

# An Analysis on Performance Competency of Civil Servants towards Excellence: A Case Study of Communes in Daun Penh District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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## Abstract

The objectives of this study are to investigate the civil servants' performance at commune level and to study the causes and effects on the relationships of the performance measurement criteria of Baldrige model. Mix-method approach has been constructed based on seven criteria of the Model and open-ended interviews. The samples of 100 civil servants and 382 residents in 11 communes of Daun Penh District have been analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data based on interviews with district representative and commune leaders of Daun Penh District, as well as representatives from two NGOs have been analyzed by content analysis technique to explore further reasons and opportunities for decentralization development based on the contributions of civil society towards performance competency of civil servants in the communes.

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The finding reveals negative relationship between the civil servants and the citizens' perspectives of the performance competency. The civil servants rated their performance as highly efficient, while the citizens viewed it as substandard. Furthermore, the research found the causes and effects on the relationships among the performance measurement criteria of Baldrige model as positive. However, there is a positive relationship between the NGOs and the civil servants, specifically, based on the interviews with MithSamlanh and JICA, this research concludes that the performance competency of civil servants has significant changed and gradually strengthened, apart from the challenges of limited power and budget delegation of the communes. The noteworthy contributions of both NGOs were found to be focused towards capacity building, health care and infrastructure.

Finally, this research suggests potential guidelines in order to resolve local issues such as managerial autonomy of local governments, work evaluation system, information sharing capacity, citizen participation and other alternatives.

**Keywords:** performance competency, civil servants, Malcolm Baldrige model, decentralization, Cambodia

## Introduction

Strong public administration is a major influence on a country's development while quality services require good performance of civil servants. However, the challenge faced by communes and management in local governments is to achieve both effective service delivery and political process. According to Owen (2003) there has been a new paradigm shift since the mid 1980s in public sector reform which

represents a transformation of public sector and its relationship with government and society. A flexible, market-based form of public management has been familiarized and implemented by advanced states in order to respond to the technological change, globalization and international competitiveness. Internationally and domestically, strengthening local governments, aim with the of political, economic and social development is becoming increasingly important. Hence, Cambodia, a democratic country of constitutional monarchy base, has also turned its focus from national level to sub-national level in order to better respond to the international development patterns and the fast changing environment across the globe.

Decentralization in Cambodia was enabled by international donors who first pushed for decentralization at commune level (Dosch, 2007) The idea first emerged in 2001, when Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) adopted the Law of Commune Administrative Management (The Commune Law) and Commune Election Law. Elected Commune Councils' powers, the functions and the structure of commune are clearly stated in the Commune Law, and regulations and procedures of commune elections are held every 5 years as written in the Commune Election Law (Chheang and Chan, 2008). It is noticed that, the Royal Government of Cambodia has developed and updated National Strategic Framework known as Rectangular Strategy Phase II (2009-2013). In the National Strategy Development Plan (NSDP), the core strategic development of the Royal Government of Cambodia, "Good Governance" is considered as the most essential pre-condition for achieving sustainable socioeconomic development with equity, equal opportunity, equality before law and social justice. It is also clearly stated that the sustainable development of the country in terms

of good governance requires reforms especially at sub-national level as local governments. The reason being that they are closer and more connected to the people, while the national government is not able to focus on every issue that arises or quickly respond to those problems without the help of local governments within the territories.

Regardless of the laws and the government efforts, Mansfield & MacLeod, 2004 and Niazi, 2011 concluded that, Cambodia decentralization faced 3 major barriers in functioning effectively: influence of politics, availability of budget and poor competency of commune councils.

