal conduct of investigations in such instances. Logically, of course, the number of interviewees commenting on each step of a formal complaint process would be the same. The complaint process steps is summarised in Table 6.6 below;

Table 6.6: Complaint Management Process

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA1, RA10, RA18, RA19, RA23, RA56	Complaint Form	The department has a complaint form.
RA3, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA9, RA13, RA14, RA19, RA23, RA26, RA32, RA36, RA39, RA40, RA43, RA45, RA48, RA49, RA51, RA52, RA56	Recording and filing complaints	Open the complaint file based on the nature of the complaints.
RA3, RA6, RA7, RA9, RA13, RA18, RA19, RA22, RA23, RA26, RA31, RA39, RA41, RA43, RA44, RA45, RA51, RA52, RA60	Investigating complaints	The department will forward complaints to related divisions for investigations.
RA3, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA9, RA10, RA12, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA18, RA19, RA24, RA25, RA26, RA28, RA30, RA31, RA32, RA33, RA34, RA35, RA36, RA39, RA41, RA47, RA48, RA49, RA50, RA52, RA56, RA59	Following up on complaints	The department will give the feedback to the call centre, after which the supervisor will make a call to inform the client. Another respondent claimed that the complainant submits the complaint to them, they then forward it to the relevant department, sometimes the response is late, we make follow up and asking the update status of the complaint.
RA1, RA22, RA23	Working to complaints response Times	Departments have complaint charter for receiving complaints, investigations and response time to the complainant.

RA1, RA3, RA7, RA8, RA12, RA13, RA14. RA22. RA26, RA32, RA48, RA53, RA56	Analysing complaint statistics	All complaints were recorded systematically in the database.
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6.7.1 Complaint Files and Recording Processes

Based on the information gathered from twenty one interviewees, it was also found that thirteen departments only provided a complaint form for filling in at the time that the complaint was made. One of the complaint processes involved opening a complaint file and recording the details. Some of the interviewees stated that they might or might not open a complaint file depending on the nature of the complaint. Once a complaint had been received, if it was to be recorded, it would be given a reference number. After that, an acknowledgement letter would be sent to the complainant. Another interviewee, however, stated that once they had received the complaint, a file was opened and that this was simply sent to the head of administration.

Each department, it seemed, had its own complaint-recording and handling procedures. For instance, in one department, if the complaint came from a call centre, e.g. by text message from the hotline, it would be faxed and forwarded to the relevant section to deal with. But in another department, after recording the complainant's name and nature of the complaint, it would be sent to a different team that would check on the complaint. In another case again, on receipt of a complaint, the details would be sent via email to the head of section.

6.7.2 Complaint Investigations

In terms of the complaint investigation processes of the sample of departments, only nineteen interviewees mentioned that their departments had undertaken formal investigations into complaints they had received. Moreover, it was pointed out by several managers that most complaints would not take long to be resolved and that only a very few which were more complicated were especially time-consuming and required significant attention from the department. For some of the departments, the ‘investigation stage’ was however considered to be the critical stage of complaint management, because this, it was felt, would be where the department was most likely to learn what had gone wrong and would have the opportunity to consider any lessons from the complaint. Grassroots problems might, for example, be identified that would need further investigation and action if similar problems were to be avoided in the future. One interviewee argued that, after receiving a complaint, the public relations officer would play an important role in reviewing and investigating the matter.

6.7.3 Following up on Complaints

The literature on good practice in complaint management emphasizes the importance of the complainant being promptly notified of receipt of their complaint and of being kept informed of progress in any on-going investigation. This, it has been argued, both increases the complainant’s positive feelings about the response of the agency and ensures realistic expectations on the part of the complainant. Information on the performance of departments of government in Brunei in this respect was gathered from thirty two of the interviewees – those that discussed their department’s follow-up with complainants.

One interviewee explained that once a member of the public had submitted a complaint to his department this would be forwarded to the relevant section; and if a response was late forthcoming, as was often the case, his department would send a follow-up request seeking an update of the status of the complaint. It was suggested, moreover, that complaint follow-up was not only limited to the complainant, with one interviewee pointing out that normally, after investigation, the hotline, would also be informed and, if necessary, the department would call and ask for details of the problem. If the department did not respond, it was suggested that a formal letter would be sent from the director seeking an update.

Other interviewees pointed out, furthermore, that follow-up action was not necessarily limited to replying to complainant only. For instance, some complainants might well lodge a complaint to one department about another, for example, complaining to the transport department about the company responsible for road maintenance. It was also suggested that some departments tended to adopt a reactive approach, for instance, giving a status update of the complaint only if the complainant happened to call them.

6.7.4 Complaint Response Times

Only three interviewees, from three different departments, indicated that their department took the matter of prompt complaint response times very seriously. These three interviewees each mentioned their complaint charters that established response times of three days for answering complaints. However, in the utilities sector, the complaint charter defines three hours as the desirable response time (this reflecting the problems that discontinuity in supply or leakages can cause members of the public). Out of the sixty interviewees only two indicated having a

complaint charter in place (one of which had both a complaint charter for receiving complaints, and another governing investigations and response times).

6.7.5 Compiling Statistics on Complaints

The recording of complaints was generally recognised to be valuable in ensuring that lessons could be learned and improvements made. In the literature, compilation of complaint statistics has been widely advocated to provide better pictures of the issues to be derived from complaint information (Trappey *et al.*, 2010; Razali and Jaafar, 2012). One interviewee explained that all complaints were recorded systematically in the department's database that contained one file containing information on each case, the procedures that had been followed and details of issues for improvement. It was suggested that all complaints were expected to be recorded within 24 hours, with details of the nature of each complaint, who was handling it, and so on. However, many interviewees suggested that their departments were only collecting the statistics about the complaints they had processed rather than compiling more comprehensive complaint statistics. Related to that, the departments admitted that, whilst compiling the statistics, the data was often quite mixed up and error-ridden because of the heavy workloads that staff were experiencing.

Many other departments, it was found, however, did not compile complaint statistics at all and had no systematic monitoring processes in place for complaints. One reason here was suggested to be that complaints tended to be received by more than one member of staff, therefore co-ordinating data compilation was not always straightforward to do.

6.8 Complaint Management Training

In the literature, several scholars have argued that training on complaint handling deserves to be offered to all personnel, not only those in central customer service departments (see for example, Van Ossel and Stremersch, 1998:172; Weldy, 2009). However, this was found hardly to be the case in the government departments of Brunei. Here only two departments reported providing complaint training to all their staff as can be seen in Table 6.7 below:

Table 6.7: Complaint Management Training

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA2, RA6, RA8, RA9, RA10, RA18, RA25, RA39, RA48, RA53	Training skill	Respondents were given training on communication skills, conflict resolution, knowledge skill, stress management. The right people for training.
RA1, RA7, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA19, RA26, RA28, RA31, RA32, RA42, RA43, RA50, RA52	Challenges	Limited training, not the right people and does not reflect to the department. Never attend training before.

6.8.1 Complaint Management Training Skills

Many interviewees stated that they had received much training in relation to communication skills especially those operating at the front-line on the public counters. Such training would typically include skills in talking to customers and handling customer calls. Also common-

place was training in conflict resolution, stress management, public speaking and in areas of specialist knowledge. One interviewee pointed out that, since there was high staff turnover in the department, new staff were now given a 'tool box' (or practice manual) containing key areas of knowledge and answers to frequently asked questions.

In addition, another interviewee responded by saying that training was given in several phases of staff careers and for different tiers in the organisational hierarchy of the department. In some departments – including those without complaint management procedures in place -, some interviewees admitted that they had not received any training since starting work within their departments. Several also indicated that, because they had received no specific training on complaint handling, they would just have to do their best; talking politely to the complainant and explaining the procedures of the department as best they could, and hoping that the complainant would understand. Much, it seemed, depended on the experience of the particular officer in charge or the one who had received the complaint.

Although some staff had been sent on training courses on complaint handling, the majority had only attended more general training courses or programmes related more generally to their main job responsibilities rather than anything specific to complaint handling. The main exception in this respect was found to be the Management Services Department which had sponsored such training, as well as having sent some of its officers overseas for wider experience through job attachments. Overall, there appeared to be little training being provided on complaint handling despite the agreement about the value of such activity (Van Ossel and Stremersch, 1998:172).

Some training programmes were organised by particular departments and held in their own

training centres (as in-house training) or at the civil service institute¹¹. But some courses, such as in communication and customer service, were handled centrally by the civil service institute. Several respondents voiced their concern about the small quota of places available to departments on centrally-organised training – in many instances this being limited to two people only.

6.8.2 Training Challenges

Fourteen interviewees stated that they had never attended any training at all, including several who argued that their department ought to organize opportunities particularly in dealing with the public. For many departments, training tended to be a seasonal activity while other respondents pointed out that some staff who had previously been sent on courses in complaint handling had been transferred and allocated to other work soon afterwards and therefore the benefits had been largely lost. One interviewee claimed that customer service training was only available to the lower tiers of management when it seemed quite as relevant to middle and senior management, and another argued that, within his department, it was always difficult to support staff from lower echelons on training programmes because of the busy daily workloads.

¹¹ The Institut Perkhidmatan Awam (IPA) or Civil Service Institute is an important government training agency in Brunei which is responsible for providing training and consultancy, designing and delivering short courses, updating and implementing training programmes needed for the civil service. Civil Service Institute hired both local and international learning consultancies.
http://ipa.gov.bn/ipaonline/ipa_information/ipa_history.aspx

One interviewee considered such training unimportant for senior officers and another thought that often staff were sent on training programmes simply to fill up the courses and frequently with inappropriate members of the department. Language was another problem cited in this context. Some interviewees stated that the best customer service courses were delivered in English but that many staff were not well versed in this language. In departments that did not appear to practice complaint management, while there was little in the way of opportunities for training in the subject, there were relevant training courses available in subjects such as handling calls from customers, and on meeting and greeting customers. But overall, it was clear that more such opportunities were needed within the departments to prepare staff to undertake complaint management more effectively.

6.9 Complaint Handling Empowerment

Some twenty seven interviewees from fifteen different departments stated that they felt empowered in dealing with complaints as shown in Table 6.8. One stated that he felt empowered especially on the operational side by his supervisor; the supervisory level being where most of the complaints were received. Empowerment was considered important from the viewpoint of enabling simple decisions (i.e. those falling within agreed policies) to be taken promptly and without having to refer them up the management hierarchy. One interviewee pointed out that, if the complaint was about a routine matter, staff were likely to know how to respond, especially so if the relevant processes were properly documented. Meanwhile, another interviewee suggested that while there was empowerment to front-line staff for the most basic matters, for others, including some fairly straightforward ones, it would still be necessary to refer them up to a higher level. Overall, some nine respondents felt they were not empowered sufficiently by their supervisors and their departments more generally to handle complaints.

Table 6.8: Complaint Empowerment

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA1, RA2, RA6, RA7, RA8, RA11, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA16, RA18, RA22, RA23, RA24, RA25, RA33, RA39, RA41, RA43, RA44, RA45, RA48, RA49, RA51, RA54, RA56, RA57	There is empowerment	Management listens to the staffs' suggestion, for instance opening counter during public holiday too if necessary.
RA5, RA9, RA10, RA12, RA21, RA27, RA32, RA40, RA50	There is no empowerment	Only management make the decision.

6.10 Complaint Commitment

Forty respondents stated that they received great support from the top management regarding complaints, as shown in Table 6.9. This included instructions and guidance received from the top manager who, it was said, would always show concern in regard to public complaints. In other cases, the respondents also highlighted that when a complaint or problem was received, the department would bring the matter before a meeting for discussion and decision about action.

According to four respondents, there were clear directions from management regarding complaints. In such instances, it would be easy for the complaint handler to categorise complaints and to respond to them with standard operating procedures. In addition to that, thirty seven respondents stated that the top management was dedicated to complaint management. Communication was acknowledged to be important and management expected to be kept informed. To that extent, the respondents pointed out that, to be a customer-focused and

customer-oriented organization, their departments needed to make sure that complaints would not be kept secret, and the permanent secretary would always remind the department not to make unrealistic promises in any response to the public, particularly through the media. Another respondent pointed out that, when some complaints were raised in the newspapers, management would make sure those issues were indeed properly addressed.

Nevertheless, a further three respondents admitted that lack of understanding and sympathy by top management was often a problem and, as a result, the importance of customer complaints, whether from external customers or internal staff, were too often ignored. In addition, often when a complaint was made directly to top management, or had been highlighted in the mass medias, only then would action be taken.

Table 6.9: Complaint Commitment

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA8, RA16, RA22, RA32	Clear direction	Easy for the complaint handler to deal with complaints.
RA1, RA2, RA3, RA5, RA7, RA8, RA9, RA10, RA11, RA14, RA15, RA18, RA21, RA24, RA25, RA26, RA27, RA28, RA29, RA30, RA31, RA34, RA35, RA36, RA40, RA41, RA42, RA43, RA44, RA45, RA47, RA49, RA52, RA55, RA56, RA57, RA59	Dedicated	The departments to be more customer-focused
RA8, RA19, RA13	Lack of understanding	Involvement of top management is not necessary

6.11 Making Improvements in Response to Complaints

It has been argued in the literature that learning from complaints is only likely to happen if proper complaint procedures are followed (Wood, 1996; Faed, 2010; Andrews and Boyne, 2010). In this respect as discussed in Chapter 2, the literature has suggested that some organisations use customer complaint information as a part of a structured learning process, while others do so as part of a process of securing improvements in their performance. In this research it was found that complaint management does indeed bring about much improvement in government departments, as can be seen in Table 6.10 below:

Table 6.10: Complaint Management leading to Improvement

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA2, RA6, RA15, RA17, RA19, RA24, RA24, RA31, RA44, RA45, RA47, RA53, RA56, RA57, RA59	Better service delivery	Complaints have improved the service delivery in the government departments.
RA23, RA24, RA39, RA53	New laws	New laws emerge from customer complaints.
RA2, RA3, RA52	New policy	Some policies have been changed because of complaints.
RA9, RA11, RA15, RA43, RA51	New procedures	Changes in procedure were made because of complaints.
RA8, RA10, RA11, RA16, RA17, RA22, RA31, RA33, RA48, RA49, RA53, RA 56, RA 60	New process	Changes and improvement in department process were due to complaints.

RA3, RA6, RA13	Improve System	The department system was improved due to complaints.
RA12, RA40, RA50	Interaction	Interaction between the government's departments and public was improved.
RA2	Systematic call center	More telephone lines were created on complaints and thus further improved the call centre.
RA5, RA26	Better Attitudes	Complaints also improved the attitude of civil servants.

It was found, for example, that improvements were made by several different government departments in Brunei irrespective of whether or not they had implemented complaint management procedures. Fifteen interviewees stated that, when they received complaints from the media, for them, their interest was merely to publicise the information more widely rather than to make demands for improvement. These same interviewees also argued that government departments had often changed their methods of working or procedures as a result of complaints but that few people would be aware of this fact. For example the receipt of frequent complaints from residents about failures in garbage collection had led to the establishment of a small office team to review the arrangements for the service and how to improve it to ensure a cleaner city centre.

Another interviewee talked about other occasions when public complaints had led to improved interaction arrangements between the public and the government departments such as improved counter services (e.g. with longer opening times). Another interviewee also highlighted an

example of how complaints had been beneficial in extending the time periods allowed for applications for declarations to the customs department, making for greater convenience for applicants. Similarly, the opening of public counters of several government departments on Fridays had also been a direct consequence of public complaints.¹²

In the academic literature, it is argued that complaints can and should provide opportunities for organizations not only to learn but also to improve their long term relationships with customers (Van Ossel *et al.*, 2003; Stauss and Seidel, 2005; Vos *et al.*, 2008). This point was highlighted by three interviewees in the research through examples of situations where customer attitudes towards the departments had improved precisely because of sensitive handling of complaints. In these examples, it was said, discussions with the complainants had greatly helped clear up misunderstandings and provided them with better appreciation of the policies of the department and the reasons for them.

Two other examples came from interviewees who pointed out that, as a result of complaints received, their departmental call centres had been reorganised and now worked in a much more systematic manner. One of these interviewees further added that their department had learnt much from complaints from the public about the frequency of power outages in a particular district – a problem that hitherto had been unknown to the department.

