

Factors affecting the public service performance in Kampong Trabaek District Administration, Prey Veng Province, Cambodia

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing public service performance (PSP) in the Kampong Trabaek District Administration, Prey Veng Province, Cambodia. The research objectives were to: (1) evaluate the current status of PSP, (2) analyze the relationships between the independent variables (work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence) and the dependent variable (PSP), and (3) ascertain the predictive capacity of the combination of these independent variables on PSP. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey approach was utilized, gathering data from 91 district officials via a standardized questionnaire, resulting in a 100 percent response rate. The results showed that work quality, timeliness, and independence all have a strong favorable effect on PSP. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that the amalgamation of the five independent factors strongly forecasts PSP. The study finds that a comprehensive approach that balances operational efficiency with quality and autonomy is essential for improving the delivery of public services. These findings provide pragmatic insights for public management in developing nations, emphasizing the necessity of enhancing administrative capacity and cultivating a culture of accountability.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Independence, Public Service Performance, Timeliness, Work Quality, Work Quantity

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Introduction

Effective public service performance (PSP) is the cornerstone of good governance, particularly at the district level, where citizens have their most direct interactions with the state. In Cambodia, the legacy of historical challenges has resulted in persistent issues of inefficiency, corruption, and inadequate funding in public service delivery, making it difficult for local governments to meet public expectations (World Bank, 2019). The Kampong Trabaek District Administration in Prey Veng Province is a good example of these problems. They have to deal with both a growing population and limited administrative capability. To establish trust in government institutions, promote social fairness, and encourage economic growth, it is important to improve the district administration's ability to provide high-quality services.

Even though PSP is known to be important, there isn't much research on what exactly makes it work in poor nations like Cambodia, especially at the sub-national level. There is a lot of research on public administration in developed countries, but Cambodia's unique social, political, and economic situation creates a different set of problems and challenges. This study aims to fill this vacuum by looking at Prey Veng Province, which is mostly rural and relies on farming. This shows how important it is for public services to be effective in order to help people make a living.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the current status of public service performance in the Kampong Trabaek District Administration?
2. What is the relationship between work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence, and public service performance?
3. To what extent does the combination of work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence predict public service performance?

This research provides both theoretical and practical contributions. In theory, it broadens the use of Agency Theory to the public sector in a developing country, giving us a better idea of how the principal-agent relationship works in local government. The results of this study will give policymakers and public managers in Cambodia useful suggestions for how to improve service delivery, make the government more responsive and accountable, and build up its administrative capacity.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation: Agency Theory

Agency Theory provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between the government (the principal) and public servants (the agents) (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this context, the government delegates the responsibility of providing public services to its employees, with the expectation that they will act in the best interests of the public. However, information asymmetry and differing goals between the principal and agent can lead to inefficiencies and a decline in performance. This study posits that the independent variables—work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence—are critical dimensions through which the performance of public servants can be assessed, and that these dimensions are not merely components of PSP but are also distinct constructs that influence it.

Empirical Literature

The literature on public administration has extensively examined the determinants of PSP. Work quality, defined by professionalism and adherence to standards, has been shown to directly impact citizen satisfaction and trust (Van Ryzin, 2004). Work quantity, while a measure of productivity, can have a complex relationship with performance, as an excessive focus on output can compromise quality (Boyne, 2002). Timeliness is a critical factor, as delays in service delivery can significantly erode public trust, even if the quality of the service is high (Van Ryzin, 2011). Effectiveness measures the extent to which services achieve their intended outcomes and is influenced by factors such as goal clarity and resource availability (Boyne et al., 2006). Finally, independence, or the autonomy of public servants, can foster innovation and responsiveness, but also carries the risk of inconsistency and a lack of accountability if not properly managed (Andrews et al., 2017).