Nevertheless, in Cambodia, the performance fitness has not been the main focus, even though it is necessary to observe and understand key concepts of public management. As a consequence, this research addresses this setback through analysis based on Baldrige model seven criteria. Because performance competency of civil servants in the respected field needs to be promoted in order to improve the public services that concern people and with interest in deepening the understanding of civil servants performance in terms of service provisioning, the research is conducted by focusing on the case study of communes in Daun Penh District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Table 1 Demography of Communes in Daun Penh District

Communes	Permanent residents	Residents above 18	Civil Servants
PhsmarTmey I	4,757	3,706	8
PhsmarTmey II	4,890	3,840	8
PhsmarTmey III	7,174	5,625	10
BoengRaing	4,716	3,151	8
PhsarKondal I	6,609	5,629	10
PhsarKondal II	6,170	4,846	8
Chaktomuk	6,810	5,693	10
CheyChumneas	7,931	6,389	10
Phsar Chas	5,879	4,466	8
SrahChork	17,834	13,448	12
Wat Phnom	5,050	4,131	8
Total	77,820	60,924	100

This study attempts (1) to investigate the current status and challenges that civil servants face according to their performance competency towards excellence in order to enhance professional development of public administrators in their respective fields (2) to study the cause and effect relationship of performance measurement criteria of Baldrige model (3) to explore the contributions and limitations of civil society towards performance competency of civil servants in the communes.

$H_1$ : From the perspective of civil servants, positive relationships of seven criteria lead to performance competency of civil servants towards excellence.

H<sub>2</sub>: From the perspective of citizens, positive relationships of seven criteria lead to performance competency of civil servants towards excellence.

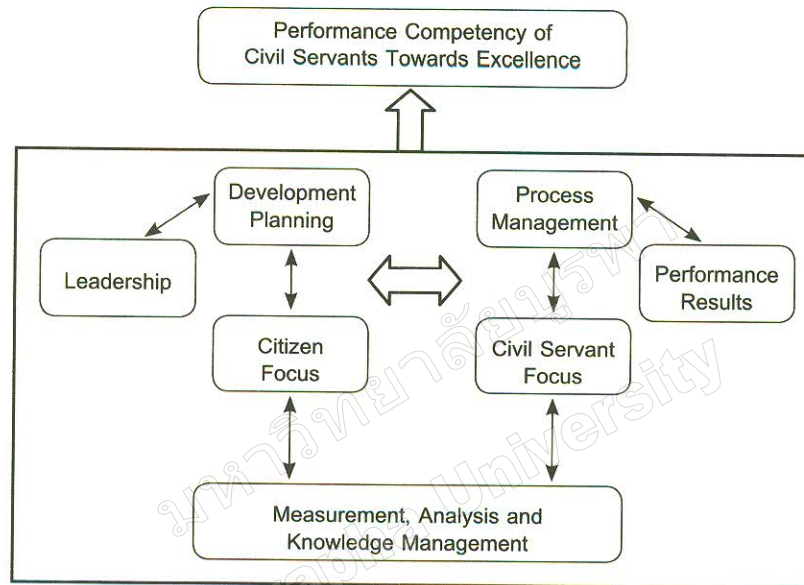


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Methodology

Creswell and Clark (2011) claimed that, mixed method is "a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" can be achieved. Thus, the combination of quantitative and qualitative is the approach employed to collect and analyze data in this research.

## Sampling Method

Questionnaire set A was handed out to civil servants of the 11 communes to evaluate their performance. Due to the small number of

civil servants in each commune, the whole population of the 11 communes has been selected to make it more reliable. Hence, 100 participants have been chosen to answer the questions that were already revived and verified in order to evaluate the overall performance of civil servants in the respective areas.

According to the statistics of Phnom Penh Municipal Hall (2011), total permanent population of Daun Penh District is 77,820 with 60,924 citizens who are over 18 years old. In order to ensure that the selected sample is representative of the whole population of each commune, the table sampling of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is adopted with 95% reliability and 5% error. Thus, the sample size of the study is 382. McMillan (2012) stated that, there are two types of random sampling, probability and nonprobability. Probability sampling classifies data into stratified, systematic, simple random and cluster, while nonprobability sampling consists of convenience sampling, purposeful sampling and quota sampling. In this research, since the number of local residents in each commune varies, questionnaire set B was delivered to the inhabitants based on stratified systematic sampling by using the formula:

$$n_1 = (n) N_i / N$$

$n_1$ : Sample size

$n$ : Required sample size

$N_i$ : Population of the participants

$N$ : The whole population

Furthermore, in order to be more comprehensive and incorporate details of how communes operate and the factors that obstruct civil servants' performance, the involvement participants for open-ended interviewed have been ensured to belong to both government and civil sector. 1 representative from Daun Penh district, 11 communes' leaders,

