

Facilities Management in Malaysian Local Authorities: Identifying Current Issues

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Abstract: The concept of Facilities Management (FM) is still new in Malaysia. However, FM is regarded as important in every organization. Therefore, this paper explores the FM issues in Local Authorities (LA's) particularly in Malaysian local authorities. FM encompasses many aspects of management in the organizations. FM has been regarded as a supported tool in organizations even though FM is one of the enablers in the organizations. Using the literature review, the issues of FM that are currently affecting the public sectors especially in LA's are being recognized. The results of the study indicate that most of the Malaysian LA's are not efficiently and effectively delivering the services and providing public facilities adequately. As the LA's involve with public, the problems arise from the service delivery of LA's become an important issue. In order to overcome the issues regarding FM in Malaysian LA's, the performance measurement of FM must be conducted in LA's to identify the level of performance in service delivery of LA's. Based on the findings, it can give an overview to Malaysian LA's to improve their service delivery and facilities provision as well as showing the importance of FM in managing the facilities in Malaysian LA's efficiently and effectively. The findings will be of significance to Malaysian LA's in improving the performance of Malaysian public sector entities, particularly local authorities.

Key words: Facilities management, local authorities, performance measurement, efficiently and effectively, provide public facilities

INTRODUCTION

The trend of fulfilling the needs of the users in the public sector especially in Local Authorities (LA's) has been increasing due to significant impact towards the public sectors. Malaysia has a three-tier government namely federal government, state governments and local authorities (Goh, 2014; Phang, 1996). LA's play an important role in providing the public facilities to the communities. There are three categories of LA's namely a city administration, a municipal council and a district council. In Malaysia, there are 149 LA's including the City council, municipal council and district council. As one of the key players in the development planning in the urban and rural areas, the provision of public facilities and services and maintaining public infrastructures is essentially necessary (Hussain and Brahim, 2006).

Facilities Management (FM) is one of the sectors that can help in managing and fulfill the needs of the users in the organizations. The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) defines FM as "a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality

of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology". FM is regarded as one of the fastest-growing professions in the UK and one of the alternatives that have been used using the outsourcing to cost-cutting in 1970's (Nazali and Pitt, 2009).

FM had been introduced for almost 40 years especially in the United States and in Europe (Drion *et al.* 2012). However in Malaysia, FM is relatively new and the progress of FM is still in infancy (Moore and Finch, 2004), (Nazali and Pitt, 2009) even though there are concerns on the need of upgrading the quality level in public services. One of the factors that contribute to the passive development of FM in Malaysia is caused by lacking of understanding the FM definitions and functions (Myeda and Pitt, 2014).

In 2010, the fifth Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abd Razak launching a Government Transformation Programme (GTP) roadmap to improve the performance of the public sector (Unit Pengurusan Prestasi dan Pelaksanaan). This includes FM as one of the supported practices to enhance the service delivery in public sectors. Based on the principles of

1Malaysia, people first, performance now, the GTP programme focus on the concept of fairness to all especially the public, fulfilling the requirement and the needs of the public and the most important aspect in this concept is the transparency and the accountability of the government towards the public. The concept of “performance now” indicates the importance of delivering better services to the public by the public agencies such as LA’s.

LA’s involve with public in providing public facilities as well as delivering the public services. Currently, there has been an increasing pressure in improving the performance of LA’s in terms of cost reductions, service delivery improvements, quality services and accountability. However, due too many complaints from the public towards the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and accountability of the Malaysian LA’s is being questionable. The importance of measuring the performance of FM in Malaysian LA’s is essential to identify the level of performance of service delivery in Malaysian LA’s.

This may be due from the issues occurred in FM practice. What are the current issues that affecting the Malaysian LA are in delivering their services and providing better facilities to the public Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide an overview on the current issues that affecting the Malaysian LA’s especially in FM and the requirement of the development of conceptual framework of PMS for FM in Malaysian LA’s.

SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS OF FM

There are numerous of functions and services that are involved in FM. There are several types and level of services that are included in FM; financial management, space management, operational management, behavioral management, premises services, offices services, central services (Barrett, 1995), management roles, management knowledge, operational activities, facility knowledge (Kincaid, 1994), technical FM, commercial FM, infrastructural FM (Schulte, 2003), IT management, real estate, space management, environmental, health and safety, outsourcing, property management, maintenance (Moore and Finch, 2004), and FM department level activities, FM high level activities and FM specialist activities. All this functions in FM involved multiple disciplinary in the organizations to make FM functioning well. Not only as supportive roles in organizations, FM also contribute in the success or the failure of the organizations. Without any strategic planning in FM, the organizations can be less productive and lead to the failure of the organizations. The employees of the

organizations really depend on the good management of FM and every level of the management required FM as an enabler of the success on the organizations. Not only providing facilities, FM also involved in delivering services such as maintenance to make sure the need of the users can be provided. Addition to that, Grimshaw (2003) highlights another six main functions of FM consisting of.