While these variables are often studied in isolation, this research seeks to understand their combined effect on PSP in the unique context of a Cambodian district administration. The independent and dependent variables are considered mutually exclusive for the purpose of this study, as PSP is conceptualized as an overarching outcome that is influenced by the five distinct, yet interrelated, dimensions of work performance.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to systematically investigate the relationships between the independent variables (work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence) and the dependent variable (PSP). This design was chosen for its suitability in collecting data from a large sample at a single point in time to examine correlations and predictive relationships.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprised all 91 district officials of the Kampong Trabaek District Administration. A census approach was used, including all district officers, administrative staff, governors, and council members, to ensure a comprehensive representation of the entire administration. This resulted in a final sample size of 91 respondents, with a 100 percent response rate.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure the study variables. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Public service performance was measured using a composite index based on citizen satisfaction surveys and internal performance metrics. Examples of questionnaire items include:

- Work Quality: "I consistently produce high-quality work that meets professional standards."
- Work Quantity: "I am able to complete a large volume of work in a timely manner."
- Timeliness: "I consistently meet deadlines and deliver services on time."
- Effectiveness: "My work contributes directly to achieving the district's strategic objectives."
- Independence: "I have the autonomy to make decisions about how to best perform my work."

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected over a period of two weeks. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Svay Rieng University Research Ethics Committee. All participants provided informed consent before completing the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses.

Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

The following hypotheses were proposed:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between work quality and PSP.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between work quantity and PSP.
- H3: There is a positive relationship between timeliness and PSP.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between effectiveness and PSP.
- H5: There is a positive relationship between independence and PSP.
- H6: The combination of work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence significantly predicts PSP.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework underpinning the hypothesized relationships.

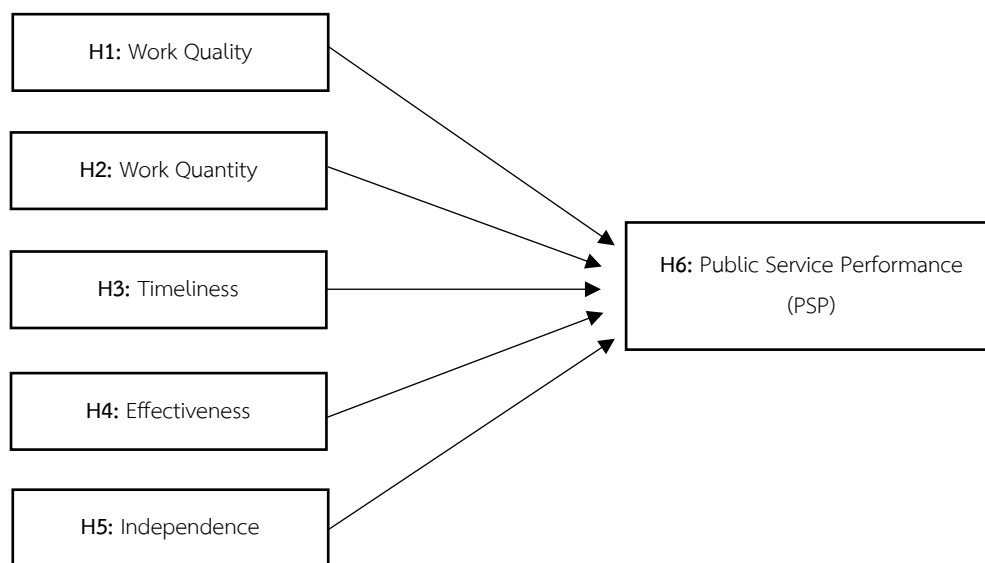


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Results

Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

The socio-economic characteristics of the 91 respondents are presented in Table 1. Understanding the demographic composition of public servants is crucial for interpreting performance outcomes, as research has shown that factors such as education, experience, and gender can significantly influence work behaviors and service delivery quality (Meier & Hicklin, 2008; Riccucci & Van Ryzin, 2017).

The gender distribution reveals a male-dominated workforce, with 71.4 percent male and 28.6 percent female respondents. This gender imbalance reflects broader patterns in public administration in Cambodia, where women remain underrepresented in leadership and administrative positions despite recent efforts to promote gender equality in the civil service (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2019). Studies have indicated that gender diversity in public organizations can enhance decision-making processes and improve responsiveness to diverse citizen needs (Pitts & Wise, 2010).

Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents (49.5 percent) fall within the 36-45 age bracket, followed by 33.0 percent in the 25-35 range and 17.5 percent in the 46-55 range. This age profile suggests a relatively mature workforce with substantial career experience, which is consistent with findings from the Asian Development Bank indicating that district-level administrators in Cambodia typically have extended tenures (Asian Development Bank, 2016). The predominance of mid-career professionals may contribute to institutional stability but could also indicate potential challenges in knowledge transfer and succession planning.

The educational profile demonstrates a highly educated workforce, with 76.9 percent holding Bachelor's degrees and 23.1 percent possessing Master's degrees. This level of educational attainment is notably higher than the national average for public servants in Cambodia and reflects recent government initiatives to professionalize the civil service through educational requirements and capacity-building programs (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2018). Higher educational qualifications have been associated with improved analytical capabilities, problem-solving skills, and adaptability to reform initiatives in public sector contexts (Wright & Pandey, 2008).

Work experience data reveals a diverse range of tenure, with 43.9 percent having 6-10 years of experience, 28.6 percent with more than 10 years, and 27.5 percent with 1-5 years. This distribution suggests a balanced mix of experienced administrators and newer staff members, which can facilitate both institutional continuity and the introduction of fresh perspectives. Research by Moynihan and Pandey (2010) emphasizes that experience levels significantly influence organizational performance, with moderate tenure often associated with optimal performance due to accumulated knowledge without the risk of stagnation.

Table 1. Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents (N=91)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	65	71.4%
	Female	26	28.6%
Age	25-35	30	33.0%
	36-45	45	49.5%
	46-55	16	17.5%
Education	Bachelor's Degree	70	76.9%
	Master's Degree	21	23.1%
Experience	1-5 years	25	27.5%
	6-10 years	40	43.9%
	>10 years	26	28.6%

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables and PSP. The results are presented in Table 2. Correlation analysis is a fundamental statistical technique for exploring the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables, providing initial evidence for hypothesis testing before conducting more sophisticated multivariate analyses (Field, 2013).

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Matrix (N=91)

Variable	WQ	WQN	TI	EF	ID	PSP
WQ	1					
WQN	.280**	1				
TI	.424***	.254*	1			
EF	.169	.406***	.264*	1		
ID	.372***	.170	.418***	.090	1	
PSP	.512***	.189	.634***	.315**	.489***	1

Note. $p < .05$. * $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

The correlation matrix reveals several significant relationships that warrant detailed examination. Work quality (WQ) demonstrates a strong positive correlation with PSP ($r = .512, p < .001$), supporting H1 and indicating that higher quality work is substantially associated with improved public service performance. This finding aligns with Van Ryzin's (2004) research demonstrating that service quality is a primary driver of citizen satisfaction and institutional trust. The moderate positive correlation between WQ and timeliness ($r = .424, p < .001$) suggests that quality-oriented work

practices tend to coexist with punctual service delivery, possibly reflecting a broader commitment to professional standards (Brewer & Selden, 2000).

Work quantity (WQN) shows a weak and non-significant correlation with PSP ($r = .189, p > .05$), failing to support H2. This counterintuitive finding suggests that merely increasing output volume does not necessarily translate into better performance outcomes. This is consistent with Boyne et al.'s (2006) argument that public sector performance is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to simple productivity metrics. The significant correlation between WQN and effectiveness ($r = .406, p < .001$) indicates that higher work volumes may contribute to achieving organizational objectives, but this relationship does not extend to overall PSP when quality and timeliness factors are considered.

Timeliness (TI) exhibits the strongest correlation with PSP ($r = .634, p < .001$), providing robust support for H3. This finding underscores the critical importance of responsive service delivery in the public sector context. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) emphasize that timeliness is often the most visible dimension of public service performance from the citizen's perspective, directly influencing perceptions of government effectiveness. The significant correlations between TI and all other independent variables suggest that timeliness serves as a central organizing principle that integrates various aspects of work performance.