1 representative from international organization and 1 from local organization have been chosen to be key informants in order to obtain accurate and reliable information for the analysis, since they are greatly aware of the performance competency of civil servants and specific programs in terms of service provisioning within the communes.

## Research Instrument

This study employs two types of mechanism for data collection including self-constructed questionnaires and open-ended interviews.

### A. Questionnaire

The questionnaires are designed by the researcher based on the 7 criteria of performance excellence of Baldrige model. The questionnaires, which consist of 2 parts, will be used to evaluate the performance competency of civil servants of 11 communes in Daun Penh district, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The first part of the questionnaire included the respondents' demographic information, and in the second part, items of responses will be presented as 4 levels of Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly disagree (1)" to "Strongly agree (4)", and "No Idea (0)" refers to lack of information and need to be improved.

### B. Interview

The items in interview checklists focus on the detailed work process and performance results of the communes as well as contributions and limitations that both communes and NGOs face in carrying out their duties. The first set of checklist consists of ten questions of comprehensive 7 criteria of Baldrige model defined in operational definition that fit the Cambodian context plus 2 questions regarding specific working dimensions of NGOs within the communes



and request for further suggestions. The second set of checklist consists of 7 questions related the contributions and barriers faced by NGOs in strengthening the communes' development as well as evaluating the performance competency on the bases of the 7 criteria of Baldrige model with further remarks.

### C. Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, three experts in the field have been requested to check content validity and language use of all items in the questionnaires with the interview checklists utilizing Indexes of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). The results of scoring and commenting from the three experts are acceptable with  $IOC > .5$ . Furthermore, Khmer version of questionnaires have been modified and verified by Cambodian experts in the field of political science and English literature to ensure accuracy.

To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted by delivering 30 questionnaires on trial basis, in order to test the reliability before conducting the study in communes of Daun Penh District. The reliability of questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of internal consistency with the results  $\alpha=0.928$  for questionnaire set A and  $\alpha=0.958$  for questionnaire set B.

## Data Analysis

### A. Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to analyze the quantitative data. The descriptive statistical analysis employed are frequency, the Percentage (%), Mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and Standard Deviation (SD). The results of values indicate the level of performance in each criterion, while overall

performance is calculated using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Distance from each level} &= (\text{The highest score} - \text{The lowest} \\ &\quad \text{score}) / \text{the level} \\ &= (4 - 1) / 4 \\ &= 0.75 \end{aligned}$$

**Table 2** Scale of Overall Performance

Result	Interpretation
3.25-4.00	Very Good
2.50-3.24	Good
1.75-2.49	Poor
1.00-1.74	Very Poor
0 = 0	Lack of information and need to be improved

Inferential Statistics is also used as the correlation coefficient of Pearson r to analyze the relationship of variables. Correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. The value of -1 represents a perfect negative correlation while a value of +1 represents a perfect positive correlation. A value of 0 shows that there is no relationship between the variables (Frankfort Nachmias, 2011).

#### B. Qualitative Data Analysis

Content analysis method of transcribing, coding and interpretation are employed for the purpose of analyzing the data. The analysis of qualitative data allows various aspects of civil servants performance competency interpretation in service provisioning, understanding the working dimension of development partners such as NGOs in both contributing and challenging issues so as to assist communes to reach

the excellence in performance and provide the appropriate guidelines for further and greater achievements.