A further four interviewees also highlighted that, in response to complaints, their departments had reviewed and decided to seek amendment to some of the laws of the land (although adding that this latter task was likely to take some time to implement). They added that several of the

¹² In Brunei, the working week is from Monday to Thursday plus Saturday, with Friday and Sunday considered to be public holidays.

laws were considered to be out of date and less than relevant now, and that complaints provided the most valuable evidence and justification for amending clauses to make them more appropriate to current circumstances and expectations. Complaints were also said to have resulted in shifts in departmental policies in several respects. Indeed, four interviewees talked of instances where their departments had revised their policies as a direct result of complaints. In one such case, the receipt of many complaints about the use of prepayment meters, had led to the setting up of a 'twenty-four-seven' team to review the policy and to change the arrangements, and at no small cost to the organisation. Complaints, the interviews revealed, had also forced one department to make changes to staff working practices to provide extra hours of staffing cover and the deployment of a new team.

Another example of policy change through complaints, according to one interviewee, arose when the existing policy was shown not to benefit the public or to be in line with public expectations. Initially, the interviewee said, the department did not react; but with more complaints, it triggered staff into thinking more carefully about what customers were saying and how they wanted the arrangements to work. On the other hand four other of the interviewees could not recall any instances where complaints had led to changes in their department's policies, albeit acknowledging that complaints did often encourage the department to think differently or to review its stance or attitude towards customers.

Thirteen interviewees also highlighted the impact of complaints on their work processes. Four, for example, mentioned how the process times taken by their departments has been shortened, while another nine stated that complaints had resulted in still more fundamental changes to departmental procedure schedules. For instance, according to one interviewee, previously, when complaints were made about damage to a government house, a period of three days was

the norm for taking action because the department had to write and notify another agency to enact the necessary repairs. It had always been considered a slow and bureaucratic process, but action was often only taken because a complaint had been received – with the result that now, instant action would be taken to commission any necessary repairs. Other interviewees also supported the view that complaints were helpful in speeding up processes, for example, in relation to the issuing of business licenses. On the other hand, one interviewee did suggest that it could be risky for government departments to rush to make changes on the basis of a single complaint and that it was important to take time to review the issue thoroughly before deciding on improvements.

6.12 Complainant Satisfaction with Complaint-Handling

As can be seen in Table 6.11, one interviewee suggested that, as a civil servant, he must show sensitivity and respect towards the customer regardless of whether or not the customer's arguments seemed valid and fair. Four interviewees claimed that they generally assumed complainants to be happy enough with the way their complaint was being handled unless a further complaint was received. It was also generally assumed that it would be acceptable for the department to inform the complainant of the action that had been taken as a result of their complaint, and without any survey of complainant satisfaction with the process or the outcome. Certainly, it was suggested, if the complainant smiled as they left the department, it was assumed that they were sufficiently satisfied with the complaint handling! However, others were more wary of such assumptions being made and agreed that follow-up survey work would be desirable.

Only four interviewees recalled having ever received letters of appreciation from complainants regarding the complaint handling in their cases. However, as part of department’s commitment towards accessibility, one manager had issued his personal telephone number through which complainants and the media could make direct contact to a senior level.

Table 6.11: Complaint Culture

Interviews	Themes
RA9, RA25, RA41, RA53	Assumptions of customer satisfaction
RA19, RA34, RA56, RA59	Customer appreciation
RA2	Personal numbers
RA6, RA17, RA57	Technology
RA7, RA24, RA26, RA28, RA47, RA51	Informal occasions
RA1, RA15, RA22, RA23, RA29, RA32, RA34, RA35, RA43, RA49, RA51, RA52, RA59	Leaflets

6.13 Learning about Customer Satisfaction with Public Services

In addition the research highlighted various means by which different government departments learned about citizen or customer satisfaction (see Table 6.12). In this respect seven key themes (or modes for learning) were particularly highlighted through the interviews as follows:

Table 6.12: Ways of Learning about Customer Satisfaction in Public Services

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA3, RA6, RA8, RA19, RA23, RA40	Customer Awareness Day	Customer awareness day is considered as an important mechanism for public to get more knowledge or insight about the services or products.
RA3, RA5, RA9, RA13, RA14, RA22, RA32, RA44, RA48, RA49, RA55, RA56, RA60	Customer survey mechanism	Customer survey is also considered as an effective method to collect feedbacks.
RA2, RA3, RA7, RA8, RA23, RA24, RA27, RA42, RA43, RA53, RA58	Dialogue with public and customer	Another effective way of learning customer satisfaction is through a dialogue with the public.
RA53, RA55, RA57, RA59	Discussion among colleague	Discussion among colleagues was also another alternative way to create learning whereby the experiences from the members were taken into account.
RA8, RA9, RA22, RA57	Other Department or Agencies Related	Learning from the same organization, since the department is also a member of world organization, is also quite possible.
RA8, RA13, RA18, RA22, RA23, RA27, RA41, RA45, RA49, RA56, RA60	Research	Using research as a process of learning, many improvements have been made.
RA26, RA27, RA30, RA48	Individual Experience	The respondents share their experience with colleague including handling things based on common sense.
RA18, RA23, RA26, RA30, RA34, RA42, RA44, RA45, RA49, RA61	Complaint recurrence	With complaint recurrence, the government department would be able to learn on what went wrong and hence improved from that.

6.13.1 Customer Awareness Day

Customer awareness days were considered an important mechanism for the public to gain more knowledge or insight about the services or products available from government departments. They were also seen as opportunities for the public to forward their ideas and complaints to higher authority. For government departments, this was considered an effective means for collecting useful information or gaining feedback about their services and their suitability to customer needs and expectations and as opportunities for informing the public about current or developing policy initiatives. They were also seen as useful opportunities for improving interactions between the public and government departments and for building trust. Despite all this, however, only six interviewees indicated that their departments had conducted customer awareness days on a regular basis.

6.13.2 Customer Surveys

Another means for gauging customer satisfaction with complaint-handling that was discussed was through the use of special surveys. Based on respondent experience, customer surveys were considered an effective, and quite popular, method for collecting feedback. However, it was argued that the public preferred something more than simply an opportunity to fill in survey forms (whether on-line or on paper). For instance, one interviewee argued that it was difficult to get real feedback from the public or to understand whether customers were happy with the ways they felt their complaints had been handled from simple survey questions. Thirteen interviewees from eight different departments made this point and stated that their departments had carried out more searching customer surveys to capture information about complaints and complaint handling.

Another interviewee also claimed that, within their departmental complaint management processes, the last stage was specified as informing the customer that their complaint had been addressed and that feedback on the handling of the case should be sought through a questionnaire. This was available from the service counter. However, according to the interviewee, the sample of responses received was considered unlikely to be representative, as only a very small proportion bothered to fill in the forms.

6.13.3 Dialogue with Complainants

Based on the experiences of eleven interviewees, another effective way of learning about customer satisfaction with complaint handling was said to be through direct dialogue with the public. This, it was suggested, might best be done through interaction outside the department, for instance by conducting discussions with complainants as they left the building. This was considered as a proactive measure to capture complaints or customer feedback. One interviewee stated that they held forums on occasions with the heads of village in each local district. Besides that, others also pointed out the potential of such communication with the public via social media.

6.13.4 Discussion among Colleagues

This theme captured the view of four interviewees on learning about customer satisfaction with complaint handling. Learning of complaints, it was suggested, was not to be limited to obtaining feedback solely from the customer. Discussion among colleagues was also another potentially useful way of creating learning. It was suggested that it would be good if the department were to implement this strategy because a sharing of opinions and experiences

between team members could be helpful in avoiding (not just solving) complaints and by providing a range of judgements on an issue or about how best to solve a problem.

6.13.5 Research

Another way of learning about customer satisfaction was suggested to be through using research to learn from complaints. Such learning could create improvements to the department's processes or policies. In addition, by doing research, the department would also be able to learn the best practices from abroad. Eleven respondents stated that their government departments had made efforts to do research on improvements in response to public complaints. Moreover, one such respondent also said that doing research was a must for them because of the establishment of a quality unit within their department. Doing research from complaints, according to the respondents from nine departments had enabled them to identify problems related to both processes and service quality.

6.13.6 Individual Experience

In the academic literature, learning can also be based on individual experience (West, 1994; McManus, 1996 and Robinson *et al.*, 1997). This indeed was highlighted by four respondents. Here it was stated that, as staff, they had shared their experience in complaint-handling with colleagues, and had emphasised the importance of common sense reactions in this context, particularly since they had received no formal training in the subject.

6.13.7 Complaint Recurrence

Another way of learning was said to be through ‘complaint recurrence’. As one respondent put it, when the same complaint is made by different people several times, it is clearly time to learn that something is not right and to consider making changes. This point was made by ten respondents.

6.14 Comparing the Performance of Government Departments With and Without Complaint Management Procedures

From the research, it was found that, of some twenty government departments, only eleven had at least some elements of a complaint management process in their organizations. These are labelled as Cluster 1 in Table 6.13. In addition to that, nine departments did not have complaint management and this is referred to as Cluster 2.

Table 6.13: Government Departments With and Without Complaint Management

Complaint Management Processes	
Cluster 1 (Yes)	Cluster 2 (No)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Electrical Services ▪ Management Services ▪ Treasury ▪ Royal customs and excise ▪ Brunei Muara District Office ▪ Water ▪ Land ▪ Survey ▪ Housing ▪ Postal ▪ Community development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Services ▪ Immigration and National Registration ▪ Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan ▪ Labour ▪ Agriculture and Agrifood ▪ BINA ▪ Town and country Planning ▪ Ports ▪ Land Transport

Although eleven departments had some form of complaint management within their organizations, none could be described as systematic or conforming with the standards of what might be regarded as a good complaint management process. For instance, in the **Electrical Services Department**, it was found that there was no manual of work procedures for complaint handling. Although the department compiled a series of complaints statistics, no analysis or reporting on the statistics had been carried out. The same situation was found in the **Treasury Department** where the customer service team was responsible for handling public complaints. Here, surprisingly, it was found that there was no complaints procedure, no available statistics had been gathered, and no analysis of complaints undertaken. A similar situation also applied to the **Royal Customs and Excise Department**, even though this department did have a customer service unit (albeit only to provide support services).

In other departments such as **Brunei Muara District Office**, although a complaints unit had been established in 2007, there was no public complaint counter available. Moreover, even though there was a complaints procedure and the department also compiled complaint statistics, no analysis and or report had yet been produced. In the **Water Department** and the **Land Department**, although there was no complaint unit as such, both did have complaint procedures and did compile statistics on complaints. In addition, both had also carried out analyses based on these.

The Survey Department did have both a customer service department and a complaints procedure in place. However, it did not compile statistics and again no analyses or reports had yet been produced. The **Housing Department** on the other hand, did not have a complaints unit nor complaint procedures; and had not compiled any statistics nor conducted any analyses. And the picture was much the same in the **Community Development Department**. At the

Postal Services Department, there was a customer service unit and statistics were routinely compiled (by the Quality Unit within the department). However, there was no complaints procedure and no analyses of complaints had been carried out.

From Cluster 2, only three departments recorded complaints and had compiled statistics, namely the **Public Services Department**, the **Labour Department** and the **Immigration and National Registration Department**. However, it was unclear how the statistics collected were being used, if at all. There were no complaints procedures in any of the departments in Cluster 2 except for the Public Services Department (where it was said that a work procedures manual for complaints was in existence).

6.15 Complaint Management Challenges

Although several different motivations for having complaint management in government departments have been discussed earlier in this chapter, a key finding from the interviews with officials was that there exist a number of potential weaknesses in the practices of most, if not all, departments of the Brunei Government and a number of challenges that merit addressing. Table 6.14 summarises these challenges. Making an established department of government more customer-orientated can be difficult indeed, particularly if the culture and tradition is more authoritarian and inward-facing than marketised and outward-looking.

The interviews also highlighted the limited nature of cooperation between sections and units within most government departments and even less between different departments – and the dearth of exchange and learning from one another as well. For instance, one unit might receive the complaints but the investigations might well be handled elsewhere by another unit. Many

interviewees also claimed that, due to financial constraints, it was usually taking quite some time to fill vacant posts and recruit new people that so often staffing pressures were a reason for apparent inaction in handling complaints (many of which were themselves likely to be resource-intensive). A related further challenge was the high workloads of staff that meant that additional duties like analysing complaints often had to wait their turn and be given lower priority than perhaps they deserved.

Other challenges that were mentioned in the interviews included the shortage of skills in working with new technology in most government departments, whether with email, spreadsheets and databases, or other such software, that would, ordinarily, make the task of logging and analysing complaints fairly simple and efficient. At the same time, a principal reason for not having a complaint charter in place, according to one interviewee, was that the drawing up of such documents was beyond the normal routines of the department.

Table 6.14: Complaint Management Challenges in Brunei

Interviews	Themes	Remarks
RA8, RA11, RA2, RA58	Authoritative Attitude	Top management does not know and it is impossible to make everyone happy.
RA6, RA31	Jurisdictions	Lack of cooperation from other agencies
RA2, RA14, RA30, RA31, RA53	Financial Constraints	Less budget for recruiting manpower.
RA14, RA29, RA30, RA34, RA53	Human Resources / Manpower problem	Workload burdens
RA3, RA7, RA13, RA14, RA19, RA56	Manpower number	The number of manpower is less

RA5	Enforcement Mechanism	Some regulation was not followed
RA9, RA19	Technology usage	Need regular interaction by technology such email
RA5, RA7, RA9, RA11, RA15, RA17, RA18, RA21, RA28, RA29, RA30	Complaint charter	No complaint charter, no complaint system in place, no records on complaints, not aware of complaint process.
RA19, RA11, RA22	Overlapping	Implementation problems and overlapping create confusion
RA3, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA8, RA9, RA10, RA11, RA12, RA15, RA18, RA26, RA31, RA39, RA42, RA47, RA50	Lack of customers awareness	No customer survey and no leaflets.

6.16 Does Brunei need Independent Agency or Ombudsman?

In other countries, if the public are unhappy with the way the government handles their complaints, they can submit their complaint to an independent Ombudsman. However in Brunei, there is no such office nor indeed a separate public complaints bureau. In the research, interviewees were asked for their thoughts on the need for, and value of, having an independent Ombudsman office. In response, opinions were divided- as shown in Table 6.15. Out of sixty respondents, some nineteen were in favour while thirty eight were against the idea. Three other respondents were neutral on the issue.

Table 6.15: Pro and Against on the Establishing an Ombudsman

Interview No.	Theme	Remarks
RA3, RA9, RA12, RA17, RA20, RA23, RA24, RA29, RA30, RA32, RA36, RA37, RA38, RA41, RA44, RA47, RA51, RA52, RA60	Support for Ombudsman	Less bias and have more power.
RA2, RA4, RA5, RA6, RA7, RA8, RA10, RA11, RA13, RA14, RA15, RA16, RA18, RA21, RA22, RA25, RA26, RA27, RA28, RA31, RA33, RA34, RA35, RA39, RA40, RA42, RA43, RA45, RA46, RA48, RA49, RA50, RA54, RA55, RA56, RA57, RA58, RA59	Against of Ombudsman	Will create another layer or bureaucracy.

6.16.1 Agreement on the Value of an Ombudsman’s Office

Of the nineteen respondents who were in favour of the establishment of an independent agency such as ombudsman to tackle complaints of maladministration or poor service delivery, six thought that the main advantage would be the office’s neutrality and independence. As one respondent suggested, “...it would be good to have an Ombudsman because it is a neutral organization; if the government investigates complaints, it might do so with bias. We normally do not admit our fault. The idea of having Ombudsman, who doesn’t favour any party is good because they can look objectively at the situation (RA9)”. In addition, four respondents thought that, with an independent ombudsman, there would be more power and pressure to investigate

complaints. As one respondents suggested “...sometimes within government departments, people do not know where to complain. If there is organization outside government power; they can see the function of the government department... it would be much better if complaints were reviewed by a non-governmental organization or independent agency...” (RA12). Of the other nine respondents supporting the idea one commented that “...it is better if there is another agency that can examine any issues that faced by public in relation to on Government Departments such as Ombudsman RA17)”.

6.16.2 Disagreement on the Value of an Ombudsman’s Office

Thirty four respondents expressed the view that it was better that public complaints investigation was undertaken not by additional independent agency but by a leading government department such as Management Services Department or by units within each government department. Generally it was felt better if the government department were to handle their own complaints. As one respondent said, “To set up independent agency like Ombudsman is never in our mind, currently it is enough to have such work handled by the Management Services Department. (RA7)” and another argued that “...If every department had its respective complaints units, things should be ok. (RA13)”. Another two respondents expressed the view that by having an independent agency, another layer of bureaucracy would be created: “...I don’t think so, to me it just create another layer. (RA2)”. One respondent was concerned about the inappropriateness of having an independent agency examining issues that might be highly sensitive in nature and that could reflect badly on the image of the government as a whole.