Technical function: Involve maintaining the practical utility of the physical infrastructure to ensure the core activity of the organization can be supported (operational maintenance).

Economic function: Function that can ensuring the use of physical resources to be efficient through the controlling cost (financial control).

Strategic function: The forward planning of physical resources in order to support the organizational development as well as reducing the risk (change management).

Social function: Function to ensure the physical infrastructure of work meets the legitimate needs of users within the organizational (user interfacing).

Service function: The provision of non-core support services (support service).

Professional function: Social responsibility for people in the workplace (advocacy).

In order to perform well, the integrations of property management, organizational administration and the operation of the facilities are important in the organizations. The transformation from the traditional FM services to the new enhancement of FM services makes FM crucial in every organization. Moreover, the integrations within the FM processes is essential in order to achieve the strategic aims of the organizations; in this study the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service delivery of the LA’s towards the achievement of providing better public facilities to the users.

However, the provision of public facilities is often outsourcing by LA’s to the private companies (Bennett and Iossa, 2006). For an example, the waste management that is supposed to be under the duty of the LA’s is outsource to the private company. The FM function of waste management is transferred to other parties that can provide better services and decrease the utilization of extra workers in LA’s. In this way, the cost

Table 1: Functions in FM

Department level	High level	Specialist level
Helpdesk	Property management	Architecture
Space planning	Occupancy and leasing	Design
Operation and maintenance	Building inspection	Engineering
Cleaning and housekeeping	Security/access control	Civil works
Health and safety	Emergency procedures	Surveying
Contractors management	Communication	Landscaping
Energy management	Data control/record/archive	Waste management
Procurement	Safety and fire	Environmentals
Project management	Public relation	ervices
	Business relation	Utilities engineering
		Pest control

of managing the waste management can be controlled effectively by LA's. Nevertheless, LA's should monitor the performance of the outsourcing service providers to control the effectiveness of the outsourcing services.

Furthermore, Mohamed Som highlights that the scope of FM is to possess knowledge of specific requirements of the individual, team or department and the demands of the business. The categories in FM services that had been demonstrated by Mohamed Som show that the services and functions in FM have been divided into a specific function according to the level of activities in FM. Table 1 shows the functions of FM based on three hierarchical levels in the organizations.

As FM involved in many functions in organizations, it shows that FM practice is required in every organizations including in the public sectors such as in LA's. A better performance of FM in LA's can improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service delivery in LA's. However as the LA's unable to understand the importance of FM in improving the performance, the complaints from the public will be increased due to the poor services given by LA's. It is important to make sure that the functions of FM can be understood by all level of management in LA's. It is crucial for Malaysian LA's to provide better services and public facilities that can satisfy the public as the users.

STRATEGIC ROLES OF FM

FM is one of profession that required multi-disciplinary of skills and knowledge (Nazali and Pitt, 2009). Wiggins (2010) points out the link between the demand and supply of FM services that can offer the maximization of FM performance and creating value in the organizations. The supply from the FM department or outsourcing service providers should be aligned with the demand from the users. Not only consider about the provision of facilities and services to the users but FM must also consider the latest innovation and technology to make sure the process of FM service delivery can be delivered.

Other than providing facilities Chen pointed out that the processes in FM also consist of the strategic, tactical and operational planning that started with the strategic planning from the provision of the asset and facilities until the operational phase of the facilities. This make the roles of FM started from the planning phase of the construction of the assets until the operational phase in the organizations. Facilities that were managed in a better way will give more effective cost management to the organizations, improve the effectiveness of the organizations, produce better output towards the organizations, offer an added-value to the organizations and provide a good image to the whole organizations (Zakaria and Mohammed, 2004).

A convention called National Asset and Facility Management Convention (NAFAM) which was held in Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) in 2007, set the several initiatives in order to improve the asset management and FM in Malaysia. The convention was held in Malaysia in order to increase the awareness of facilitating the effectiveness of asset and FM in Malaysia especially in managing the government assets and also improves the standard of asset and FM practices in Malaysia.

The National Asset and Facilities Management (NAFAM) created by Malaysian Government has positive objectives that lead in improving public services and therefore creating economic, environmental and social value (Alexander, 2011). Therefore, it is important for Malaysian LA's to improve in providing a better public facilities and effectively delivering services. In Malaysian LA's, FM involved in various roles to make sure the efficiency and effectiveness of the service delivery to the public can be done. LA's are not only providing public facilities but also delivering services such as waste management, the beautification of territories area, drains cleaning, the preparation of local plans, the preparation of structure plans, the provision of public toilets, grass cutting, the development of tourists areas, sewage disposal and maintenance, the provision of playgrounds, the preservation of public health, traffic and parking management, market controlling on hawkers and illegal business, controlling the building construction, controlling of road construction and drainage, the cemetery care, the slaughter home care, town planning, providing and managing the street lighting, building control, licensing, and trades control (Abdullah and Kaliannan, 2009; Tayib, 1996; Samsudin *et al.*, 2012).