## Results and Discussions

### Part 1: Quantitative Result

Percentage (%)	
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	54
Female	46
<b>Age</b>	
18-25	0
26-35	4
36-45	11
46-55	44
Over 55	41
<b>Education</b>	
High School	62
Associate Degree	4
Bachelor Degree	12
Master Degree	3
Other (Secondary or	19
<b>Experience</b>	
1-5 years	5
6-10 years	10
11-15 years	20
more than 15 years	65
<b>Position</b>	
Commune Chief	8
Deputy Commune Chief	16
Commune council member	48
Commune Clerk	9
Other (Commune staff)	19

Percentage (%)	
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	41.4
Female	58.6
<b>Age</b>	
18-25	35.1
26-35	36.4
36-45	17.5
46-55	8.4
Over 55	2.6
<b>Education</b>	
High School Degree	26.4
Associate Degree	3.7
Bachelor Degree	59.2
Master Degree	8.1
primary school)	2.6
<b>Occupation</b>	
Government official	29.6
Company staff	38.7
Businessperson	18.6
Housewife	3.9
Other (teacher, student,	9.2

Figure 2 Respondents Classification by Demographic Characteristic  
(Civil servants N=100, Citizens N= 382)

The descriptive data analysis regarding personal information of the civil servants and the citizens revealed their profiles in terms of sex, age, education and experience, etc. According to the findings, the balance of gender between male (54%) and female (46%) was found. This proves that the gender equity at local level has been improving, as affirmed by UNIFEM (2004) which states that, the decentralization

provides the opportunity to ensure equal rights via the following: (1) The decision-making process is moved closer to the public by facilitating public participation and women's involvement in decision-making; (2) Representatives at the local level (women in particular) are closer to the issues that poor women face and thus in a better and faster position to identify and address their issues; (3) Women may find it easier to enter new democratic system of governance in which men may not yet be entrenched; (4) The level of experience and qualifications for entry into local positions is lower than national positions, thus women are at less disadvantages to compete with men. In addition, the findings also showed that the majority of the civil servants are in the group age of 46-55 (44%) and over 55 (41%). Among them, 62% are educated with high school qualification and 19% hold secondary school certificates. Furthermore, 65% of the civil servants are very senior with more than 15 years of experience in the communes and 20% hold an experience of 11-15 years, while only 5% have only 1-5 years of experience. The majority of 48% are the elected as commune councils. It can be interpreted that the majority of the civil servants are old experienced politicians who have experienced the decentralization process since the first mandate in 2002.

It is highly important to include the views of both parties involved. For the purpose service receivers were involved, in order to measure the performance competency of the civil servants. 382 residents of Daun Penh District were asked to work on questionnaire set B. According to the results, majority of the respondents are in the age range of 18-25 year-old (35.1%) and 26-35 year-old (36.4%). In addition, majority hold a bachelor degree (59.2%) and serves private industry (38.7%), followed by government officials (29.6%). It can be interpreted that, the majority of citizens are young educated people who experience the age of

modern technology and the concept of new public management, and they may expect more effective performance from the communes than the rest of the age groups.

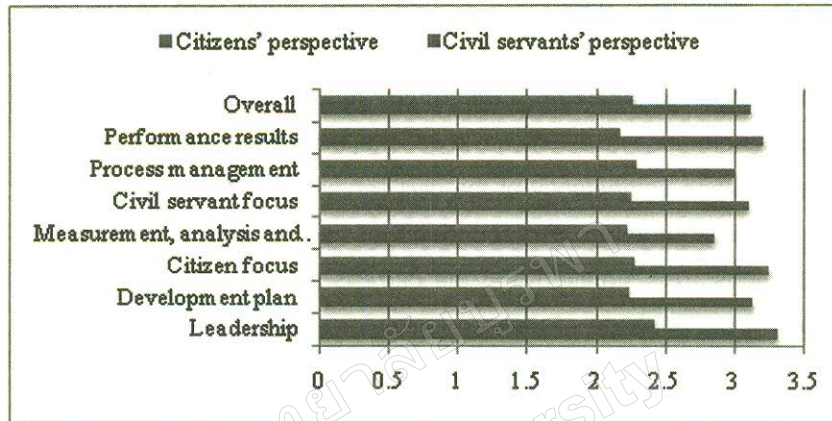


Figure 3 Summary of the Agreement on the Seven Criteria (Set A & B)