6.17 Conclusions

Overall, it was found that relatively few government departments have shown much initiative in relation to complaint management and instead have concentrated for the most part simply on providing services to the public in the established manner. The interviews revealed shortcomings on the part of most government departments in realising and appreciating the advantages and benefits of complaint management and as a result were missing opportunities for learning how to improve their performance. The interviews also highlighted general weaknesses in the skill-base for complaint management, and that little was being done by way of training or development to build capacity and capability in this respect.

This chapter has provided insights on the extent and limitations of complaint management and learning from complaints in Brunei through the responses of a sample of civil servants at senior, middle and junior grade levels. In so doing, it has added much understanding to the statistical patterns presented in Chapter 5. The evidence suggests that in Brunei, a number of different ways of working and ‘routes’ for complaint management exist and that each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses. One of the key findings was of significant differences between departments in the learning being derived from complaints. Another is that different motivations and blockages account for variance in the degree of commitment to complaint management and to treating it as a serious tool for improving public services in the country. Some of these motivations and blockages have been discussed in the published literature on the subject, as discussed in Chapter 2. But others have not and, as indicated at the outset of this thesis, mostly the published literature is silent about complaint management in autocratic states, which presents its own motivations to be harnessed and its own obstacles to be overcome.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of the Thesis

Three key research questions underpinned and shaped this thesis as follows:

1. What is the motivation for governments of autocratic states to learn about citizen/customer experience with public services and, as a result to improve them?
 - a. How important are complaints as an indicator in this respect?
 - b. Are there differences between government departments/public service functions in the attention given to citizen/customer complaints, and if so why?

2. What difference does a systematic complaint management process make to a government department's capability and inclination to learn from its citizens and customers and to improve and develop its public services accordingly?
 - a. What are the key elements of a good complaint management process?
 - b. How well does the Brunei complaints system compare with best practice in this respect?

3. How might governments in autocratic states, and therefore without the pressures of democratic accountability, best exploit the learning opportunities of complaints to ensure appropriate improvements to their public services?

From the findings of the research underlying this thesis, these questions can be answered in simple terms as follows:

RQ 1. What is the motivation for governments of autocratic states to learn about citizen/customer experience with public services and, as a result to improve them?

The findings have revealed at least five principal reasons for government departments in Brunei to operate systems of complaint management. First, doing so demonstrates a caring attitude towards the citizen – something that the king prioritises and for which he provides exemplary leadership as a caring monarch who has the citizens' welfare at heart. Second, it was clear from the research that complaint management helps government departments to improve, to provide better services, be better managed and organized and to earn greater public respect and trust. A third reason is that responsiveness to complaints on the part of government helps ensure political stability within the country as people become more confident that they have a voice; that any grievances and concerns are being listened to and that their government is potentially supportive and wanting to improve.

Fourth, in taking complaint management seriously departments of government are behaving in tune with the culture of Brunei – in which politeness is considered a vital human trait. Dealing with public complaints sensitively and supportively, rather than ignoring them or, worse, arguing against them, is consistent with cultural norms and societal expectations in this small but unified nation state. Fifth, by active listening to the citizens, the research findings suggest the government is more likely to enjoy citizen support in its efforts to create greater prosperity and increased well-being for all.

Generally, it was found that most of Brunei's twenty government departments had been making efforts in recent times to become more customer-orientated, albeit progressing at different paces to one another and to differing degrees, and for which the publication of client charters had been an important foundation. Most of the officials who were interviewed recognized and acknowledged that effective complaint management systems could help build public trust in government although only a few considered it a particularly high priority when set against other tasks and policy initiatives. It was also generally accepted that, in Brunei, without elections or tax demands for citizens, there was no great pressure on the government to be responsive to peoples' complaints and concerns beyond adherence to the expectations of the king to offer a culture of support and care through public service provision.

Under this first key research question, two sub-questions were also posed and the findings in relation to these can be summarized as follows:

First, with regard to RQ1.1 (How important are complaints as an indicator [of public service experience]?)

The key finding was that government departments have become increasingly aware of the benefits to be derived through learning from complaints. One such recognized benefit is that analyses of complaints can help in the review of current services. Additionally, complaints are now widely seen as a source of feedback to target improvements. By increasingly reacting to complaints in a constructive and positive manner, interactions between government departments and the public is considered to have improved. It was also clear from the interviews that most public servants now recognize that citizen confidence in government is enhanced by acting positively on complaints and so protect departmental reputations.

Conversely, it is now more widely accepted that failure to take complaints seriously potentially risks doing great harm to a department's reputation for both competence and as a caring public organization.

Generally, the evidence from public officials in this respect was that moves to react more systematically and sensitively to complaints, had led to improved interactions between government departments and the public. However, at the same time the interviews highlighted widespread concerns amongst government officials that initiatives to become more responsive in relation to complaints might well also prove damaging to departmental priorities and distract attentions from other developments that had greater potential to generate more revenues for departments and so help fund longer-term service improvements.

Then, with regard to the other sub-question RQ1.2 (Are there differences between government departments/public service functions in the attention given to citizen/customer complaints, and if so why?)

The main finding was that several departments have still to develop a real sense of customer focus and that, at the time of the research at least, even basic complaint management mechanisms were absent. While all departments had complied with the requirement to have a client charter, the roll-out of complaint management processes (as anticipated in the charters) was still to happen and very few departments were able to evidence substantive progress or definite plans in this respect.

In focusing particularly on complaint management processes, the research examined the realities of the five key 'routes' discussed in the literature for receiving and handling public

complaints. The key finding here was that complaints from the public are generally received and managed either by the directors or the heads of department or by the departmental Public Relations Units or customer service units. In short, despite the attempt through the client charter initiative to standardize the routes for complaint management, the Brunei government departments continue to operate their own processes and deal with complaints very much according to their own traditions and preferences, and which it was acknowledged, can be very confusing for complainants, and for the public more generally.

RQ 2. What difference does a systematic complaint management process make to a government department's capability and inclination to learn from its citizens and customers and to improve and develop its public services accordingly?

Turning to this second key research question, the principal message from the interviews was that several Brunei government departments were implementing service improvement programmes irrespective of whether or not they had implemented complaint management procedures – in other words analyses of complaints, for the most part, formed little or no part of the development and planning of such service improvements. Indeed, it was clear that the operational responsibility for handling complaints within most departments was quite divorced from that for strategic planning and the development of service provision. That said, the research did highlight a few instances where public complaints had indeed informed and led directly to service improvements – for example, in relation to public counter services (with longer opening times and opening on Fridays too, in responses to repeated complaints about the inconvenience of the previous schedules).

Similarly, in the utilities sector, it was complaints from the public about frequent power outages in one particular district that had highlighted a technical problem that hitherto had been unknown to the electricity supply department. Then in another case, the research identified a department that had reviewed and updated some of the legislation and regulations for which it was responsible, again, as a result of a series of complaints on which it had reflected. Another department was also highlighted that had made changes to its staff roster arrangements in order to be able to provide extra hours of staff cover and to establish an additional team.

As indicated earlier, this RQ2 research question also involved two sub-questions, these being as follows:

RQ2.1 What are the key elements of a good complaint management process?

RQ2.2 How well does the Brunei complaints system compare with best practice in this respect?

With regard to **RQ2.1**, the key findings in this study concerned the importance of ten specific elements that together comprise a good complaint management process as follows. First is the importance of having a single formally adopted written complaints policy and procedure for the organization as a whole (complaints policy). This complaint policy and procedure should be established in documentary form, well publicized and easily accessible to public and staff alike (this including provision of the organization's telephone number or hotlines and in multiple languages etc.). Second, and related, it is important that the organization provides multiple channels for the people to communicate their complaints (multiple channels for complaint). Third, is the importance of all complaints received being properly recorded and then acknowledged (complaint recording). Fourth, is the importance of having effective

systems and procedures in place to attend fairly and impartially to the issues raised by each complaint (complaint responsiveness and fairness).

Fifth, it's the importance of keeping people properly informed that their complaint is being addressed and of the progress of any investigation (complaint notification). It is also important in this context that people feel assured that their complaint is being treated seriously and fairly, and that there is reasonable prospect of action being taken as a result. Sixth, it is important that the organization has a nominated official to ensure consistency, timeliness and quality in how complaints are dealt with (complaint coordinator or manager). In addition, it is important that good records are kept (ideally electronically) by all staff involved in complaint handling on the progress being made in the investigation and of the evidence gathered and findings along the way (investigation records). Seventh, is the importance of all staff feeling empowered to play their part in handling complaints – from the front-line upwards and including senior management (complaint commitment and empowerment).

Eighth, on-going training in complaint handling is important for staff at all levels, not only those at the front-line or in the customer service team (training in complaint handling). Ninth, it is important that the organization should provide clear guidelines for assessment, investigation and reporting on complaints (complaint investigation and reporting). Tenth, it is important that the organization as a whole should recognize the positive value of complaints from the point of view of organizational learning and service development (learning from complaints). In this latter respect there needs to be preparedness on the part of the organization as a whole to commit due time and other resources to benefiting from such learning and to making appropriate improvements as a result.

Then regarding **RQ2.2**, the key finding was that none of the Brunei government department could be said at the time of the research to be demonstrating strong compliance with the ‘best practice’ standards of complaint management as advocated in the published literature. Only half were found to have a formal written complaint policy and procedure in places. Most seemed unconvincing with regard to realization of the potential of complaints as a basis for organizational learning and service development and few had systematic processes in place to ensure satisfactory recording purposes, still less for monitoring and analysis of patterns of complaints. Awareness of complaint policies and procedures among staff at all levels was found to be very patchy and indeed, only slightly more than a third of interviewees (35.7%) indicated that, to their knowledge, their departments did not offer written apologies to complainants even when it was clear that they were indeed at fault and when their organization was acknowledged to have failed to meet the expected standard.

Overall then, rather than well-established and common complaint management policies and practices across government in Brunei, departments were found to be following their own paths in relation to the subject, with a plethora of different models and practice standards and some giving the issue far more attention than others. Quite simply, the clear conclusion from the research was that much more needs to be done for the Brunei government as a whole to meet the standards of complaint management that have provided the benchmark in this thesis.

Finally, turning to RQ3, the question was ‘*How might governments in autocratic states, and therefore without the pressures of democratic accountability, best exploit the learning opportunities of complaints to ensure appropriate improvements to their public services?*’

In a context such as Brunei that is without the pressures of democratic accountability, it was concluded from the research that the key way forward for government departments would be

actively to exploit the learning opportunities of complaints through adopting a positive approach towards them – thus regarding all complaints as potentially helpful feedback rather than, as was said so often to be the case, as negative criticism, from those who were too often likely to be branded as ‘ill-informed’ and ‘ungrateful’.

A promising model in this context that is already practiced by some government departments in Brunei is that of ‘customer awareness days’; these being opportunities for the public to present their ideas and complaints to senior officials who make themselves available to listen and learn from the public. For government departments, this was considered a particularly effective means for collecting valuable information and for gaining helpful customer insights on experiences of public services, as well as providing opportunities for officials to inform the public about existing, new and forthcoming policy initiatives.

In addition, the research concluded on the value of customer satisfaction surveys of complaint-handling i.e. special surveys that would capture information from complainants about their experience of complaining and with the process of seeking remedy. The research findings also highlighted the learning opportunities to be exploited through more sharing of information and experiences in relation to complaints received between staff within departments. This, it was felt, could be especially helpful in avoiding (not just addressing) complaints. Above all, such sharing of experiences and information between staff in relation to complaints received and handled, could be usefully structured to focus on the positive side of learning the lessons and considering the adjustments and improvements that might be made to avoid recurrence.

7.2 Contributions of the Study

The research for this thesis has generated much new evidence about complaint management, and specifically within an autocratic state context. As such, it helps to fill an important gap in knowledge, at least as represented in the published literature (the vast majority of which is focused on western-world and democratic state contexts). Accordingly, a key outcome of the research is better understanding of the nature of the challenge for governments in developing a more customer-centric or citizen-oriented approach, for which an effective complaint management process is a key component, within a context in which the incentivizing pressures either of the market or of democratic electoral accountability are largely absent.

The study makes a further significant contribution through its focus specifically on complaint management within a public sector context, when again, most of the published literature, focuses on the context of commercial business and competitive markets. Furthermore, with such a focus, the research serves to enhance knowledge and understanding not only in academic terms, but also for the practice of public service management and for public administrators in autocratic state settings, and of course, particularly in the government of Brunei – which has both sponsored and supported the author of this thesis. A key benefit of the research for public administrative practitioners in Brunei then, is that the thesis highlights the standards of good practice in complaint management to which the country might aspire and has identified an agenda of policy and practice reforms that should make a significant difference to public satisfaction and trust in government.

7.3 Policy Recommendations on Complaint Management

Having thus summarized the main findings and considered the contribution that this thesis makes to understanding of the subject of complaint management in an autocratic state context, it is appropriate to consider the recommendations for policy and practice in Brunei in particular that flow from those findings. In this respect eight such concluding recommendations are made and discussed below in turn.

7.3.1 Recommendation 1. Setting and Maintaining High Standards of Complaint Management

The Brunei Government would benefit from formulating new policies and strategies on complaint management for its ministries and departments to ensure common standards for complaint management. To this end it would be helpful if leadership was provided from the Prime Minister's Office to ensure compliance with those standards. The preparation and distribution of a circular across government on the subject would seem a logical early step and setting out for each department the case for and basis of an effective complaint management process and establishing a timetable for implementation. In fact, in the past year, the Brunei government distributed such a circular, but one specifically concerned with the client charter idea - setting out the need and explaining what was to be expected with regard to key performance indicators and the production of annual reports, and ascribing a new leading and co-ordinating role in this regard to the Management Services Department. While it could be said that the opportunity was missed on that occasion to include something within the circular on complaint management, it should not now be difficult, in effect, to repeat the exercise but

this time with a focus on complaint management. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in Section 3.6 page 77).

7.3.2 Recommendation 2. Establishing an Independent Ombudsman Function

The second recommendation arising from the conclusions of this research is for the establishment of an independent ombudsman function to handle unresolved complaints against government departments and to provide an alternative source for the public to pursue their complaints. While it is clearly important that complaints are initially addressed towards the government department or other public body to which it refers, experience elsewhere confirms that it is good practice for there to be an independent body to which any unresolved grievances can be directed for further consideration, and ideally with powers of investigation and authority to make adjudications (in other words, to decide if a particular complaint can justifiably be upheld or not) and to determine what, if any, actions one or both parties must take in light of the decision. In instances where complaints cannot be satisfactorily resolved at departmental level, the Ombudsman's Office should present itself in a manner that makes referral of the matters easy and reassuring for aggrieved members of the public, for instance, with a single Ombudsman's Complaints Portal serving the country as a whole. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in 6.16.1 page 216).

7.3.3 Recommendation 3. Establishing a Complaints Unit in Every Government Department

Recommendation 3 is that each government department should have an appropriately staffed Complaints Unit to provide a focus of expertise and to assist in achieving compliance with the

standard procedures in the handling of complaints from the public. In fact this is already a mandatory requirement for departments in Brunei for the handling of both internal and external complaints and to make the complaint-making process easier and more consistent. But as the research has revealed marked differences between departments in the extent of commitment to this requirement it seems that a more concerted, cross-governmental, initiative is needed to achieve the spirit of the objective more thoroughly.

In particular, from the research findings, it seems there is some way to go to ensure that the process of responding to complaints is made more consistently systematic, fast and responsive. A further recommendation in this context is that each complaints unit should include at least one officer appropriate skills in public relations functions. In this respect, many interviewees in the research commented on situations where prompt action needed to be taken in relation to particular complaints because of the risk or potential damage to the reputation of the department, or indeed of government more generally. Having a specialist in communications and public relations management within each complaint management team would serve to reduce such risks. (Supporting evidence for these recommendations are to be found in Sections 5.2.9, page 148; and Section 6.8, page 195).