Effectiveness (EF) demonstrates a moderate positive correlation with PSP ($r = .315, p < .01$), supporting H4. This relationship indicates that achieving intended outcomes and organizational objectives contributes meaningfully to overall performance. However, the relatively modest correlation coefficient suggests that effectiveness alone is insufficient without attention to quality and timeliness. This finding resonates with Walker et al.'s (2011) observation that public service performance requires balancing multiple competing demands rather than optimizing a single dimension.

Independence (ID) shows a strong positive correlation with PSP ($r = .489, p < .001$), supporting H5. This finding validates the Agency Theory perspective that granting autonomy to public servants can enhance performance by enabling context-appropriate decision-making and fostering accountability (Eisenhardt, 1989). The significant correlation between ID and timeliness ($r = .418, p < .001$) suggests that autonomous decision-making facilitates rapid response to emerging issues. This aligns with Andrews et al.'s (2017) research on decentralized governance systems, which found that local autonomy enables more adaptive and responsive public services.

The correlation analysis also reveals important inter-relationships among the independent variables. The positive correlation between WQ and ID ($r = .372, p < .001$) suggests that autonomy may

create conditions conducive to quality work, possibly by allowing professionals to exercise judgment and apply their expertise. Similarly, the correlation between TI and ID ($r = .418, p < .001$) indicates that independence facilitates timely decision-making by reducing bureaucratic delays.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To test H6, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of the five independent variables on PSP. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis Results (N=91)

Model	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	.567	.234		2.423	.017
WQ	.345	.102	.312	3.382	.001
WQN	.089	.076	.098	1.171	.245
TI	.412	.098	.453	4.204	< .001
EF	.156	.088	.165	1.773	.080
ID	.289	.110	.254	2.627	.010

Note. $R^2 = .687$; *Adjusted* $R^2 = .668$; $F(5, 85) = 37.254, p < .001$.

The multiple regression analysis provides critical insights into the combined predictive power of the five independent variables on PSP, addressing H6. The overall model is statistically significant ($F(5, 85) = 37.254, p < .001$), indicating that the combination of work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence significantly predicts public service performance. This finding strongly supports H6 and demonstrates that these factors collectively account for a substantial portion of performance variance.

The model's R^2 value of .687 indicates that approximately 68.7 percent of the variance in PSP is explained by the five independent variables. The adjusted R^2 of .668 accounts for the number of predictors and sample size, providing a more conservative estimate that remains robust. These values suggest a strong explanatory model, exceeding the threshold of 50 percent typically considered substantial in social science research (Cohen, 1988). This level of explained variance is particularly noteworthy given the complexity of public service performance and the multitude of contextual factors that can influence outcomes in developing country settings (Grindle, 2004).

Examining individual predictors, timeliness (TI) emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .453, t = 4.204, p < .001$), with the highest standardized coefficient among all variables. This finding reinforces the correlation analysis results and highlights that timely service delivery is the most critical factor influencing PSP in the Kampong Trabaek context. The substantial beta coefficient suggests that for

every one standard deviation increase in timeliness, PSP increases by approximately 0.45 standard deviations, holding other variables constant. This aligns with research by Van Ryzin (2011) demonstrating that process factors, particularly responsiveness and timeliness, are often more influential than outcome factors in shaping citizen perceptions of government performance.

Work quality (WQ) is the second strongest predictor ($\beta = .312$, $t = 3.382$, $p = .001$), indicating that maintaining high standards of professionalism and accuracy significantly contributes to overall performance. The positive and significant coefficient validates the importance of quality-oriented work practices in public administration. This finding supports Denhardt and Denhardt's (2015) New Public Service framework, which emphasizes that serving citizens effectively requires not only efficiency but also a commitment to quality and ethical standards.