All this roles are related to the FM functions externally that related to the public. While internally, FM involved with employees in the LA's itself. In LA's, FM involved with providing facilities to the staff in LA's to

make sure that they can give the services to the public efficiently and effectively and therefore increases the productivity of the staff in LA's.

FM IN MALAYSIAN LA'S

FM industry is developing and evolving from time to time in order to support the functions of the organizations. FM has been developing and emerging in the most of developed countries such as United Kingdom, United States of America and Europe countries. Asian countries such as Hong Kong and Japan also already established the FM industry in their countries. However, other Asean countries such as Malaysia and Singapore are still developing in three main areas which are practice, research and education (Syed and Jusoff, 2009).

The development of FM in Malaysia started in early 2001 when the Deputy Prime Minister at that time, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad, emphasized on the importance of asset and facilities management in Malaysia especially to put a great focus on the development of FM particularly in public sector (Nizam and Marinie, 2010). The development of FM industry in Malaysia is strongly supported by Malaysian Government with several proactive actions and initiatives toward the development of FM in Malaysia.

Despite of the acknowledgement of the importance of FM in Malaysia, FM has been regard as less importance in business strategies (Myeda and Pitt, 2014). However, due to the strong support from the FM practitioners, Malaysian Association of Facility Management (MAFM) had been established to share knowledge between the FM practitioners and academicians that involve in FM (BIFM, 2014). In Malaysian LA's, FM is also one of the contributors in the efficiency and effectiveness of the service delivery to the public. As an example, Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) has created one department specifically to manage facilities in DBKL. The FM department in DBKL is created to provide any required office's facilities to the staff in DBKL. This make all the need of the staff in DBKL will be fulfilled to increase the productivity of the staff.

CURRENT ISSUES IN FM

Although, FM practice is important in the organizations there are several issues that occurred in FM. In 2012, RICS conducted a survey regarding the problems that always occurred in FM. In the report, they stated that there are seven main issues that affect FM practice. The main issues in FM could be characteristic by the following statements:

- The problems in managing and controlling the financial cost

- Unable to understand the FM functions among the strategic level management
- Unable to know how to adapt to the latest innovation in working environmen
- Lack of new FM professionals in FM industry
- Lack of strategic planning in FM
- The level of good relationship with the outsourcing service providers and
- Difficulty in managing environmental issues

Addition to that, the report also stated the challenges facing in FM that includes of:

- The need of outsourcing and how to overcome the cost control that can improve the FM capabilities and performance
- The constraints in strategic FM
- The limitation in the traditional performance measures in FM
- A weak relationship with the human resource department and
- The effectiveness of improving the relationship with the user

In Malaysia there are still a number of issues that occurred in FM especially on public facilities in Malaysia. Low service quality is one of the main issues that affected FM in Malaysia (Nizam and Marinie, 2010). Other than that Ballesty claims that there are many other issues that affected FM including lack of recognition in FM, education and training needs, professional status, career pathways, information standard, performance benchmarking, cost value versus value in service procurement and corporate and community contribution of FM.

FM ISSUES IN MALAYSIAN LA'S

Malaysian LA's involve with providing and managing public facilities and giving services such as over the counter services for public to pay summons and renew business license or paying tax. LA's need to be aware from time to time to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service delivery to the public. Lately, many complaints from the public towards the efficiency and effectiveness of the LA's in managing public facilities. Poor waste management is one of the most complaints from the public. Furthermore, the public facilities and assets should be managed and maintained in a good condition that can meet the needs of the community in social, economic and environmental aspects (Norhidayah *et al.*, 2015).

The inefficiency of the local authorities and operational issue has raise many complaints from the public towards the unsatisfactory of the service delivery