7.3.4 Recommendation 4. Improving Complaint Procedures

The research also highlighted high levels of variance in complaint handling policies and procedures between departments and identified much evidence to suggest this to be confusing and potentially problematical for staff as well as for members of the public. Accordingly, a further recommendation is that the procedures of all departments should be reviewed and standardized and a single model procedure agreed, implemented and adhered to in all instances.

Such procedures would need to be transparent and clearly articulated and publicised to the public through a carefully-thought-through publication and dissemination strategy, and as part of a public process for explaining the Government of Brunei's commitment to more customer-centric public services. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in Section 5.2.1, page 136; Section 5.2.2, page 137; and Section 6.6, page 187).

7.3.5 Recommendation 5. More Emphasis on Training for Complaint Handling

A fifth recommendation advocates developing greater expertise in government in complaint handling and for which a more concerted regime of training in the practices and skills of complaint management would seem especially important. Moreover, by bringing together staff from different departments for such training would itself help to ensure greater consistency across government and encourage the interchange of good practice ideas, experiences and lessons learned. The research has identified the individuality and independence of departments of government as a particular problem in this respect and a shared programme of training and development opportunities would facilitate the shift both to a common approach and to cross-governmental learning from complaints. Ideally at least some of the training might be accredited and lead to certificated standards of performance and achievement, which would also be a motivator for staff engagement and commitment. From the findings of the research it is also clear that the need for such training and development applies equally to those at the frontline as to those at supervisory and managerial levels. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in both Section 5.2.9, page 147; and Section 6.8.1, page 196).

7.3.6 Recommendation 6. Developing Analytics Skills for Complaint Management

In addition to the needs for enhanced skills in complaint management and in public relations within each complaint unit of government, the research findings support a recommendation for the teams also having within their midst at least one officer with specialist skills in analytics and who might provide the leadership both in undertaking research and analysis of patterns of complaints and in promoting enquiry and learning from complaints among colleagues more generally. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in 6.8.1 page 195 and Section 6.8.2 page 197).

7.3.7 Addressing Public Fears about Making Complains

As both the literature review and the empirical research findings from Brunei both clearly highlight, a key part of the reform process for complaint management needs to be about establishing the right social climate of empowered customers – a climate in which any public dissatisfaction with public services can be articulated without apprehension or fear about the possibilities of negative consequences or repercussions. Making a complaint when there are genuine feelings of dissatisfaction or grievance at poor customer experience, needs to be, from the complainant's viewpoint, acceptable, straightforward, fearless and worthwhile. Everyone also needs to be confident that their complaint will be investigated professionally and impartially to establish the facts and understand the circumstances properly before any conclusions are reached, decisions made, or actions taken. In this context the recommendation is made that every case is not only afforded due time and attention but also that the process that has been undertaken in this respect, as well as the outcome and reasons for it, are explained and communicated thoroughly to the complainant. Thus, even, if a complaint is ultimately not

upheld, the complainant is able to appreciate and respect that due process was indeed followed in reaching the decision. Ideally such communication is probably best undertaken in person, (whether by face to face or telephone) and with follow up letters. Attitude is all important, and what is needed is a healthy complaint culture within all departments. (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in Section 6.7.3, page 192 and Section 6.10, page 199).

In the same spirit, it is further recommended that each government department should produce and publicise their complaint charters setting out the processes to be followed, and specifying precisely what a complainant can reasonably expect, including the maximum response times for different categories of complaint. From what the research learned from interviewees, a good complaints charter might perhaps be one that pledged to resolve complaints within a time period of between 24 hours (for straightforward matters) to within 1 month (for the most complex ones, or those requiring the commissioning of special investigations and reports). (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in Section 6.7.4, page 193).

7.3.8 Financing Effective Complaint Management

It is an obvious but important point that, if the Government of Brunei is serious about complaint management it needs to commit appropriate financial resources to realise its ambition. In an era of increasing digital governance, this needs to include resourcing of on-line systems (e.g. complaint submission processes), in to resourcing sufficient staff and investing in staff training and development as discussed above. This then, is the final recommendation – that the Brunei government gives careful consideration to the resources that are needed to undertake complaint management effectively and consistently in all its departments, and prioritises budgets accordingly, as indeed many interviewees in the research emphasised as being of critical

importance (Supporting evidence for this recommendation is to be found in Section 5.2.8, page 146).

7.4 Conclusion

The research has used a mixed methods approach to reveal important aspects of the handling of complaints by departments of the Brunei government and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current practice, as benchmarked against standards established in the published literature and in best practice around the world. The principal finding has been that Brunei government departments have some way to go to reach the high standards of complaint management that are outlined and advocated in the literature. The conclusion, then, is that much needs to be done to improve practices in Brunei to ensure compliance with best practices and to guarantee a climate for public complaints that supports organizational learning through complaints. The evidence gathered through the research generally supports the concluding argument that, providing proper processes are put in place, followed diligently and with constructive and positive leadership, that Brunei can indeed be a beacon and an example to other autocratic states in satisfying its people and learning from them about the provision of excellent public services. This after all, is the wish of the King of Brunei, and that in itself must be a powerful motivation for making the necessary reforms and for taking complaint management more seriously.

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APPENDIX A

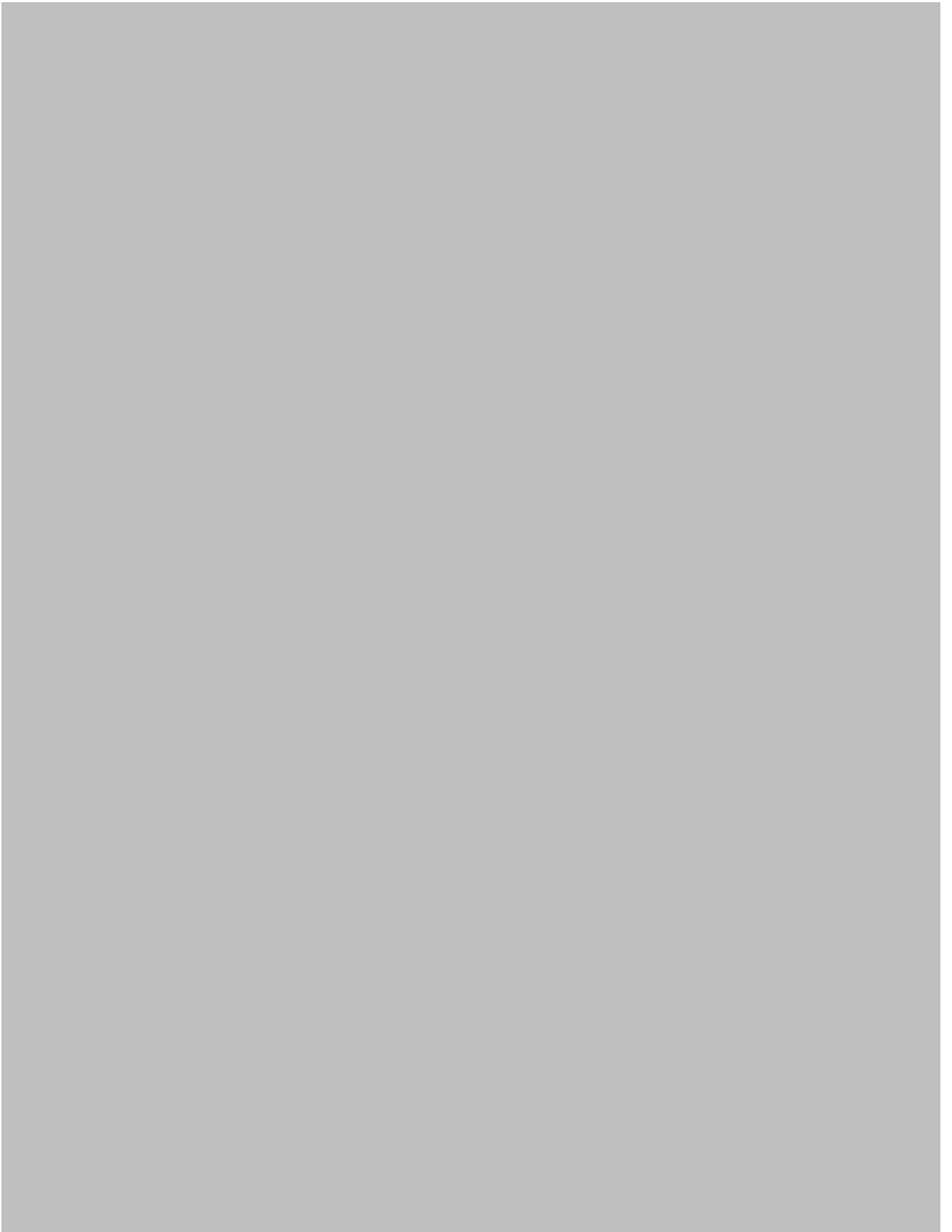
List of Departments that has been Surveyed by Management Services Department in 2012 (Customer Satisfaction Survey)

Ministry	No.	Department
Prime Minister's Office	1.	Audit
	2.	Attorney General's Chambers
	3.	Royal Brunei Police Force
	4.	Public Service Commission
	5.	State Mufti
	6.	Development and Economic Planning
	7.	Electrical Services
	8.	Public Service
Finance	9.	Treasury Department
	10.	Royal Custom and Excise
	11.	Employee Trust Fund
Home Affairs	12.	Immigration and National Registration Department
	13.	Municipal Board Bandar Seri Begawan
	14.	Municipal Board Belait and Seria
	15.	Municipal Board Bandar Tutong
	16.	Brunei Muara District Office
	17.	Belait District Office
	18.	Tutong District Office
	19.	Temburong District Office
	20.	Labour
	21.	Prison

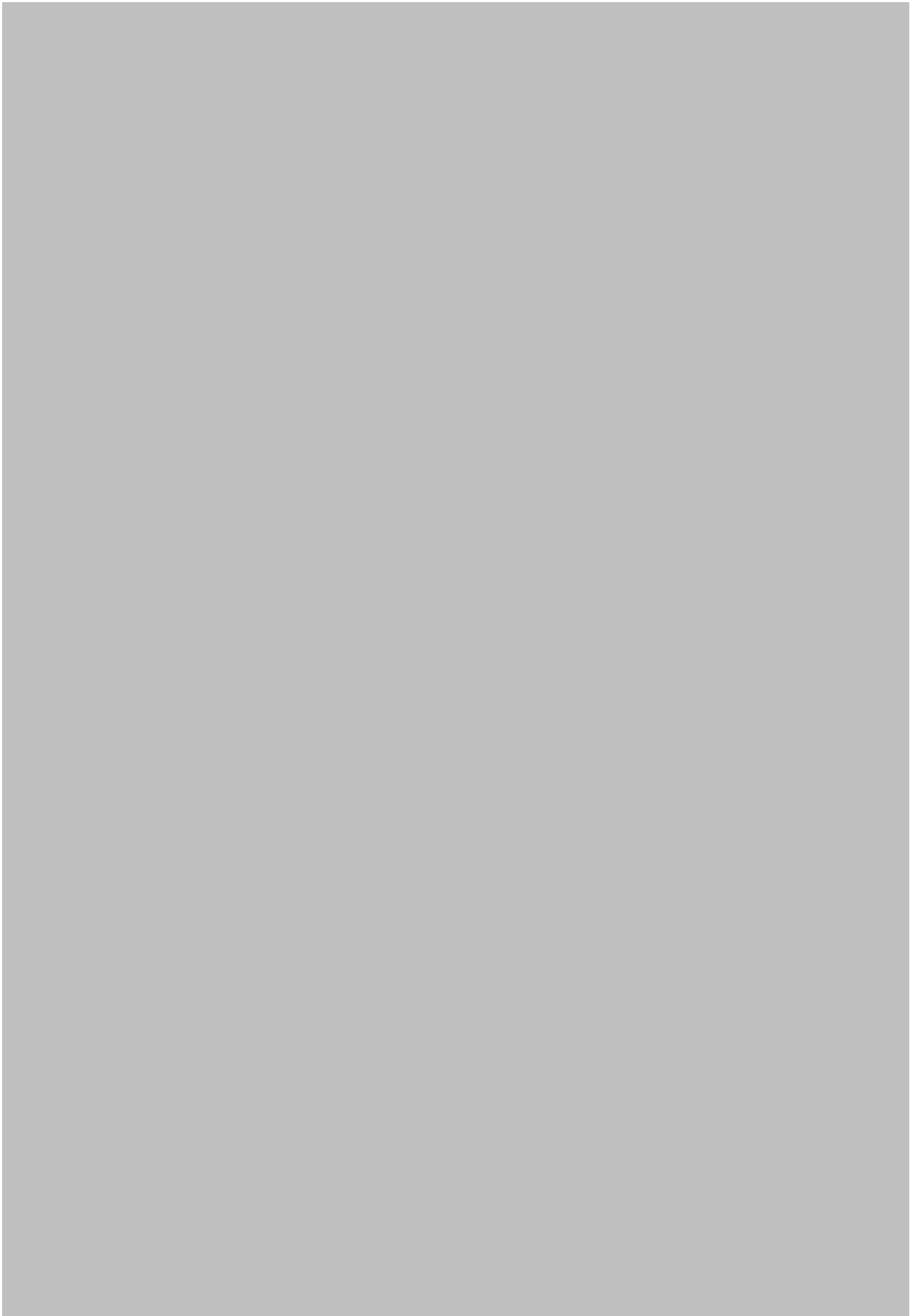
Ministry of Education	22.	Schools
	23.	Technical Educations
	24.	Examinations
	25.	Scholarship Sections
Industry and Primary Resources	26.	Agriculture and Agrifood
	27.	Fisheries
	28.	Industry Development Authority (BINA)
Development	29.	Land Department
	30.	Public Work (Department of Administration and Finance)
	31.	Public Work (Department of Technical Services)
	32.	Public Work (Department of Development)
	33.	Public Work (Department of Building Services)
	34.	Public Work (Department of Water Services)
	35.	Public Work (Department of Road)
	36.	Public Work (Department of Drainage and Sewerage)
	37.	Housing Development Department
	38.	Survey
	39.	Town and Country Planning
Youth and Cultural and Sport	40.	Community Development
	41.	Language and Literature Bureau
	42.	Youth and Sports
Health	43.	Environmental Health Services
	44.	RIPAS Hospital

Religious Affairs	45.	Syariah Affairs
	46.	Haj
	47.	Islamic Religious Council Office
	48.	Islamic Dakwah Center
Communication	49.	Postal Services Department
	50.	Civil Aviation
	51.	Marine
	52.	Land Transport
	53.	Ports

APPENDIX B









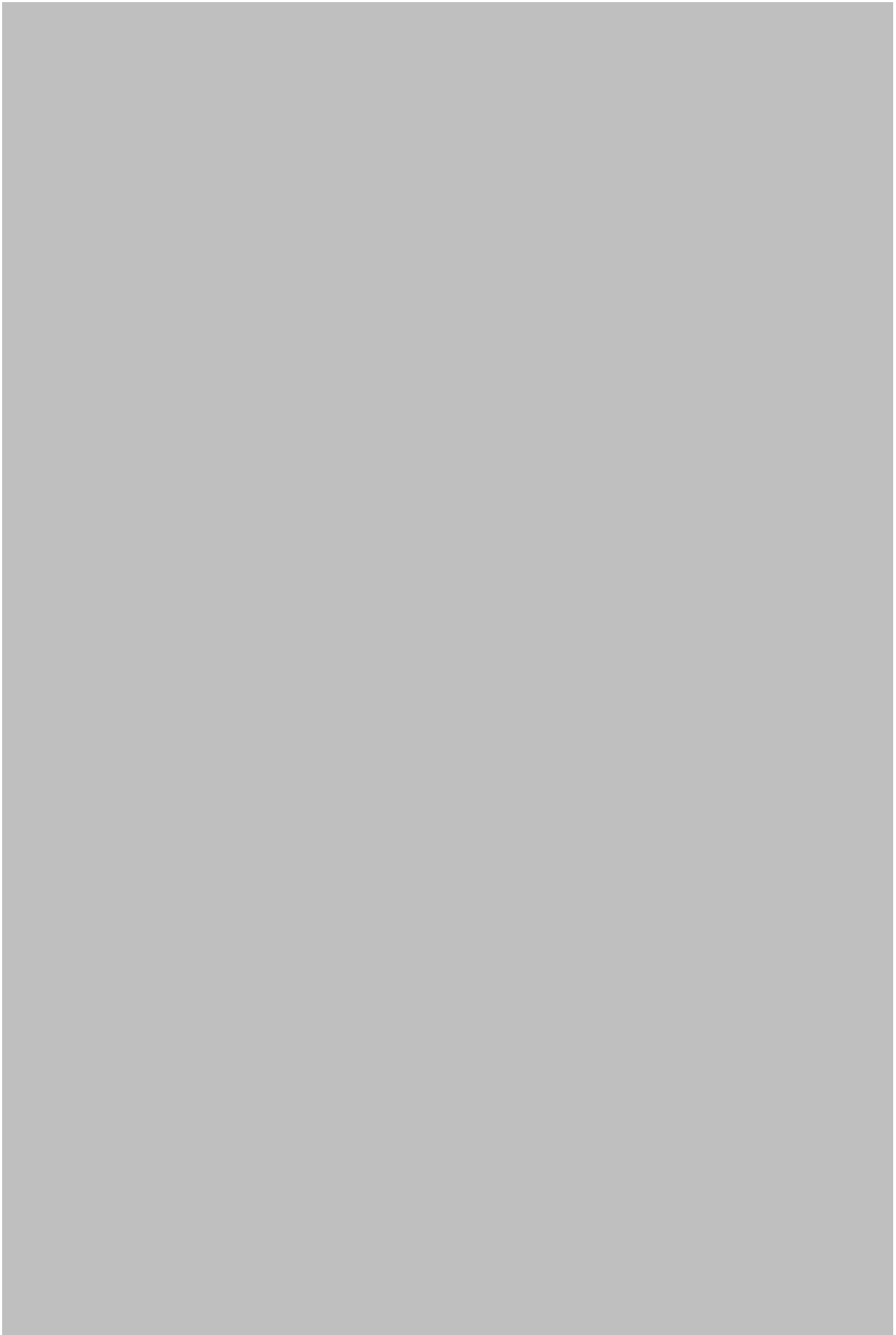














APPENDIX C



SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

“The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Sector Complaint Management in Brunei Darussalam.”