Independence (ID) also emerges as a significant predictor ($\beta = .254$, $t = 2.627$, $p = .010$), though with a somewhat smaller effect size than timeliness and work quality. This result provides empirical support for decentralization theories that advocate for local autonomy in public service delivery (Faguet, 2014). The positive coefficient suggests that empowering district officials with decision-making authority enhances performance, likely by enabling more flexible and context-sensitive responses to local needs. However, the moderate effect size indicates that independence must be balanced with appropriate oversight and coordination mechanisms.

Interestingly, work quantity (WQN) does not emerge as a significant predictor in the regression model ($\beta = .098$, $t = 1.171$, $p = .245$), consistent with the correlation analysis findings. This non-significant result suggests that when controlling for other factors, the volume of work completed does not independently contribute to PSP. This finding challenges traditional public administration approaches that emphasize productivity metrics and output targets, supporting instead a more nuanced understanding of performance that prioritizes quality and responsiveness over quantity (Ammons & Rivenbark, 2008).

Effectiveness (EF) shows a marginally non-significant relationship ($\beta = .165$, $t = 1.773$, $p = .080$), approaching but not reaching conventional significance thresholds. This borderline result suggests that while achieving organizational objectives is important, its contribution to overall PSP may be mediated through other factors such as quality and timeliness. Alternatively, this finding may reflect measurement challenges in capturing the multifaceted nature of effectiveness in public service contexts (Boyne, 2003).

The regression diagnostics indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern, as the variance inflation factors (VIF) for all predictors are below 2.0, well within acceptable limits (Hair et al., 2010). The residual analysis reveals approximately normal distribution, supporting the validity of the regression assumptions. These diagnostic results enhance confidence in the model's reliability and interpretability.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the determinants of public service performance in the Kampong Trabaek District Administration, with important implications for public management theory and practice in developing countries. The results demonstrate that PSP is a multidimensional construct influenced by distinct yet interrelated factors, and that a holistic approach considering quality, timeliness, and autonomy is essential for effective service delivery.

The Primacy of Timeliness in Public Service Performance

The emergence of timeliness as the strongest predictor of PSP ($\beta = .453$, $p < .001$) represents a significant finding with important theoretical and practical implications. This result suggests that in the Kampong Trabaek context, the speed and responsiveness of service delivery may be even more critical than the technical quality of outputs. This finding resonates with Van Ryzin's (2011) procedural justice framework, which posits that citizens evaluate government performance based not only on outcomes but also on the fairness and efficiency of administrative processes. In resource-constrained settings like Cambodia, where citizens often face significant barriers to accessing public services, timely delivery may serve as a visible signal of government commitment and competence (UNDP Cambodia, 2020).

The importance of timeliness is particularly salient in the context of Cambodia's ongoing public administration reforms, which have emphasized reducing bureaucratic delays and improving service responsiveness (World Bank, 2021). The Royal Government of Cambodia's Administrative Reform Program has identified timeliness as a key performance indicator, and this study provides empirical validation of that strategic priority (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2020). From a practical standpoint, the strong effect of timeliness suggests that investments in process streamlining, digitalization, and workflow optimization may yield substantial returns in terms of overall performance improvement.

However, the emphasis on timeliness must be balanced against quality considerations to avoid the risk of hasty or superficial service delivery. The significant positive correlation between timeliness and work quality ($r = .424, p < .001$) observed in this study suggests that these dimensions need not be mutually exclusive. Organizations that cultivate a culture of professionalism and establish clear performance standards may be able to achieve both speed and quality simultaneously (O'Toole & Meier, 2011).

Work Quality as a Foundation for Performance

The significant positive relationship between work quality and PSP ($\beta = .312, p = .001$) aligns with extensive research emphasizing the importance of professionalism and competence in public administration (Van Ryzin, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot & Meiri, 2008). In the Kampong Trabaek context, work quality encompasses adherence to administrative procedures, accuracy in documentation, ethical conduct, and technical competence in service delivery. These quality dimensions are foundational to building institutional credibility and citizen trust, particularly in post-conflict societies like Cambodia where historical experiences have eroded confidence in government institutions (Hughes & Un, 2011).