Furthermore, it was discovered that the level of civil servants' performance in the communes of Daun Penh District based on the seven criteria of Baldrige model comprising of leadership, development planning, citizen focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, civil servant focus, process management and performance result. Quantitative data analysis revealed that, the civil servants generally agreed on their glowing performance ( $\bar{X}=3.12$ ). Interestingly, among the seven criteria, leadership and citizen criteria received the highest mean score  $\bar{X}=3.31$  and  $\bar{X}=3.25$ , whereas, measurement, analysis and knowledge management and process management criteria received the lowest,  $\bar{X}=2.86$  and  $\bar{X}=3.00$ . The civil servants believed that good practices of leadership are widely introduced in their communes with appreciable concentration towards the needs of the citizens. In contrast,

they believed that their communes were not effectively employing information technology to manage commune work and deliver services to the residents.

Moreover, difference in views was found over leadership, development planning, citizen focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, civil servant focus, process management and performance result criteria. In general, the inhabitants perceived the performance competency of the civil servants ( $\bar{X}=2.27$ ) as poor, with a significant number of respondents having no idea to most of the questions. This signified that the citizens are not satisfied with the current performance of their communes based on the measurement criteria of Baldrige when applying the concept of performance excellence. Regarding the background of the respondents, majority of them were young who may not have enough encounters with the communes in comparison to their parents. However, they are the group who are well-educated so they understood well their role and duty in enhancing commune development. Hence, based on the quantitative statistics, the negative relationship between the civil servants and the citizens was proved.

**Table 3** Relationships among seven criteria of performance competency (Set A)

		Correlations						
		TL	TSP	TCF	TMA	TCS	TPM	TPR
TL	Pearson Correlation	1						
TSP	Pearson Correlation	.570**	1					
TCF	Pearson Correlation	.470**	.432**	1				
TMA	Pearson Correlation	.391**	.437**	.291**	1			
TCS	Pearson Correlation	.607**	.549**	.404**	.526**	1		
TPM	Pearson Correlation	.558**	.503**	.394**	.537**	.659**	1	
TPR	Pearson Correlation	.751**	.600**	.543**	.503**	.708**	.688**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4** Relationships among seven criteria of performance competency (Set B)

		Correlations						
		TL	TDP	TCF	TMA	TCSF	TPM	TPR
TL	Pearson Correlation	1						
TDP	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1					
TCF	Pearson Correlation	.639**	.735**	1				
TMA	Pearson Correlation	.527**	.640**	.648**	1			
TCSF	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.606**	.661**	.665**	1		
TPM	Pearson Correlation	.609**	.688**	.677**	.654**	.746**	1	
TPR	Pearson Correlation	.642**	.710**	.740**	.626**	.751**	.783**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In order to study the cause and effect relationships of performance measurement criteria of Baldrige model, each criterion was tested in accordance to hypothesis 2 and 3 in the findings. The results were found as shown in table 3 and 4.

H1: "From the perspective of civil servants, positive relationship of seven criteria leads to performance competency of civil servants towards excellence." with a statistical significance of 0.01 level (2-tailed). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

H2: "From the perspective of citizens, positive relationship of seven criteria leads to performance competency of civil servants towards excellence." with a statistical significance of 0.01 level (2-tailed). Thus, the hypothesis is accepted.