Dear Sir / Madam

I am sending you a copy of a survey questionnaire that forms part of the process of data collection for my academic study at University of Birmingham (UOB). My research aim is to understand what constitutes a good complaint management process for Brunei Darussalam. In addition, the questionnaire aims to explore the way complaint management is being used to benefit organizational learning by the Government Departments in Brunei Darussalam.

In this questionnaire, you are asked to think about how your organization complaint management processes support and use feedback information for learning about the quality of public service being provided and how to improve.

Your organization has been selected through a sampling procedure and it would be much appreciated if you would kindly take a few minutes to answer the questions in the survey. All the information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and the findings to be presented in my thesis will be in aggregate format only, so that no individual can be identified.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw any time, without necessarily giving a reason. There is a consent form provided below for you to sign, can I thank you in anticipation of your help with this. **Please complete your response by 04 July 2013.**

If you have any queries about the survey questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact me



BORANG KAJISELIDIK

“Kecekapan dan Keberkesanan Pengurusan Aduan dalam Sektor Awam di Brunei Darussalam.”

Tuan / Puan

Bersama ini saya sertakan satu borang kajiselidik yang merupakan sebahagian daripada proses pengumpulan data untuk pembelajaran saya di University of Birmingham (UOB). Tujuan kajian saya adalah untuk memahami bagaimana proses pengurusan aduan yang baik di Brunei Darussalam. Sebagai tambahan, kajiselidik ini juga adalah untuk meneroka cara pengurusan aduan yang baik untuk memberi manfaat kepada pembelajaran organisasi oleh Jabatan Kerajaan di Brunei Darussalam.

Dalam kajiselidik ini, awda dikehendaki memberikan pandangan bagaimana proses pengurusan aduan di organisasi awda, menyokong dan menggunakan maklumbalas untuk mempelajari tentang kualiti perkhidmatan awam yang disediakan dan bagaimana untuk meningkatkannya.

Organisasi awda telah pun terpilih melalui prosedur persampelan dan ianya adalah amat dihargai jika awda memberikan sedikit masa untuk menjawab kajiselidik ini. Semua informasi yang awda berikan akan dirahsiakan dan hasil kajian akan dibentangkan di dalam tesis saya dengan format agregat sahaja, maka tidak ada individu yang akan dikenali.

Penyertaan awda dalam kajiselidik ini adalah secara sukarela dan awda boleh menarik diri pada bila-bila masa sahaja tanpa memberikan sebarang alasan. Terdapat borang persetujuan telah disediakan untuk awda tandatangani dan saya ingin berterima kasih atas bantuan awda. Sila lengkapkan borang kajiselidik awda sebelum **04 Julai 2013**.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS / ARAHAN PENTING

1. In this survey, there are no right or wrong answers, because it is about your understandings and viewpoints / *Di dalam kajiselidik ini, tidak ada jawapan betul atau salah, kerana ia adalah mengenai kefahaman dan pandangan awda.*
2. It should not take you longer than 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire / *Awda hanya mengambil masa 40 minit untuk menyelesaikan kajiselidik ini.*
3. The questionnaire is divided into four sections / *Kajiselidik ini terbahagi kepada 4 bahagian;*
 - Section / *Bahagian A:* Complaint management processes in your organization / *Proses pengurusan aduan di organisasi awda.*
 - Section / *Bahagian B:* Attitudes towards customer complaints / *Akhlak terhadap aduan pelanggan.*
 - Section / *Bahagian C:* Experience of public sector complaint handling / *Pengalaman sektor awam dalam mengendalikan aduan.*
 - Section / *Bahagian D:* Background characteristics and other information about you, the respondent / *Latar belakang dan informasi tambahan mengenai awda.*

Rosdi Haji Abdul Aziz
Doctoral Researcher
Institute of Local Government Studies
School of Government and Society
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston B15 2TT
United Kingdom



Consent Form for Questionnaire / Borang Perseujuan Kajiselidik

The Research Subject / Subjek Kajian

**“The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Sector Complaint Management in
Brunei Darussalam”**

**“Kecekapan dan Keberkesanan Pengurusan Aduan dalam Sektor Awam di Negara
Brunei Darussalam.”**

- I have read and understood the Study Information Sheet / *Saya telah membaca dan memahami mengenai kertas maklumat kajian.*
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study / *Saya telah diberi peluang untuk bertanya soalan mengenai kajian ini.*
- I understand that taking part in the study is voluntary / *Saya memahami bahawa ikut serta dalam kajian ini adalah secara sukarela.*
- I understand that confidentiality will be ensured and my identity will be protected both in the analysis and in all subsequent reports / *Saya memahami bahawa Identiti saya akan dirahsiakan dan dilindungi daripada analisis dan semua laporan yang berkaitan.*
- I understand that I can withdraw my data by contacting:

If you are in agreement with the above conditions and are willing to participate in the survey, please sign and date this form to acknowledge your understanding and to indicate your consent / *Kesudian Tuan / Puan meluangkan masa dalam temuduga ini sangatlah dihargai. Jika Tuan / Puan bersetuju untuk menyertainya, sila tandatangan serta beri tarikh sebagai tanda pemahaman dan persetujuan Tuan / Puan terhadap syarat-syarat di atas.*

Signature of Participant / Tandatangan Peserta: _____

Date / Tarikh: _____

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the survey / *Terima Kasih kerana ikut serta dalam kajian ini.*

**SECTION BAHAGIAN / A : COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT IN YOUR ORGANIZATION /
PENGURUSAN ADUAN DI ORGANISASI AWDA**

As complaint management practices are often different in different organizations, these first few questions will help me to understand on how complaint management is handled in your particular organization. Please TICK one that applies to your organization in each of the aspects below: *Cara pengurusan aduan adalah berbeza di setiap organisasi, beberapa soalan di bawah ini akan membantu saya untuk memahami bagaimana pengurusan aduan dikendalikan di organisasi awda. Sila tandakan (/) pada setiap aspek yang disediakan dibawah yang dilakukan di organisasi awda:*

1. Complaint Procedures / Prosedur Aduan	Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
1.1 Does your organization have a written complaints policy and procedures? If the answer is No, please go to Q2. / <i>Adakah organisasi awda mempunyai polisi dasar dan prosedur aduan secara bertulis? Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 2.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Is this complaints policy and procedures available in a documentary form? / <i>Adakah polisi dasar dan prosedur aduan ini terdapat dalam bentuk dokumentari?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Is this complaints policy and procedures is available to you? If the answer is Yes, Please go to Q1.4. If No, please go to Q1.5. / <i>Adakah polisi dasar dan prosedur aduan ini disediakan untuk awda? Jika YA, sila rujuk soalan Q1.4. Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk Q1.5.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Are you familiar with its detail? / <i>Adakah awda memahaminya secara terperinci?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Do you think that all complaint handling staff are aware and be informed about it? / <i>Adakah awda rasa semua kakitangan tahu dan maklum mengenainya?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 Do you think that all complaint handling staff will be familiar with its details? <i>Adakah awda rasa semua kakitangan akan memahaminya secara terperinci?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7 Does your organization publicise its complaint policy and procedure to the public (example in your website or customer service centre)? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menghebahkan polisi dasar dan prosedur aduan untuk orang awam (contohnya dalam laman web awda)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.8 Does your organization also use this complaint procedure for any internal complainst (i.e. from staff)?
If the answer is Yes, please go to Q3. / Adakah organisasi awda menggunakan prosedur aduan ini untuk sebarang aduan dalaman (iaitu daripada kakitangan)? Jika YA, sila rujuk soalan 3.

2. If **No**, please state the main reason why your organization did not have complaints policy and procedure? / Jika **TIDAK**, sila nyatakan sebab-sebab utama mengapa organisasi awda tidak mempunyai polisi dasar dan prosedur aduan?

3. Complaint Process / Proses Aduan

	Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak tahu
3.1 Does your organization acknowledge the receipt of a complaint from your customer? If Yes , in what way is the acknowledgement provided, please go to Q.3.2. If the answer is No, please go to Q4. / Adakah organisasi awda menerima aduan daripada pelanggan? Jika YA, dalam bentuk apa penerimaan tersebut, sila rujuk soalan 3.2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Do you send the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.)? If the answer is Yes, please go to Q3.3. / Adakah awda menghantar surat akuan penerimaan kepada pengadu? Jika YA, sila rujuk soalan 3.3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Do you send the acknowledgement through the text message (handphone))? If the answer is No, please go to Q3.4 / Adakah awda menghantar pengesahan penerimaan melalui teks mesej (telefon bimbit)? Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 3.4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Do you send the acknowledgement through email? / Adakah awda menghantar pengesahan penerimaan akuan melalui e-mel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
3.5	Does your organization log or register each complaint once it has been received? If Yes , How does your organization do it, please go to Q.3.6. , If the answer is No, please go to Q4. / <i>Adakah organisasi awda mendaftar setiap aduan apabila diterima? Jika YA, bagaimana organisasi awda melakukannya, sila rujuk soalan 3.6., Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 4.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Do you record the date of the complaint? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat tarikh aduan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7	Do you record the identity of the complainant? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat identiti pengadu?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8	Do you record the nature of the complaint? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat mengenai aduan tersebut?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.9	Do you record the action taken to clear the complaint? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat tindakan yang diambil untuk menutup aduan.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.10	Do you record the file number of where details of the case are kept? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat nombor fail di mana butir-butir kes itu disimpan.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.11	Do you record the name of officer in charge of the case? / <i>Adakah awda merekodkan nama pegawai yang bertanggungjawab dalam kes itu.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.12	Do you record the date by which the complaint was cleared? / <i>Adakah awda mencatat tarikh apabila aduan telah ditutup.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	If No , please state the main reason why your organization does not register complaints once they are received? / Jika TIDAK , sila nyatakan sebab-sebab utama mengapa organisasi awda tidak mendaftarkan aduan apabila organisasi awda menerimanya?			

5. Communication / Komunikasi

		Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / TidakTahu
5.1	5 Do you offer customers a free-phone number (without incurring a charge) or hotline numbers that connects directly to your complaints section/s? / <i>Adakah awda menawarkan kepada pelanggan mengenai nombor telefon (tanpa menanggung caj) yang menghubungkan terus kepada seksyen aduan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Do your reception areas have a facility (e.g. a post-box) for customers to leave a message about their complaints when officers are busy or the office is unattended? / <i>Adakah kawasan penerimaan awda mempunyai kemudahan (contohnya: peti surat) untuk pelanggan meninggalkan mesej mengenai aduan mereka apabila pegawai sibuk atau pejabat ketika kosong?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	6 Does your organization provide services such as arrangements are in place to assist customers with special needs, such as sight or hearing impaired people, those with a reading or mental disability or language difficulty? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menyediakan tempat perkhidmatan untuk membantu pelanggan yang berkeperluan khas, seperti orang yang terjejas penglihatan atau pendengaran, mereka yang kecacatan mental atau kesukaran berbahasa.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Do you provide information to complainants about complaints stages, either verbally in writing? / <i>Adakah awda memberi maklumat kepada pengadu mengenai peringkat aduan sama ada secara lisan atau bertulis?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Do you inform the complainant of their right to internal and external reviews? / <i>Adakah awda memaklumkan pengadu tentang hak mereka untuk ulasan dalaman dan luaran?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6	Do you advise complainants about improvements to be made as a result of their complaints on a complaint-by-complaint basis and through your Annual Report? / <i>Adakah awda memaklumkan pengadu tentang penambahbaikan hasil aduan mereka akan dilakukan melalui Laporan Tahunan awda?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7	Do you advise your complainants, either verbally or in writing, of the anticipated times for stages of the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
	complaints process? / <i>Adakah awda menasihati pengadu, sama ada secara lisan atau bertulis, mengenai masa-masa yang dijangkakan bagi peringkat proses aduan?</i>			
5.8	Do you have letter templates to guide you when communicating decisions? / <i>Adakah awda mempunyai contoh surat untuk membimbing awda apabila mengutarakan keputusan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.9	Have you been allowed by your top management to tailor letter templates to enable the individual circumstances of each case to be addressed? / <i>Adakah awda dibenarkan oleh pengurus atasan awda untuk mengubah contoh surat yang telah disediakan di dalam keadaan yang tertentu bagi membolehkan penerangan kes individu dibuat berdasarkan kes masing masing?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.10	Have you been encouraged by your organization to speak to concern customers rather than only responding in writing? / <i>Adakah awda digalakkan oleh organisasi awda untuk berkomunikasi bersama pelanggan dan bukan hanya bertindak balas secara bertulis?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Visibility and Access / Akses kepada Membuat Aduan				
6.1	7 Does your organization publicise your complaints telephone numbers, such as hotlines or free-phone services? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menghebahkan nombor telefon aduan awda, seperti talian hotline atau perkhidmatan telefon (tanpa menanggung caj)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Does your organization publicise information in languages other than Malay such as English about where and how to make complaints? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda juga menghebahkan maklumat-maklumat dalam bahasa lain selain bahasa melayu seperti contoh bahasa Inggeris tentang di mana dan bagaimana untuk membuat aduan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	8 Do you are able to assist customers with details on how to lodge a complaint? / <i>Adakah awda mampu untuk membantu pelanggan dengan maklumat tentang cara membuat aduan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	Does your organization provide information about how members of the public can make complaints and it is	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes /
Ya No /
Tidak Don't Know /
Tidak Tahu

available to all staff, e.g. on your intranet. / *Adakah organisasi awda memberikan maklumat tentang bagaimana orang ramai boleh membuat aduan dan maklumat ini juga disampaikan melalui semua kakitangan, seperti contoh melalui 'intranet'.*

7. Responsiveness and fairness / Responsif dan keadilan

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7.1 | Does your organization produce statistical analysis on complaints? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menghasilkan analisis terhadap statistik aduan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.2 | Does your organization monitor the progress of complaints and advise complainants of reasons for deviation from target timelines. / <i>Adakah organisasi awda memantau perkembangan aduan dan menasihati para pengadu akan sebab kenapa had masa sasaran tidak dapat dipenuhi.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.3 | Do you keep the complainant informed of progress with the investigation of their complaint? If Yes, How frequently? please go to Q.7.4 / <i>Adakah awda memaklumkan pengadu mengenai penyiasatan terhadap aduan mereka? Jika YA, berapa kerap? sila rujuk soalan 7.4.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.4 | Do you informed the progress in once a week? If the answer is No, please go to 7.5 / <i>Adakah awda memaklumpkannya dalam seminggu sekali? Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 7.5.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.5 | Do you informed the progress in once a month? If the answer is No, please go to 7.6 / <i>Adakah awda memaklumpkannya dalam sebulan sekali? Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 7.6.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.6 | Do you informed the progress in every 3 months? If the answer is No, please go to 7.7 / <i>Adakah awda memaklumpkannya dalam setiap 3 bulan? Jika TIDAK, sila rujuk soalan 7.7.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.7 | Do you informed the progress in every 6 months? / <i>Adakah awda memaklumpkannya dalam setiap 6 bulan?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

		Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
7.8	Do you only informed the progress after the complainant contact your organization first and asking about their progress status? / <i>Adakah awda hanya akan memaklumkan pengadu mengenai perkembangan aduan mereka setelah pengadu berkenaan telah menghubungi organisasi awda terlebih dahulu?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.9	Does your organization allow you to apologise to your complainant if you make a mistake? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda membolehkan awda untuk memohon maaf kepada pengadu awda jika awda membuat kesilapan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.10	Does your organization offer written apology to a customer when your organization fails to meet an expected standard? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menawarkan permohonan maaf bertulis kepada pelanggan apabila organisasi awda gagal memenuhi piawaian yang diharapkan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Resources / Sumber-sumber				
8.1	Does your organization have an overall complaints coordinator or manager who ensures consistency, timeliness and quality in how complaints are dealt with and data collected? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda mempunyai seorang penyelaras atau pengurus untuk mengendalikan aduan-aduan menyeluruh bagi memastikan konsistensi, ketepatan had masa, dan kualiti tentang bagaimana aduan diatasi dan bagaimana data-data dikumpulkan.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.2	Do you regularly seek feedback from staff involved in complaints handling on the effectiveness of the current procedures? / <i>Adakah awda sentiasa mendapatkan maklum balas daripada kakitangan yang terlibat dalam pengendalian aduan untuk memastikan keberkesanan prosedur sepanjang proses tersebut?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.3	Does your organization have the ability to record complaints information electronically on a central database? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda dapat merekodkan maklumat aduan secara elektronik pada pusat pangkalan data?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
8.4 Alternatively, does your organization have an effective paper-based system? / <i>Selain itu, adakah organisasi awda mempunyai sistem berasaskan kertas yang berkesan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.5 Does your system registers and classifies complaints and provides reports and trend analysis / <i>Adakah sistem awda mendaftarkan dan mengklasifikasikan aduan-aduan dan seterusnya menyediakan laporan dan analisis arah aliran.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.6 Does your system have a tracking mechanism to allow the complaints coordinator to monitor the progress of matters handled by other staff? / <i>Adakah sistem awda mempunyai satu mekanisme pengesanan untuk membolehkan penyelaras aduan untuk memantau perkembangan hal-hal yang dikendalikan oleh kakitangan yang lain?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Personnel and Training / *Personel dan latihan*

9.1 Does your organization provide training to staff involved in handling complaints that is specifically tailored to their level of authority and duties? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda menyediakan latihan kepada kakitangan yang terlibat dalam menguruskan aduan-aduan yang dibuat secara khusus disesuaikan dengan tahap kuasa dan tugas mereka?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.2 Does your training provider works through your agency's complaints policy and guidelines to ensure staffs fully understand procedures and roles? / <i>Adakah penyelia latihan awda membuat latihan bekerja berpandukan dasar dan garis panduan agensi awda demi memastikan para pekerja memahami sepenuhnya prosedur dan tugas yang diberikan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.3 When selecting staff for the complaints team, do you emphasise the need for good interpersonal and conflict resolution skills? / <i>Apabila memilih kakitangan untuk pasukan yang mengendalikan aduan, adakah awda menekankan perlunya peribadi yang baik dan kemahiran menyelesaikan konflik?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.4 Does the essential information about your complaints management system is included in your induction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

program? / Adakah maklumat penting mengenai sistem pengurusan aduan awda termasuk dalam program induksi awda?

- 9.5 Have you been given any training on communication skill areas such as interviewing skills, dealing with difficult people, dispute resolution and customer relations? / Adakah awda pernah diberikan apa-apa latihan dalam bidang-bidang seperti kemahiran berkomunikasi, kemahiran dalam temuramah, kemahiran ketika dalam ketika sukar, kemahiran penyelesaian pertikaian dan hubungan pelanggan.
-

10. Assessment and Investigation / Penilaian dan penyiasatan

- 10.1 Does your organization have guidelines for the assessment of complaints that identify classes of complaints and how they should be dealt with, e.g. complaints about stawdards of service or an incorrect decision? / Adakah organisasi awda mempunyai garis panduan untuk penilaian terhadap aduan-aduan yang mengenalpasti klasifikasi aduan-aduan berkenaan dan bagaimana mereka harus ditangani, contohnya aduan mengenai piawaian perkhidmatan atau keputusan yang tidak betul?
-
- 10.2 Does your assessment consider a range of factors, such as the complaint's seriousness, and whether it involves an issue of public interest? / Adakah penilaian awda juga mempertimbangkan pelbagai faktor seperti kepentingan aduan tersebut, dan sama ada ia melibatkan isu kepentingan awam?
-
- 10.3 Does your organization have guidelines for investigative officers that clearly explain their role? / Adakah organisasi awda mempunyai garis panduan bagi pegawai-pegawai penyiasat yang jelas menerangkan peranan masing-masing?
-
- 10.4 Do the guidelines for investigating officers detail how to conduct interviews inspect sites and documents and observe natural justice principles? / Adakah garis panduan bagi pegawai penyiasat tersebut terperinci tentang bagaimana menjalankan temuduga, memeriksa tapak dan dokumen-dokumen dan mematuhi prinsip-prinsip keadilan semulajadi?
-

		Yes / Ya	No / Tidak	Don't Know / Tidak Tahu
10.5	Do the guidelines recommend the type of detail to be included in investigative reports, such as a summary of the investigation and results, factors that contributed to the complaint arising and recommendations to remedy the complaint or prevent similar complaints occurring? / <i>Adakah garis panduan tersebut mencadangkan jenis-jenis maklumat terperinci dalam laporan-laporan penyiasatan, seperti ringkasan penyiasatan dan keputusan, faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada aduan yang semakin meningkat dan seterusnya cadangan untuk membaik-pulih aduan atau dengan mengelakkan aduan yang sama berlaku?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Improvement / Penambahbaikan				
11.1	Does your organization take steps to prevent complaints arising of a similar nature by making relevant changes to policies and procedures? / <i>Adakah organisasi awda mengambil langkah untuk mengelakkan aduan yang timbul yang mempunyai persamaan daripada berulang dengan membuat perubahan yang berkaitan dengan dasar dan prosedur?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.2	Are you allowed to give any feedback for improvement? / <i>Adakah awda dibenarkan untuk memberikan maklumbalas bagi penambahbaikan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.3	Are you involved in compiling complaints reports for senior management? / <i>Adakah awda terlibat dalam menyusun laporan aduan untuk pengurusan kanan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.4	Are you involved in analysis of the complaints data reports for senior management? / <i>Adakah awda terlibat dalam analisis laporan data aduan untuk pengurusan kanan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.5	Are you involved in providing recommendations for complaint reduction strategies? / <i>Adakah awda terlibat dalam menyediakan cadangan-cadangan bagi strategi pengurangan aduan?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.6	Did the complaints reports and recommendations are considered on a regular basis by senior management? / <i>Adakah laporan aduan-aduan dan cadangan-cadangan dianggap secara tetap oleh pengurusan kanan</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes / No / Don't Know /
Ya Tidak Tidak Tahu

11.7 Did your organization through senior management uses the complaints report information and recommendations to target problem areas and improve policy and procedures as necessary? / Adakah organisasi awda melalui pengurusan kanan, menggunakan maklumat laporan aduan-aduan dan cadangan untuk mengetahui kawasan mana yang bermasalah dan meningkatkan dasar dan prosedur yang diperlukan?

11.8 Did your organization through `Senior management reports on how improvements have been made as a result of complaints information in your agency's annual report or other widely-accessible publication. / Adakah pengurusan kanan awda melaporkan tentang bagaimana peningkatan telah dibuat berdasarkan maklumat aduan didalam laporan tahunan agensi awda atau penerbitan lainnya yang boleh diakses secara meluas.

11.9 Information about your departmental complaints management system is included in internal publications to raise awareness of roles in the complaints handling process and how complaints contribute to service improvement. / Maklumat tentang sistem pengurusan aduan jabatan awda adalah termasuk dalam penerbitan dalaman untuk meningkatkan kesedaran mengenai peranan dalam proses pengendalian aduan dan bagaimana aduan-aduan itu menyumbang kepada peningkatan perkhidmatan.

12. When your organization deal with complaints, **management** assigns a priority to each complaint to reflect the seriousness, urgency, needs and rights of the complainant. For each of the following statements please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement by **circling** the appropriate number. / Apabila organisasi awda berurusan dengan aduan, pihak **pengurusan** menetapkan keutamaan kepada setiap aduan untuk mencerminkan kesungguhan, kesegeraan, keperluan dan hak-hak pengadu. Bagi setiap kenyataan berikut sila tandakan tahap persetujuan / tidak bersetuju dengan **membulatkan** nombor yang sesuai.

5 = Definitely agree / Sangat bersetuju

4 = Mostly agree / Kebanyakannya bersetuju

3 = Neither agree nor disagree / Bukan bersetuju mahupun tidak bersetuju

2 = Mostly disagree / Kebanyakannya tidak bersetuju

1 = Definitely disagree / Sangat tidak bersetuju

0 = Don't know / Do not wish to disclosed / Tidak tahu / Tidak mahu didedahkan

		Don't know/ Do not wish to disclosed	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
12.1	Senior management discusses the systems's purpose and objective with staff. / <i>Pengurusan kanan membincangkan tujuan dan objektif sistem pengendalian aduan tersebut dengan kakitangan yang terlibat.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.2	Senior management holds the view that complaints represent an important opportunity to improve agency performance. / <i>Pengurusan kanan berpandangan bahawa aduan adalah merupakan satu peluang penting untuk meningkatkan prestasi agensi</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.3	Complaints staffs have authority to take action to remedy complaints and to make or recommend changes to procedures. / <i>Kakitangan yang</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

mengendalikan aduan mempunyai kuasa untuk mengambil tindakan untuk menyelesaikan aduan dan untuk membuat atau mengesyorkan perubahan kepada prosedur-prosedur.

12.4	Complaints staffs have ready access to senior management for decisions outside their authority. / <i>Kakitangan yang mengendalikan aduan mempunyai akses setiap masa dengan pihak pengurusan kanan bagi memberikan keputusan yang di luar kuasa mereka.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.5	Complaints review officers can apply or vary the application of department policy or decline to apply policy if the circumstances of the case justify it. / <i>Pegawai yang bertanggungjawab dalam kajian aduan boleh memohon atau mengubah penggunaan dasar jabatan atau menolaknya untuk menggunakan dasar lain jika hal keadaan kes itu membenarkannya.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

12.6	Senior management receives regular reports about the effectiveness of the system against measurable objectives. / <i>Pengurusan kanan kerap menerima laporan mengenai keberkesanan sistem terhadap matlamat-matlamat mereka.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.7	Senior management regularly reviews the complaints system's effectiveness. / <i>Pengurusan kanan sering meninjau keberkesanan sistem aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.8	Details of reviews and actions taken to improve services are published to staff and the public. / <i>Butiran ulasan dan tindakan yang diambil bagi meningkatkan perkhidmatan dihebahkan kepada kakitangan dan juga orang awam.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.9	The complaints management system is adequately resourced including human and technological resources. / <i>Sistem pengurusan aduan dilengkapi dengan secukupnya termasuklah dari</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

sumber teknologi dan manusia.

13. When your organization deals with a complaint, to what extent does that complaint information benefit your organization in the long run?. For each of the following statements please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement by **circling** the appropriate number. / *Apabila organisasi awda berurusan dengan aduan, sejauh manakah maklumat aduan itu memberi manfaat kepada organisasi awda dalam jangka masa akan datang? Bagi setiap pernyataan berikut, sila nyatakan tahap setuju/ atau tidak setuju dengan membulatkan nombor berikut*

5 = Definitely agree / *Sangat bersetuju*

4 = Mostly agree / *Kebanyakannya bersetuju*

3 = Neither agree nor disagree / *Bukan bersetuju mahupun tidak bersetuju*

2 = Mostly disagree / *Kebanyakannya tidak bersetuju*

1 = Definitely disagree / *Sangat tidak bersetuju*

0 = Don't know/ Do not wish to disclosed

		Don't know/ Do not wish to disclosed	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
13.1	Complaint information has helped your organization to retain customer. / <i>Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda untuk mengekalkan pelanggan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.2	Complaint information has helped your organization learn from mistakes. / <i>Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda untuk belajar dari kesilapan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

13.3	Complaint information has helped your organization to achieve customer satisfaction. <i>Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda untuk mencapai kepuasan pelanggan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.4	Complaint information has helped to cut down your department cost. <i>/ Maklumat aduan telah membantu untuk mengurangkan kos perbelanjaan jabatan awda.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.5	Complaint information has helped your organization to improve work processes. <i>/ Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda untuk meningkatkan proses kerja.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.6	Complaint information has helped your organization to increase revenue. <i>/ Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda untuk menambah pendapatan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

13.7	Complaint information has helped your organization in formulating new policy. / <i>Maklumat aduan telah membantu organisasi awda dalam menggubal dasar baru.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.8	Complaint information has helped improve your organization image. / <i>Maklumat aduan telah membantu meningkatkan imej organisasi awda</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION / BAHAGIAN B : ATTITUDE TOWARDS CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS / SIKAP TERHADAP ADUAN PELANGGAN

14. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your attitude and behaviour of where things are at this time. For each of the following statements please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement by **circling** the appropriate number. *Tiada jawapan yang betul atau salah. Saya berminat dalam sikap dan tingkah laku awda apabila perkara-perkara ini berlaku pada masa ketika itu. Bagi setiap pernyataan berikut, sila nyatakan tahap setuju/ atau tidak setuju dengan membulatkan nombor berikut.*

- 5 = Definitely agree / *Sangat bersetuju*
- 4 = Mostly agree / *Kebanyakannya bersetuju*
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree / *Bukan bersetuju mahupun tidak bersetuju*
- 2 = Mostly disagree / *Kebanyakannya tidak bersetuju*
- 1 = Definitely disagree / *Sangat tidak bersetuju*
- 0 = Don't know / Do not wish to disclosed / *Tidak tahu / Tidak mahu didedahkan*

		Don't know/ Do not wish to disclosed	Definitely disagree	Mostly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly agree	Definitely agree
14.1	Complaint is just a statement about expectations that have not been met / <i>Aduan hanya suatu pernyataan mengenai jangkaan yang tidak dipenuhi</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.2	Complaints are a critical element of the voice of the consumer. / <i>Aduan adalah elemen penting mengenai suara pengguna.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.3	You see complaint as an opportunity to improve quality. / <i>Awda melihat aduan sebagai satu peluang untuk meningkatkan kualiti.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.4	Complaint is used to extract valuable information and gain insightful knowledge. / <i>Aduan digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumat yang berharga dan menimba ilmu baru</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.5	You see complaint as a way of striving for continuous improvement /	0	1	2	3	4	5

	<i>Awda melihat aduan sebagai salah satu cara terbaik dalam bagi penambahbaikan yang berterusan</i>						
14.6	You see complaint as an opportunity to learn. / <i>Awda melihat aduan sebagai satu peluang untuk belajar.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.7	You see complaint as an a problem and threathening issue. / <i>Awda melihat aduan sebagai satu masalah dan isu yang mengancam.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.8	Complaint is a stressful thing to deal with. / <i>Aduan adalah satu perkara yang memberi tekanan kepada awda</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.9	Compaint is an important part of marketing strategy. / <i>Aduan adalah bahagian penting dalam strategi pemasaran</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.10	You believe complaints must be reduced. / <i>Awda berharap aduan perlu dikurangkan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION / BAHAGIAN C: CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT / PENGALAMAN PELANGGAN KE ATAS JABATAN KERAJAAN DALAM PENGURUSAN ADUAN

In this section, I am interested to know your own experience as a customer or user or citizen in lodging complaint to any public department before. / *Dalam bahagian ini, saya berminat untuk mengetahui pengalaman awda sendiri sebagai pelanggan atau pengguna atau warganegara dalam membuat aduan kepada mana-mana jabatan awam sebelum ini.*

15. When you are not satisfy with the government public service delivery, have you make any complaints to public departments before? If the answer is **Yes please go to Q17**. If you have too many experience on lodging complaint, please tell me on your experience of the complaint you make recently?. If the answer is **No please go to Q16**. / *Apabila awda tidak berpuas hati dengan sistem perkhidmatan awam kerajaan, adakah awda telah membuat aduan kepada mana-mana jabatan awam sebelum ini? Jika jawapannya adalah Ya sila pergi ke Q17. Jika awda mempunyai pengalaman dalam membuat aduan sila beritahu pengalaman awda memberi aduan baru-baru ini? Jika jawapannya adalah Tidak sila pergi ke soalan 16.*
- Yes / Ya No / Tidak

16. If, the answer is No, Please tell me how strongly you agree or diasgree with the following statement that indicate the reasons you did not want to make a formal complaint by circling the appropriate number. / *Jika jawapannya adalah Tidak, Sila beritahu saya sejauh mana awda bersetuju atau tidak bersetuju dengan kenyataan berikut yang menunjukkan sebab-sebab awda tidak mahu membuat aduan rasmi dengan membulatkan nombor yang telah disediakan.*

- 5 = Definitely agree / *Sangat bersetuju*
 4 = Mostly agree / *Kebanyakannya bersetuju*
 3 = Uncertain / *Kurang Pasti*
 2 = Mostly disagree / *Kebanyakannya tidak bersetuju*
 1 = Definitely disagree / *Sangat tidak bersetuju*
 0 = Don't know / Do not wish to disclosed / *Tidak tahu / Tidak mahu didedahkan*

		Don't know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
16.1	The public service delivery is meeting your expectations. / <i>Kualiti perkhidmatan awam memenuhi harapan awda.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

16.2	You do not know where to lodge complaint. / <i>Awda tidak tahu di mana untuk membuat aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.3	You don't know how to make a complaint and not aware about the complaint procedures. / <i>Awda tidak tahu bagaimana untuk membuat aduan dan tidak sedar mengenai prosedur aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.4	You do not know to whom to complain. / <i>Awda tidak tahu kepada siapa untuk mengadu.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.5	You think it is not worth to make a complain. / <i>Awda fikir ianya tidak berbaloi untuk membuat aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.6	You do not bother to make any formal complaints. / <i>Awda tidak peduli untuk membuat aduan rasmi.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.7	You afraid you will ended with more trouble. / <i>Awda takut awda akan berakhir dengan</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

masalah yang lebih besar.