Table 2: Issues of FM in Malaysian LA's

Issues	Researchers
Operational issues	Samsudin <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Transparency	Samsudin <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Poor services	Abdullah and Kaliannan (2009), Zakaria <i>et al.</i> (2012), Ibrahim and Karim (2004), Phang (1996), Zakaria and Hilmie (2010)
Not proactive in improving public services	Abdullah and Kaliannan (2010), Haznan and Manian
Cleanliness issue	Zakaria <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Provision of public facilities	Ibrahim and Karim (2004)
The efficiency of service deliveries	Mansor and Razali (2010)
Poor financial planning	Berahir <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Accountability	Tooley <i>et al.</i> (2010), Wisniewski and Olafsson (2004), Abdul Hamid <i>et al.</i> (2014), Yunus <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Poor management	Zakaria
Environment and safety issues	Ngah <i>et al.</i> (2011)

in providing the services and public facilities (Ibrahim and Karim, 2004, Samsudin *et al.*, 2012). Besides that, the LA's also always being accused of delays, poor attitude and weak enforcement. This may be due from the inefficiency of the FM practice in LA's that can support the continuity of the service delivery to the public. This all involves the role from FM department. Other than that, the accountability of the LA's also being questionable (Wisniewski and Olafsson, 2004, Abdullah and Kallanan, 2009, Yunus *et al.*, 2014). Prior to this, the LA's often have difficulties in communicating with the public on accountability especially on the reasons of the disclosure of the public facilities (Bracketz and Kenley, 2002). Furthermore, LA's are always referred to as being bureaucratic, inefficient, wasteful, unresponsive and not citizen-friendly. They also indicate that the LA's often deal with financial lacking, human resources, poor management, incompetence and problematic services.

The appropriate models on how the facilities can allow the processes that can support the fulfillment of an organization's strategic aims are now considered to be essential. Thus, it is very important for LA's to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service delivery in LA's to gain the community's satisfaction. Table 2 shows the summary of several issues pertaining to FM in Malaysian LA's.

Pertaining to the issues occurred in Malaysian LA's, it shows that poor services and accountability are the most unsatisfying problems from the public. This may be due to a weakness of the management in LA's especially in FM. In a research that has been conducted by Ibrahim and Karim (2004) indicated that the low levels of efficiency and the effectiveness of the service delivery makes LA's require to improve the performance in fulfilling the needs of the public as well as being able to deliver services more effective.

In a study by Mansor and Razali (2010), they recommend that the LA's should provide more facilities, staff training, adequate budget support, application of enhance technology and also continuous motivation at all levels in LA's. This all involves FM. The aligning of the management of asset and facilities with the LA's strategic aims can support the strategic aims in more proactive way rather than a reactive approach (Bracketz and Kenley, 2002).

Moreover with the principles of 1Malaysia, that stated of "People First, Performance Now", the improvement of service delivery in Malaysian LA's should be taken into an important aspect in every LA's. A better quality services and improvement of public facilities can satisfy the public as the users. As an addition to that a preventive maintenance is more reliable than the corrective maintenance on the public facilities so that the complaints from the public can be decreased.

THE NEED OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS (PMS) IN MALAYSIAN LA'S

Malaysian local authorities involve with managing and providing the services and facilities to the public. Nowadays, the public sector including the local authorities is taking a lot of demands from the public to improve their performance in service delivery (Hood, 1995, Ramseook *et al.*, 2010, Wisniewski and Olafsson, 2004; Nooi, 2008). The pressure to improve the performance on local authorities from the public has drive the local authorities to provide better service delivery, quality services and better facilities performance. The need to fulfill the public requirements has force the local authorities to monitor and evaluate the performance of the whole management and operations of local authorities for continuous improvement (Abdullah and Kallanan, 2014).

The commitment of the local authorities towards the public satisfaction has made the performance measurement is essential. Moreover, public satisfaction can be decrease when their needs are not being addressed by the local authorities (Yunus *et al.*, 2014). For that reason, the PMS must be applied in the local authorities to measure the level of performance that have been made by the LA's. Zakaria *et al.* (2014) also identified that the environmental issue such as the cleanliness and poor services provided by the local authorities has lead to the dissatisfaction of the public. Hence, the PMS is important to measure the performance of the Malaysian local authorities.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate some issues relating to FM in Malaysian LA's especially that affecting the

efficiency and the effectiveness of Malaysian LA's in providing facilities and services to the public. The issues found in the literature are not only indicate the problems that affect the performance of LA's but also a need of LA's to improve in FM. Additionally there is also an increasing demand from the federal government and the public for the LA's through the efficiency and the effectiveness of service delivery and better provision of public facilities. A good service delivery of the LA's is closely related to a good management of FM. Furthermore, the LA's also failed in managing the service delivery to the public (Zakaria *et al.* 2012).

Based on the literature review, clearly there are many issues occurred in Malaysian LA's particularly involving FM. As the LA's involved in providing public facilities and delivering services, it is important for LA's to measure the performance of LA's in order to improve the efficiency, the effectiveness and the quality of the service delivery in LA's. In this study, the findings are solely based on the literature. This study adds value to the body of knowledge and a better understanding of problems that affect the service delivery of Malaysian LA's especially regarding the FM practice.

IMPLICATION

Thus, the implication from this study will serve as foundation for future studies in a research on developing a conceptual framework of PMS for FM in Malaysian LA's.

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