## **Part 2: Qualitative Result**

According to the interview with the district and communes' leaders, 5 important focus points related to the procedure of the performance competency of the civil servants were established: commune work, citizens' participation, work evaluation, authority delegation, and other suggestions and comments for improvement, from the perspectives of the district representative, commune leaders and the citizens. Within the findings, some interesting viewpoints emerged, among the district representative, the commune leaders and the citizens, which can further explain the findings of the quantitative results. The commune leaders generally stressed that they performed well in serving the citizens, especially in terms of the improvement of the security scenario and the solidarity of the commune work, except the hygiene issues that has not been effectively resolved. This was attributed the lack of understanding from some locals and substandard garbage collection service of Cintri Company. Additionally, district and commune



leaders urged for institutional reform which included decision making power and budget allowance. In contrast, the citizens placed more importance on clear management system and quality implementation by the civil servants, as the means for local development. They requested free and fair service, clear and accurate information, unambiguous clear assessment system, etc. This leads to an obvious observation that the requirements of the citizens were not fulfilled by the communes, while the communes only did well in improving security and development issues aligning with the policy of the national government on village safety and economic development in commune's 5-year plan such as road, sewage system construction and maintenance. It was widely believed that to better respond to issues of the citizens, sufficient power delegation to the local authority is required. Lastly, it was mentioned by the district and commune leaders that the challenges faced by the communes were gradually improving, via the close support of their partners. According to the interview, MithSamlanh and JICA were highly applauded for their active roles in contributing to the local development. They have been mainly supporting the communes through capacity building of the civil servants and the development programs mainly on health care and infrastructure. Based on the interviews, there is a positive relationship between NGOs and the civil servants.

*From the perspective of the civil society, we see significant changes and improvement in civil servants performance compared to 10 years ago, although complete and real decentralization has not been implemented yet. After MithSamlanh signed MOU with the ministry of Social Affairs, we got a lot of support for our work. We believe that sooner or later, the commune work will be improved along the Strategic*

*Plans of the National Government. Today, both national and local governments have a good networking with development partner, including NGOs, in helping develop the community (Somaya, 2013).*

*Capacity of the civil servants has gradually strengthened. But it has to be accompanied by a budget from the government for development along with funds from the local residents. If we look at the strategic and development plans of the government, we could see the final goal is to reach the real and complete decentralization. Comparing it to the maturity of administrative development in Japan, it also required 20 years of efforts (Tola, 2013)*

These were consistent with the Strategic Plans of the National Government of Cambodia. However, some limitations faced by Mith Samlanh and JICA while working with local authority, were attributed to the long-procedures, lack of information sharing and no cooperative concept among the civil servants.

Finally, based on the quantitative findings, there is a negative relationship between the civil servants and the citizens' perspectives of the performance competency. The civil servants rated their performance as highly efficient, while the citizens viewed it as substandard. However, based on the interviews, there is a positive relationship between NGOs and the civil servants. The NGOs concluded performance competency of civil servants has significant changed and gradually strengthened, apart from the challenges of limited power and budget delegation of the communes.

## Discussions

After analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, some implications of the findings were observed.

According to the quantitative results, the perspectives of civil servants and the citizens were contradictory to one another. Civil servants perceived their performance as good, while the citizens thought their performance was poor. The differing opinions could be due to different backgrounds and age groups of the respondents amongst the civil servants and the citizens. Most of the civil servants are old politicians with only high school education, while majority of the citizens are young and high educated. They are more familiar with the cutting-edge technology and the concept of effective management. This young group grew up in a period of fast changing environment with the influence of globalization. Thus, they seem to expect more from the performance competency of the civil servants and effective management.

Furthermore, technological development has enabled a more connected world, maximized the influences of globalization and brought the concept of modern management to developing countries like Cambodia. Castells (2011) mentioned that, technological change is the fundamental factor that enables processes of globalization. Stever (1972), viewed globalization as the process that promotes world-wide exchanges of national and cultural resources. Advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, for example, the major factor in globalization includes the rise of the internet as it generates further interdependence of economic and cultural activities. However, public management by applying information technology has not yet been implemented effectively in Cambodia.