16.8	You think that it would not do any good to you. / <i>Awda berfikir bahawa mengutaran aduan tidak akan melakukan apa-apa kebaikan untuk awda.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.9	You think that no action will be taken by the organization. / <i>Awda berfikir bahawa tiada sebarang tindakan akan diambil oleh organisasi</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.10.	You think that the organization would not actually change anything. / <i>Awda berfikir bahawa organisasi itu tidak akan mengubah apa-apa.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.11	You would rather send your complaint to other agencies such as Management Services Department. / <i>Awda lebih suka menghantar aduan awda kepada agensi-agensi lain seperti Jabatan Perkhidmatan Pengurusan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
16.12	You would rather send your complaint to mass media such	0	1	2	3	4	5

as newspaper. /
Awda lebih suka menghantar aduan awda kepada media massa seperti surat khabar.

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16.13 | You will only lodge complaint if you think the outcome will be positive /
<i>Awda hanya akan membuat aduan jika awda berfikir hasilnya akan positif</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16.14 | You would rather make informal complaints. / <i>Awda lebih suka membuat aduan rasmi.</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16.15 | Others: please specify / <i>Lain-lain: sila nyatakan</i>
_____ | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. To whom do you submit the complaints to? / *Kepada siapa yang awda mengemukakan aduan?*

- Head of the organization / *Ketua organisasi*
- Frontline staff who handle customer complaints / *Kakitangan hadapan yang mengendalikan aduan pelanggan*
- Public Relation Officer / *Pegawai Perhubungan Awam*
- The frontline at the reception of the organization / *Barisan hadapan di kaunter penyambut tetamu di organisasi tersebut*
- Others: please specify / *Lain-lain: sila nyatakan* _____

18. Are you aware of the organization procedure during the time you make formal complain? / *Adakah awda sedar prosedur organisasi semasa awda membuat aduan rasmi?* Yes / Ya No / Tidak Don't Know / Tidak Tahu

19. Is there any improvement being made when after you make that complaints? / *Adakah terdapat sebarang penambahbaikan yang dibuat selepas awda membuat aduan?* Yes / Ya No / Tidak Don't Know / Tidak Tahu

20. Please score your *satisfaction* with the public organization handled your most recent complaint, by scoring these factors out of 5 (where 5 is very satisfied and 1 is very dissatisfied) / *Sila beri penilaian tentang kepuasan awda dengan organisasi awam dalam menangani aduan awda paling terkini , dengan menilai faktor-faktor daripada 5 (di mana 5 adalah sangat berpuas hati dan 1 adalah sangat tidak berpuas hati)*

5 = Very satisfied / Sangat berpuas hati

4 = Satisfied / Memuaskan

3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied / *Bukan berpuashati mahupun tidak berpuashati*

2 = Dissatisfied / *Tidak berpuas hati*

1 = Very dissatisfied / *Sangat tidak berpuas hati*

0 = Don't know / Do not wish to disclosed / *Tidak tahu / Tidak mahu didedahkan*

		Don't know	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
20.1	The final <i>outcome</i> of your recent complaint. / <i>Apakah hasil akhir aduan terbaru awda.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
20.2	The way in which your complaint was <i>managed?</i> (The way they dealt with you and your complaint, the process, not the outcome) / <i>Cara aduan awda telah diuruskan? (Cara</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

	<i>mereka berurusan dengan awda dan aduan awda, proses, dan bukannya hasilnya)</i>							
20.3	The speed of the organization's response to your complaint. / <i>Kepantasan tindakan organisasi itu dengan aduan awda.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5	
20.4	The explanation on the complaint handling process / <i>Penjelasan yang diberikan mengenai proses pengendalian aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5	
20.5	The way they keeping you informed during the process / <i>Cara mereka memaklumkan kepada awda semasa proses pengendalian aduan.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5	
20.6	The way they think that your complaint being given a fair hearing. / <i>Cara mereka berfikir bahawa aduan awda telah ditangani dengan adil.</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5	

20.7	The speed on whole the complaint handling process in this organization? / <i>Kepantasan Secara keseluruhannya dalam proses pengendalian aduan di organisasi ini?</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
20.8	Others: Please specify / <i>Lain-lain sila nyatakan</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5

21. Please rate with the following statements indicating the experience in submitting complaint to public organization by circling the appropriate number. / *Sila nilaikan dengan kenyataan berikut menunjukkan pengalaman awda dalam mengemukakan aduan kepada organisasi awam dengan membulatkan nombor yang telah disediakan.*

- 5 = Excellent / *Sangat Baik*
- 4 = Good / *Baik*
- 3 = Average / *Sederhana*
- 2 = Bad / *Buruk*
- 1 = Worst / *Sangat Buruk*

		Worst	Bad	Average	Good	Excellent
21.1	The employees who handled your complaint were polite. / <i>Kakitangan yang yang mengendalikan aduan awda bersikap sopan.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.2	The employees who handled your complaint seemed very much	1	2	3	4	5

	concerned about your problem. / <i>Kakitangan yang yang mengendalikan aduan awda kelihatan sangat mengambil berat tentang masalah awda.</i>					
21.3	The employees who handled the complaint gave you individual attention. / <i>Kakitangan yang yang mengendalikan aduan awda memberikan perhatian yang sewajarnya</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.4	Quality of service provided / <i>Kualiti perkhidmatan yang diberikan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.5	Friendliness and warmth of officers / staff when serving you. / <i>Keramahan dan kemesraan pegawai / kakitangan apabila melayan awda.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.6	The presences of officers / staff (always at work) easily obtain information needed. / <i>Kehadiran pegawai / kakitangan (sentiasa di tempat kerja) dan mudah mendapatkan maklumat yang diperlukan.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.7	Response officers / staff of an inquiry / request. / <i>Respons pegawai / kakitangan terhadap sesuatu pertanyaan / permohonan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.8	Urgency to fulfill what was desired / <i>Kesegeraan dan menepati apa yang dihajati</i>	1	2	3	4	5

21.9	Polite and pleasant manner of the officers / staff during the interaction. / <i>Tutur cara yang sopan dan menyenangkan dari pegawai / kakitangan semasa interaksi.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.10	Attention has been paid when attending to your case. / <i>Tumpuan yang diberikan semasa melayani awda</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.11	Manner and tone of the officers / staff when serving you. / <i>Tutur bahasa yang digunakan oleh pegawai / kakitangan semasa melayani awda</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.12	Ability of officers and staff to deal with queries / problems raised / <i>Keupayaan pegawai dan kakitangan untuk berurusan dengan pertanyaan / masalah yang diajukan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
21.13	Time waiting to be served. / <i>Masa menunggu untuk dilayan</i>	1	2	3	4	5

22. Please rate with the following statement that indicate the most important to you when submitting complaint to public organization by circling the appropriate number. *Sila bulatkan nombor yang berkenaan. / Sila nilaikan dengan pernyataan berikut yang menunjukkan yang paling penting kepada awda apabila mengemukakan aduan kepada organisasi awam dengan membulatkan nombor yang telah disediakan.*

5 = Very Important / *Sangat Penting*

4 = Important / *Penting*

3 = Neither Important or not important / *Bukan penting mahupun tidak penting*

2 = Not important / *Tidak Penting*

1 = Not so important / *Sangat Tidak penting*

		Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important or Unimportant	Important	Very Important
22.1	Providing a speedy response / <i>Pemberian tindak balas yang cepat.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.2	Improving the service / <i>Meningkatkan perkhidmatan.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.3	Keeping you informed / <i>Awda sentiasa dimaklumkan</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.4	Fairness of the procedures / <i>Prosedur yang adil</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.5	Helpful staff / <i>kakitangan yang sedia membantu</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.6	Written explanation / <i>penjelasan yang bertulis</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.7	Apology / <i>permohonan maaf</i>	1	2	3	4	5
22.8	Ease of use of the procedure / Mudah dalam penggunaan prosedur	1	2	3	4	5
22.9	Compensation / <i>pampasan</i>	1	2	3	4	5

23. From your experience, what do you think of the strengths and weaknesses of complaint handling faced by public organization in Brunei. / *Daripada pengalaman awda sendiri, apa yang awda fikir tentang kekuatan dan kelemahan pengendalian aduan yang dihadapi oleh jabatan dan agensi kerajaan di Brunei.*

Strengths / Kekuatan :

Weaknesses / Kelemahan :

24. Do you have any suggestion (s) or recommendation (s) towards the improvement of complaint management in our government agencies? / *Adakah awda mempunyai sebarang pandangan atau cadangan kearah peningkatan pengurusan aduan di agensi-agensi kerajaan?*

SECTION D: SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND WORK INFORMATION

25. Gender / *Jantina*

Female/ *Perempuan* Male/ *Lelaki*

26. What age group do you belong to / *Golongan Umur?*

Below 20 years old / *Di bawah 20 tahun*

20-25 years old / *20-25 tahun*

26-30 years old / *26-30 tahun*

31-35 years old / *31-35 tahun*

- 36-40 years old / 36-40 tahun
- 41-45 years old / 41-45 tahun
- 46-50 years old / 46-50 tahun
- 50-55 years old / 50-55 tahun
- Over 55 years old / Lebih dari 55 tahun

27. Marital Status / Taraf Perkahwinan

- Single / Bujang
- Married / Kahwin
- Divorced / Cerai
- Others (Please specify)
/ Lain-lain, sila nyatakan _____

28. Your Religion / Agama yang diikuti

- Buddha / Buddha
- Christian / Kristian
- Hindu / Hindu
- Islam / Islam
- Other (Please specify) _____

29. Highest Education / Pendidikan Tertinggi:

- Secondary School / Sekolah Menengah
- A- level/Certificate / Peringkat A/Sijil
- National Diploma / Diploma Kebangsaan
- Higher National Diploma / Diploma Tertinggi Kebangsaan
- Undergraduate Degree / Ijazah Sarjana Muda
- Master's Degree / Ijazah Sarjana
- Doctor of philisophy / Ijazah Kedoktoran
- Other (Please specify) / Lain-lain (Sila nyatakan) _____

30. In which level of division are you currently working?

Division / *Bahagian* I [1]

Division / *Bahagian* II [2]

Division / *Bahagian* III [3]

Division / *Bahagian* IV [4]

Division / *Bahagian* V [5]

31. What is your role? / *Apakah jawatan awda?*

Director / *Pengarah*

Deputy Director / *Timbalan Pengarah*

Senior Officer / *Pegawai Kanan*

Senior Complaint Officer / *Pegawan Aduan Kanan*

Senior Public Relation Officer / *Pegawai Perhubungan Awam Kanan*

Complain Handling Officer / *Pegawai Pengurusan Aduan*

Public Relation Officer / *Pegawai Perhubungan Awam*

Complaint Handling Staff / *Kakitangan Pengurusan Aduan*

Customer Service Staff / *Kakitangan Perkhidmatan Pelanggan*

Frontline Reception / *Penyambut Tetamu*

32. Type of Service / jenis Perkhidmatan

Permanent / Tetap

Month-to-Month / Sebulan ke sebulan

Contract / Kontrak

Open vote

Daily / Gaji Hari

33. Job Tenure (Years) / Tempoh perkhidmatan (Tahun)

(I) Current Position / Jawatan sekarang	II) Current Department/ Jabatan sekarang	(III) Government / Kerajaan
0-5 years <input type="text"/>	0-5 years <input type="text"/>	0-5 years <input type="text"/>
6-10 years <input type="text"/>	6-10 years <input type="text"/>	6-10 years <input type="text"/>
11-15 years <input type="text"/>	11-15 years <input type="text"/>	11-15 years <input type="text"/>
16-20 years <input type="text"/>	16-20 years <input type="text"/>	16-20 years <input type="text"/>
21-25 years <input type="text"/>	21-25 years <input type="text"/>	21-25 years <input type="text"/>
26-30 years <input type="text"/>	26-30 years <input type="text"/>	26-30 years <input type="text"/>
over 30 years <input type="text"/>	over 30 years <input type="text"/>	over 30 years <input type="text"/>

33. Monthly Salary / Gaji sebulan

Less than \$1,000	<input type="text"/>
\$1001 -\$2000	<input type="text"/>
\$2001 -\$3000	<input type="text"/>
\$3001 -\$4000	<input type="text"/>
\$4001 -\$5000	<input type="text"/>
\$5001 -\$6000	<input type="text"/>
\$6001 -\$7000	<input type="text"/>
More than \$7001 and above	<input type="text"/>

Please return the completed questionnaire to the focal officer at your organization by **04 July 2013**. Your response to this survey is highly appreciated.

*Sila kembalikan borang kaji selidik yang telah lengkap diisi kepada pegawai sumber di organisasi awda tidak lewat dari hari Khamis, **04 Julai 2013**. Maklumbalas awda sangat dihargai.*

APPENDIX D



Information Sheet for Interview

The Research Subject

“The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Sector Complaint Management in Brunei Darussalam”

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. This Information Sheet explains what the study is about and how I would like you to participate in. The purpose of this interview is to collect data for an academic study at University of Birmingham (UOB) to explore the way complaints are handled by public sector organizations (Government Departments) in Brunei Darussalam. In addition to that, the other aim of the interview is to explore the way complaints are managed as a means for learning about how to improve services.

In this interview, you are asked to think about how your organizational complaint management processes and the ways in which feedback information is used for organisational learning in various levels.

All the responses you give will be treated as strictly confidential. The information provided by you in the interview will be used for the study purpose for my Doctoral Thesis only. Your answers will be analysed in an anonymous manner (along with those of other respondents interviewed) and so that no one particular individual or organization can be identified. All data will be stored securely. No identifiable personal data will be published. You are free to withdraw from the survey at any time, and without giving any reason. You will also be asked to sign a consent form and provided with a copy of this.

If you agree to this, the interview will be audio recorded and will take approximately 40 minutes. All the interview recordings will be destroyed at the end of the research. Your name and contact details will not be recorded on the interview transcripts. In addition, any details which could potentially identify you will be also removed or changed. Your participation in this study will not be discussed with other interviewees. Your participation in this research

will be greatly valued. You can stop at any point or choose not to answer any particular question. Just let the interviewer know.