The finding that work quality significantly predicts PSP even when controlling for other factors validates the New Public Service perspective, which emphasizes that public administrators serve not merely as efficient processors of transactions but as stewards of the public interest (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). This perspective contrasts with New Public Management approaches that prioritize efficiency and cost-reduction, sometimes at the expense of service quality (Hood & Dixon, 2015). The Kampong Trabaek results suggest that quality-oriented reforms—such as capacity building, professional development, and performance management systems—are essential components of effective public sector modernization.

The educational profile of respondents in this study (76.9 percent with Bachelor's degrees, 23.1 percent with Master's degrees) provides a favorable foundation for quality-oriented performance. Research has consistently shown that higher educational attainment is associated with improved analytical capabilities, ethical reasoning, and adaptability to changing demands (Wright & Pandey, 2008). However, education alone is insufficient; organizational systems must support and reinforce quality standards through supervision, feedback mechanisms, and recognition of excellence (Perry & Wise, 1990).

Independence and Decentralized Decision-Making

The finding that independence is a significant predictor of PSP ($\beta = .254$, $p = .010$) provides empirical support for decentralization theories and validates the Agency Theory framework adopted in this study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Andrews et al., 2017). This result suggests that granting district-level officials autonomy in decision-making enhances their ability to respond effectively to local needs and circumstances. In the Cambodian context, where administrative systems have historically been highly centralized, this finding has important policy implications for ongoing decentralization reforms (Pak et al., 2007).

The positive effect of independence aligns with research by Andrews et al. (2017) demonstrating that local autonomy enables public servants to develop context-sensitive solutions and adapt to community-specific challenges. In Kampong Trabaek, a predominantly rural district with agricultural dependencies, local officials require flexibility to address seasonal variations in service demand, respond to agricultural crises, and coordinate with traditional community structures that may not fit standardized administrative templates (Öjendal & Sedara, 2006).

However, the moderate effect size of independence (compared to timeliness and quality) suggests that autonomy must be exercised within appropriate governance frameworks. Excessive independence without adequate oversight can lead to inconsistent practices, inequitable service distribution, and accountability deficits (Smoke, 2015). The challenge for policymakers is to design governance systems that balance local flexibility with standardized quality assurance and accountability mechanisms. This might include establishing clear performance standards, implementing regular monitoring and evaluation systems, and creating peer learning networks that allow autonomous units to share best practices (Rondinelli & Cheema, 2003).

The Paradox of Work Quantity

The non-significant relationship between work quantity and PSP ($\beta = .098$, $p = .245$) represents a counterintuitive but theoretically important finding. This result suggests that simply increasing output volume—completing more transactions, processing more applications, or serving more clients—does not necessarily translate into better overall performance when quality and timeliness factors are considered. This finding challenges traditional public administration approaches that emphasize productivity metrics and output targets as primary performance indicators (Ammons & Rivenbark, 2008).

Several theoretical explanations may account for this result. First, the finding may reflect a quality-quantity tradeoff, wherein excessive focus on volume undermines the capacity to maintain quality standards (Holmstrom & Milgrom, 1991). Public servants facing pressure to maximize output may resort to superficial processing, inadequate attention to individual cases, or shortcuts that compromise service quality. Second, the result may indicate that work quantity is a necessary but insufficient condition for performance—baseline productivity is required, but beyond a certain threshold, additional volume does not enhance outcomes (Propper & Wilson, 2003).

Third, the non-significant relationship may reflect measurement issues related to the complexity and heterogeneity of public service tasks. Not all tasks are equivalent in terms of difficulty, time requirements, or impact on citizen welfare. A simple count of completed tasks may fail to capture the value-added dimension of public service work (Heinrich, 2002). This interpretation suggests the need for more sophisticated performance measurement systems that weight tasks by complexity and importance rather than treating all outputs as equivalent.