Significantly, the concept of new public management (NPM) is a global paradigm emerging in response to economic, institutional, political, and ideological changes (Wise, 2002). New Public Management has also been considered as the entire collection of tactics and strategies

that seek to enhance the performance of the public sector (Behn, 2001). The goal of new public management approach of Donald Kettl has been widely studied:

*Remedy pathology of traditional bureaucracy that is hierarchically structured and authority driven,” and “to root out authority driven hierarchical systems.*

In order to clearly comprehend the concept, it is highly essential to look at the core characteristics of the new public management approach. They are productivity, marketization, service orientation, decentralization, policy orientation, and accountability for results. It is also noted that, the new public management approach:

*Borrowed primarily from the literature of business administration, calling for more managerial freedom to use resources, put a greater focus on results rather than inputs, and greater reliance on the private sector for service delivery. (Thompson and Thompson, 2001, p. 152).*

#### **Incomplete Decentralization**

Regardless of the reviewed concepts of new public management, the findings indicate the precise picture of partial decentralization of Cambodian society according to political psychology. The concept of decentralization comes from the ideology of democracy. However, the findings prove that, Cambodia is on its way towards real decentralization, and thus it requires more time to overcome the challenges, for example, institutional reforms, and public understanding. As mentioned in literature review, decentralization in Cambodia was enabled by external actors, and international donors who first pushed for decentralization at the commune level. (Dosch, 2007).

The main challenge that the civil servant faced in carrying out

their jobs was dependency on national government due to the budget and decision making power constraints. This can be explained by analyzing the concept of political psychology in terms of leadership styles. The characteristic of civil servants seem to be conservative as they take orders from their higher authority, which leads to negative effect on the quality of service delivery. The principle of administrative reform is good but implementation without any initiative is not effective. The finding of this study corresponds to that of MacAndrew (2004). In the process of democratizing, Cambodia has had major impediments to overcome in its political culture, violent history and institutional limitations. The ongoing decentralization reforms including inter alia local elections, invention by appropriate state institutions and popular participation is expected to achieve both reconstruction and democratization, but the outcome is far from certain.

#### **Traditional Management**

The limitation of civil servants' performance in the commune of Daun Penh District is that the traditionally managed communes do not effectively respond to the citizens' needs. With no effective organization, the communes are less successful in accomplishing their objectives. This can be due to the civil servants being accountable only to their superiors; consequently, they are not able to meet the expectations of local citizens.

*An administration under the formal control of the political leadership, based on a strictly hierarchical model of bureaucracy, staffed by permanent, neutral and anonymous officials, motivated only by the public interest, serving and governing party equally, and not contributing to policy but merely administering those policies decided by the politicians. (Owen, 2003, p. 17)*

### Positive Relationship of Performance Measurement Criteria

The research proves the cause and effect relationships among the performance measurement criteria of Baldrige model, as positive. This result is consistent with those of Meyer and Collier (2001); Badri et al., (2006), that each criterion is significantly linked to one another. With good leadership as a driver of all the components in the Baldrige model, strategic planning, citizen focus, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, civil servants focus, and process management substantially influence the successful organizational performance results.

### Contribution and Limitation of Civil Society

Civil societies have played key roles in assisting and promoting performance excellence in public administration. The spread of globalization leads to greater influence of NGOs especially in areas of major concern like governance, economy, environment, children, and workers. MithSamlanh and JICA are the two important NGOs that support the local development and are highly applauded by the commune chiefs of Daun Penh District. The reason that the communes gain more support is, the implementation of RGC decentralized local governments along the lines of National Strategic Development Plan. This is consistent with the suggestions of Öjendal and Sedara (2011) that,

*Decentralization reform in Cambodia has opened up political space in a benevolent and democratic way. This has facilitated the growth of a more positive relationship between civil society and the local state, reduced the governance gap and enhanced the legitimacy of the local state. An important trend in globalization is the increasing influence and broadening scope of the global civil society.*

However, some limitations were mentioned by MithSamlanh and JICA while working with local authorities such as dissimilar work concepts,

long-procedures, lack of information sharing and cooperative concept among the civil servants. Difference in working attitudes is probably responsible for varying concepts of both parties. The civil servants are representatives but at the same time they are a part of political groups; thus, essentially they are pressurized to reach the targets set by the higher authorities, and so sometimes they neglect careful study of the root causes, unlike NGOs who work well in this regard. Furthermore, NGOs believe that, although both the government and the NGOs have the same ultimate goal of serving the people, still NGOs do not work to counter government policies, but rather to establish policies that are beneficial to all.