I would like to thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. If you have any questions about the study at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Rosdi Haji Abdul Aziz
Doctoral Researcher
Institute of Local Government Studies
School of Government and Society
Edgaston
University of Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom



Kertas Maklumat Temuduga

Subjek Kajian

“Kecekapan dan Keberkesanan Pengurusan Aduan dalam Sektor Awam di Negara Brunei Darussalam”

Tuan/Puan,

Sukacita dimaklumkan bahawa Tuan / Puan adalah dipelawa untuk menyertai dalam kajian ini. Kertas ini akan menerangkan tentang perihal kajian dan peranan yang dikehendaki sebagai peserta. Temuduga ini bertujuan untuk mengumpul butir-butir maklumat untuk kajian ilmiah saya di Universiti Birmingham bagi mengetahui bagaimana organisasi-organisasi di sektor awam (jabatan-jabatan kerajaan) mengendalikan aduan-aduan yang diterima. Tujuan temuduga ini juga ialah untuk meninjau bagaimana aduan-aduan tersebut dapat membantu bagi memperbaiki perkhidmatan.

Dalam temuduga ini Tuan / Puan akan diminta untuk memberi gambaran bagaimana proses pengurusan aduan dalam organisasi tuan/puan serta maklum balas yang diterima dapat digunakan sebagai sumber pembelajaran di pelbagai peringkat organisasi.

Untuk makluman, segala jawapan yang diberikan akan diperlakukan secara sulit. Maklumat-maklumat yang diberikan semasa temuduga akan digunakan bagi tujuan kajian Tesis Kedoktoran saya sahaja. Jawapan-jawapan Tuan / Puan (bersama peserta yang lain) akan dianalisa secara anonim dan dengan cara supaya tiada individu atau organisasi dapat dikenal pasti. Semua data akan diberi perlindungan. Tiada butiran peribadi yang dapat dikenal pasti akan diterbitkan. Tuan / Puan berhak menarik diri dari menyertai kaji selidik ini bila-bila masa dan tanpa memberi sebarang sebab. Tuan / Puan juga akan diminta untuk menandatangani borang persetujuan serta akan diberikan satu salinan Kertas Maklumat ini.

Jika Tuan / Puan bersetuju, temuduga ini akan dirakam dan ianya akan mengambil masa dalam 40 minit. Kesemua rakaman temuduga akan dimusnahkan setelah tamat kajian. Nama dan butiran perhubungan tidak akan disertakan dalam rakaman temuduga. Untuk makluman juga sebarang butiran yang berpotensi untuk mengenal pasti identiti Tuan / Puan akan dipadam atau diubah. Penyertaan Tuan / Puan dalam kajian ini tidak akan didedahkan kepada yang ditemuduga yang lain. Penyertaan Tuan / Puan dalam kajian ini amatlah dihargai. Tuan

/ Puan boleh berhenti pada bila-bila masa semasa temuduga atau tidak menjawab mana-mana soalan iaitu dengan memberitahu niat Tuan / Puan kepada penemuduga.

Terima kasih di atas kesudian Tuan / Puan menyertai dalam kajian ini. Bagi sebarang pertanyaan pada mana-mana peringkat kajian tuan/puan dialu-alukan untuk menghubungi saya. Perhatian Tuan / Puan adalah sangat dihargai.

Rosdi Haji Abdul Aziz
Doctoral Researcher
Institute of Local Government Studies
School of Government and Society
Edgaston
University of Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom

Consent Form for Interview / Borang Persetujuan bagi Temuduga

The Research Subject / Subjek Kajian

**“The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Sector Complaint Management in
Brunei Darussalam”**

**“Kecekapan dan Keberkesanan Pengurusan Aduan dalam Sektor Awam dalam di
Negara Brunei Darussalam”**

- I have read and understood the Study Information Sheet / *Saya telah membaca dan memahami mengenai kertas maklumat kajian.*
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study / *Saya telah diberi peluang untuk bertanya soalan mengenai kajian ini.*
- I understand that taking part in the study is voluntary / *Saya memahami bahawa ikut serta dalam kajian ini adalah secara sukarela.*
- I understand that confidentiality will be ensured and my identity will be protected both in the analysis and in all subsequent reports / *Saya memahami bahawa Identiti saya akan dirahsiakan dan dilindungi daripada analisis dan semua laporan yang berkaitan.*

If you are in agreement with the above conditions and are willing to participate in the survey, please sign and date this form to acknowledge your understanding and to indicate your consent / *Kesudian Tuan / Puan meluangkan masa dalam temuduga ini sangatlah dihargai. Jika Tuan / Puan bersetuju untuk menyertainya, sila tandatangan serta beri tarikh sebagai tanda pemahaman dan persetujuan Tuan / Puan terhadap syarat-syarat di atas.*

Signature of Participant / Tandatangan Peserta: _____

Date / Tarikh: _____

Interview on
“The Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Sector Complaint Management
in Brunei Darussalam”

No. / Bil.	Topic / Perkara	Question / Soalan
1.	Client Charter / <i>Hak Pelanggan atau TPOR</i>	<p>1. In your opinion, do you think the government has achieved its objectives of getting closer to its customer and making customer satisfy toward government services by introducing client charter to government departments? <i>Pada pendapat biskita, adakah kerajaan telah mencapai matlamatnya memperbaiki hubungan dengan pelanggan dan memenuhi kehendak pelanggan terhadap perkhidmatan kerajaan dengan memperkenalkan Hak Pelanggan atau TPOR dalam Jabatan-Jabatan Kerajaan?</i></p> <p>2. Apart from the client charter, can you think of any things that the government should focus on that can contribute to customer satisfaction? <i>Selain daripada Hak Pelanggan atau TPOR, dapatkah biskita memikirkan apa-apa perkara yang patut ditumpukan oleh kerajaan yang dapat menyumbang kepada kepuasan pelanggan?</i></p> <p>3. Many people talk about client charter and explain it in different ways. What is your understanding on the definition of client charter? <i>Ramai orang memperkatakan mengenai Hak Pelanggan atau TPOR dan terdapat pelbagai tafsiran mengenainya. Apakah pemahaman biskita terhadap pengertian Hak Pelanggan atau TPOR?</i></p>

		<p>4. Did you think that complaint is part of customer focus? <i>Adakah biskita berpendapat bahawa aduan termasuk dalam tumpuan pelanggan?</i></p>
2.	Complaints / <i>Aduan-Aduan</i>	<p>5. Does your organization have a clear definition of a complaint which is consistently followed by all staff? <i>Adakah organisasi biskita mempunyai pengertian yang jelas mengenai aduan dan sejajar difahami oleh kesemua kakitangan?</i></p> <p>6. What is your perception on the definition on 'complaints' to your organization? <i>Apakah tanggapan biskita terhadap pengertian "aduan" dalam organisasi biskita?</i></p> <p>7. Does your organization have a focal point for handling public complaints? If yes, is it a complaint unit or a public relation officer was given task to handle public complaint? <i>Adakah organisasi biskita mempunyai badan tertentu dalam mengendali aduan? Jika ya, adakah ianya berupa unit aduan atau pegawai perhubungan awam yang diberi tugas untuk mengendalikan aduan tersebut?</i></p>
3.	Complaint Procedures / <i>Tatacara Membuat Aduan</i>	<p>8. Does your organization have a written policy and procedures to support your complaints management process? If No, please state the main reason why your organization did not have complaint procedure. <i>Adakah organisasi biskita mempunyai dasar dan tatacara bertulis bagi membantu proses menguruskan aduan? Jika tidak, sila nyatakan sebab utama mengapa organisasi biskita tidak mempunyai formaliti sedemikian.</i></p> <p>9. Does your organization provide written guidance on how to make a complaint? <i>Adakah organisasi biskita memberi panduan bertulis terhadap cara-cara membuat aduan?</i></p>

		<p>10. What does your organization consider to be the benefits of that formal complaints procedures for managerial efficiency? <i>Apakah yang dianggap oleh organisasi biskita sebagai kebaikan atau faedah dalam tatacara aduan tersebut bagi meningkatkan kecekapan pengurusan?</i></p> <p>11. How familiar are you with the organization's complaints procedure? <i>Sejauh mana biskita biasa dengan prosedur aduan organisasi?</i></p>
4.	Complaint Process / <i>Proses Aduan</i>	<p>12. Do you have a process map which clearly describes the steps in your complaint management process? Do you consider complaints management as a legitimate business process or just a set of procedures or activities? <i>Adakah biskita mempunyai peta proses yang memperincikan langkah-langkah dalam pengurusan aduan? Adakah biskita menganggap pengurusan aduan termasuk dalam proses pekerjaan/perniagaan atau cuma sebagai prosedur atau aktiviti secara umum?</i></p> <p>13. How did your organization handle complaints once they were received? <i>Bagaimana organisasi biskita mengendalikan aduan-aduan setelah ianya diterima?</i></p> <p>14. Do you conduct follow up with the complainant? <i>Adakah biskita mengadakan susulan dengan pengadu?</i></p> <p>15. How is the complaint communicated? Various channels? Suggestion box? <i>Bagaimana aduan tersebut disampaikan? Pelbagai saluran? Peti cadangan?</i></p> <p>16. In handling public complaint, did you see the involvement of senior management in the process of complaint handling?</p>

		<p><i>Adakah biskita melihat pihak atasan terlibat sama dalam menangani aduan orang ramai?</i></p> <p>17. In your opinion, do you think that the top management should also be involved in complaint handling? <i>Pada pendapat biskita, adakah pihak atasan juga patut terlibat sama dalam pengurusan aduan?</i></p>
5.	Complaint Improvement / <i>Pembaikan dari Aduan</i>	<p>18. How does your organization learn from complaints? Did you learn anything from complaints? Can you describe what form of learning takes place. <i>Bagaimana organisasi biskita mengambil pengajaran dari aduan-aduan? Adakah biskita mengambil pengajaran daripadanya? Sila huraikan bagaimana pengajaran tersebut diambil.</i></p> <p>19. What types of improvement did you find out from handling customer complaints? <i>Apakah jenis-jenis pembaikan yang boleh diambil menerusi pengurusan aduan pelanggan?</i></p> <p>20. How do you prevent complaints of the same type from recurring in the future? <i>Bagaimana biskita memastikan supaya aduan-aduan yang sama tidak akan timbul di masa akan datang?</i></p> <p>21. How do you know that your current complaints management is the best practice? <i>Bagaimana biskita tahu bahawa pengurusan aduan yang ada sekarang adalah yang terbaik?</i></p> <p>22. How can you make sure that complaints are handled consistently and fairly across your organization? <i>Bagaimana biskita memastikan aduan-aduan ditangani secara konsisten dan sejajar di setiap peringkat organisasi?</i></p> <p>23. Have you identified what needs to be improved in your complaints management?</p>

		<p><i>Adakah biskita telah mengenal pasti apa yang perlu diperbaiki dalam pengurusan aduan biskita?</i></p> <p>24. Do you think whether the current complaint management in your organization need further improvement or not? <i>Adakah biskita berpendapat pengurusan aduan yang ada sekarang memerlukan pembaikan lanjut atau tidak?</i></p>
6.	<p>Employees (Training / Empowerment) / <i>Pekerja (Latihan / Kewibawaan)</i></p>	<p>25. Does your organization give you empowerment or enough autonomy to handle unforeseen problem situations like complaints? <i>Adakah biskita diberikan atau mempunyai kuasa atau kebebasan dalam mengendalikan masalah-masalah yang tidak diduga seperti aduan?</i></p> <p>26. Does your department provides training to staff involved in handling complaints that is specifically tailored to their level of authority and duties? <i>Adakah jabatan biskita memberi kursus latihan kepada kakitangan yang terlibat dalam mengendalikan aduan yang sesuai dengan kuasa dan tugas mereka?</i></p> <p>27. During training, does the course trainer works through your agency's complaints policy and guidelines to ensure staff fully understand procedures and roles? <i>Semasa latihan, adakah jurulatih memberi kursus berdasarkan kepada dasar dan garis pandu aduan agensi biskita demi memastikan kakitangan memahami prosedur serta peranannya?</i></p> <p>28. Does the way you handle customer complaint change after that training? Please specify changes that being made after attending training course. <i>Adakah latihan tersebut memberi perubahan kepada cara biskita menangani aduan? Sila nyatakan perubahan-perubahan selepas menyertai kursus tersebut.</i></p>

		<p>29. Did you ever share your new knowledge and skill with colleagues after attending customer complaint training? <i>Adakah biskita pernah mengongsikan pengetahuan serta kemahiran yang didapati dari latihan pengurusan aduan tersebut dengan rakan sekerja?</i></p>
7.	Customer Satisfaction / <i>Kepuasan Pelanggan</i>	<p>30. How does your organizations know that the complainant were <u>truly satisfying</u> with your organization and not merely assuming that, because they had replied to a complaint, the customer must automatically be happy? Who should investigate the complaints? <i>Bagaimana organisasi biskita tahu bahawa pengadu benar-benar berpuas hati dengan organisasi biskita dan bukan berdasarkan andaian bahawa hanya kerana sesuatu aduan telah diberi respon pelanggan secara automatik berpuas hati? Siapakah yang patut ditugaskan untuk menyelidik aduan tersebut?</i></p> <p>31. How does your organization know that those customers who complained were actually satisfied with your organization, including those that your organization believed were satisfied with the outcome of the complainant? <i>Bagaimana organisasi biskita tahu bahawa pelanggan-pelanggan yang membuat aduan benar-benar berpuas hati, termasuk mereka yang berpuas hati berdasarkan andaian organisasi biskita?</i></p>
8.	Complaint Culture / <i>Budaya Membuat Aduan</i>	<p>32. Do you believe that complaint management is a key business priority or area of activity? Do you have evidence on this? <i>Adakah biskita percaya bahawa pengurusan aduan adalah salah satu keutamaan dalam pekerjaan/perniagaan atau bidang aktiviti? Atas dasar apakah biskita percaya sedemikian?</i></p>

		<p>33. Does your organization encourage customers to complain and comment and systems were put in place to make this easy as possible? <i>Adakah organisasi biskita menggalakkan pelanggan membuat aduan dan memberi maklum balas serta adakah terdapat sistem untuk mempermudah bagi melakukan perkara sedemikian?</i></p> <p>34. How well do you educate your customers on how or where to complain? <i>Sejauh mana biskita dapat menunjuk ajar pelanggan tentang bagaimana atau di mana untuk membuat aduan?</i></p> <p>35. Does your organization rely on leaflets and posters informing customers that comments of any sort were welcome? <i>Adakah organisasi biskita bergantung kepada risalah dan poster bagi memaklumkan pelanggan bahawa sebarang maklum balas adalah dialu-alukan?</i></p> <p>36. Did you know that Management Services Department is given responsibility to handle public complaints about government service delivery? Are you satisfied with complaint handling done by MSD? <i>Adakah biskita tahu bahawa Jabatan Perkhidmatan Pengurusan diberi tanggungjawab dalam mengendalikan aduan orang ramai terhadap penyampaian perkhidmatan kerajaan? Adakah biskita berpuas hati terhadap pengurusan aduan yang dikendalikan oleh MSD?</i></p>
9.	Ombudsman	<p>37. What do you think about establishing an independent agency such as ombudsman in democratic states that tackled complaints of maladministration or poor service delivery? <i>Apa pendapat biskita mengenai penubuhan agensi bebas seperti Ombudsman dalam negara-negara demokrasi bagi menangani aduan terhadap salah tadbir atau kekurangan dalam penyampaian perkhidmatan?</i></p>

		<p>38. Do you think that now is the right time to establish independent agency such as Ombudsman or establishing Public Complaint Bureau is enough for a small country like Brunei?</p> <p><i>Adakah biskita berpendapat bahawa sekarang adalah masa yang sesuai untuk menubuhkan agensi bebas seperti Ombudsman atau Biro Aduan Awam adalah mencukupi bagi negara kecil seperti Brunei?</i></p> <p>39. In your opinion, do you think that the public complaint handling would be effective if it were done by an independent agency compared to a government department such as Management Services Department or a unit in each government department?</p> <p><i>Pada pendapat biskita, adakah pengurusan aduan orang ramai lebih berkesan jika dikendalikan oleh agensi bebas berbanding jabatan kerajaan seperti Jabatan Perkhidmatan Pengurusan atau unit dalam setiap jabatan?</i></p>
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