From a practical standpoint, this finding cautions against performance management systems that incentivize volume at the expense of quality and responsiveness. Public sector reforms in developing countries have sometimes adopted private sector productivity models that may be inappropriate for the public service context, where outcomes are multidimensional and not easily quantifiable (Manning & Parison, 2004). The Kampong Trabaek results suggest that performance management systems should emphasize balanced scorecards that integrate quality, timeliness, and effectiveness metrics rather than relying primarily on output volume indicators.

Effectiveness and Outcome Achievement

The marginally non-significant relationship between effectiveness and PSP ($\beta = .165$, $p = .080$) warrants careful interpretation. While effectiveness does not reach conventional statistical significance thresholds, the borderline p-value and positive coefficient suggest that outcome achievement does contribute to performance, albeit perhaps through indirect pathways or in interaction with other variables. This finding may reflect the inherent challenges in measuring effectiveness in public service contexts, where outcomes are often long-term, multifaceted, and influenced by factors beyond organizational control (Boyne, 2003).

In the Kampong Trabaek context, effectiveness encompasses the extent to which district services achieve intended objectives such as improving citizen welfare, promoting economic development, and ensuring equitable access to resources. These outcomes may be difficult for

individual public servants to observe directly, particularly in the short term, which could attenuate the perceived relationship between effectiveness and overall performance (Moynihan, 2008). Additionally, effectiveness may be mediated through quality and timeliness—that is, services are effective precisely because they are delivered with high quality and in a timely manner.

The modest role of effectiveness in the regression model may also reflect the reality that in resource-constrained settings, public servants often focus on process compliance and immediate outputs rather than long-term outcomes (Grindle, 2017). Strengthening the effectiveness-performance linkage may require reforms that enhance outcome measurement systems, establish clearer connections between daily activities and strategic objectives, and provide feedback mechanisms that allow public servants to see the impact of their work on citizen welfare (Behn, 2003).

Implications for Governance and Institutional Trust

While this study did not directly measure concepts such as citizen satisfaction, trust, or governance quality, the findings have important implications for these areas. The emphasis on timeliness and quality as primary drivers of PSP suggests that these dimensions are likely to have direct impacts on citizen satisfaction and trust in government. Research has consistently shown that positive service experiences shape broader attitudes toward government institutions and political systems (Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2003; Yang & Holzer, 2006).

In Cambodia's context, where historical experiences of conflict, corruption, and authoritarian governance have eroded public trust, improving service delivery performance represents a critical pathway for rebuilding state-society relationships (Un & Hughes, 2011). The findings suggest that reforms targeting timeliness, quality, and local autonomy may be particularly effective in enhancing citizen perceptions of government legitimacy and responsiveness. This aligns with the "performance legitimacy" framework, which posits that governments in developing countries can build support through effective service delivery even in the absence of fully democratic institutions (Zhao, 2009).

The findings also have implications for understanding governance challenges such as corruption and accountability. The significant role of work quality suggests that professionalization and capacity building may serve as anti-corruption mechanisms by establishing clear standards and reducing discretionary decision-making (Rauch & Evans, 2000). Similarly, the positive effect of independence, when properly designed with accountability safeguards, may reduce opportunities for rent-seeking by empowering local officials to resist corrupt pressures from higher levels (Persson et al., 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has demonstrated that work quality, timeliness, and independence are significant predictors of public service performance in the Kampong Trabaek District Administration. The findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to public sector reform that goes beyond a narrow focus on efficiency and productivity. To enhance PSP, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Invest in training and development** to enhance the skills and competencies of public servants.
- **Streamline administrative processes** to reduce bureaucracy and improve timeliness.
- **Empower public servants** by granting them greater autonomy and decision-making authority, while ensuring accountability.
- **Foster a culture of quality** that prioritizes professionalism and excellence in service delivery.

These recommendations can move the Kampong Trabaek District Administration towards a more effective, responsive, and accountable public service that meets the needs of its citizens. Sustained investment in infrastructure, human resources, and governance reforms, along with leveraging technology and fostering citizen engagement, will be pivotal for enhancing overall public service performance in this district as well as all districts in Prey Veng province, Cambodia.

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