## Recommendations

Guidelines are proposed by observing the performance competency of the civil servants from the triangular perspectives of the civil servants, the citizens and the NGOs.

### 1. Managerial Autonomy of Local Governments

In order to constantly improve decentralization, Cambodian government should implement the framework of autonomous bureaus by providing more control to the communes over certain aspects such as allowing communes to collect taxes and reform personnel system as stated by the Organic law. According to the principle of managerial autonomy and flexibility in private sector, various ministries and departments in both advance and developing states have been converted into business like "autonomous bureaus". They gain considerable operational autonomy in financial, personnel, and administrative matters. (Haque, 2002) Autonomous bureaus help in cutting red tape of work performance

and better respond to the services required by the citizens. Furthermore, by applying autonomous bureaus, local governments are encouraged to strengthen their capacity and to find other financial sources to develop their communes as this reduces burden and the dependency of local governments.

## **2. Work Evaluation System**

According to the findings, there is no internal or external united evaluation system, for example, feedback or follow up to check the work quality of the civil servants. In public management system, it is important to consider the effectiveness of a policy and the management challenges, especially since it indicates how the interventions have had an impact on outcomes (Cook, 2004). Therefore, effective evaluation system is required in order to shift the poor work performance to a more effective one.

## **3. Information Sharing Capacity**

Although it was claimed by the commune leaders that information sharing in the communes is very systematic due to the structure of the communes, still the residents suggested that clear and accurate information of the communes on development projects, work progress as well as data of living conditions of the citizens has not yet been well-managed and provided to the concerned parties. Therefore, the commune leaders should reconsider the means of information sharing by maximizing and integrating information sharing capabilities of the civil servants. Through good information management, there will be good communication between the civil servants and the citizens. This relationship will ease the community development and establish confidence in the communes.



#### 4. Citizen Participation

According to Kurt Lewin, participatory leadership style is considered as a very essential aspect in private sector, because this style creates and maintains healthy relationships between the employees and the leaders by allowing suggestions and crucial decisions, along with their managers. However, findings showed that, a significant number of the locals had no idea about the performance of the civil servants. It could be simply because in each family, mostly breadwinner or the spouse are the representatives which participate in the public forums, so they are the ones who understood the processes, while others remain uninterested in the communes' activities. However, it was observed in the interviews that the interview did not focus on incorporating citizens in the decision making process. Therefore, in order to increase the performance efficiency, healthy relationships between the civil servants and the residents should be seen as a priority, by fostering the participation of the citizens.

#### 5. Other Alternatives

According to the findings, the commune leaders were not able to deal with hygiene issues in the communes due to lack of garbage disposal awareness amongst the citizens and substandard garbage collection by the Cintri Company. In response to this problem, the commune leaders seemed unable to find alternatives, while stressing on lack of authority and power toward the issues. The conflict between insufficient resources and the needs are the source of economic science. However, being leaders of the communes, they should be able to discover other means such as prevention measurement through "brain gathering movement". Based on observation techniques, commune

leaders control the data related to community and understand the human resources within their district. Hence, the leaders can invite and motivate capable youth in their area to participate in educating the importance of garbage management to local citizens. Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) seeks to find the best alternative activity, process, or intervention that minimizes resource used to achieve a desired result. (Görlach, Interwies, Newcombe, and Johns, 2007) In other words, it is used as a decision-making assistance tool to identify the economically most efficient way to fulfill an objective. Therefore, the communes can apply CEA to identify the most appropriate alternative to achieve results with least expenditure by comparing policies, programs and projects. They can also make use of public schools which are located in their communes for public education and dissemination, which is yet another low cost technique.

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