

Land Administrator Personal Competency Model Using Exploratory Factor Analysis

Azmi Rohani a, Robiah Suratmana, Durrishah Idrus a

^a Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

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Abstract

Land administrators play a significant role in enabling sustainable development; however, there is a scarcity of debates concerning soft skills competency in relation to the systems, laws and procedures. Moreover, insufficient information has been provided through past research that has targeted the development and validation of the core competencies of land administrators. The purpose of this study was to develop a land administrator personal competency model to measure the skills, attitudes and abilities involved in the performance of land administration. Land administrators' competencies were assessed in terms of how reliable and valid they were through reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Via a questionnaire distributed online, descriptive research of the Johor Land Administration, Malaysia, was undertaken between May and July 2021. Forty-two items from three competencies – skill competencies, attitude competencies and ability competencies – were designated as the initial instrument for a new conceptual model based on the Land Administrator Personal Competency Model. The results showed that all three competencies of the instrument had high reliabilities (all had Cronbach's alpha values ± > .907). EFA revealed that the three factor-structures of skills, the three factor-structures of attitudes as well as the two factor-structures of abilities explained 63.828%, 63.074% and 62.364%, respectively, of the variance in the pattern of relationships among the items. All the factor-structures of the land administrator personal competencies instrument were confirmed through this study. With this information, the model developed might be useful for obtaining further information about land administrators' levels of performance through measurements of competencies involving the skills, mental approach and capability they display.

Keywords: Land Administrator; Competency; Exploratory Factor Analysis; Sustainable Development

1.Introduction

The inability of civil servants to deliver their responsibilities may cause the civil service to gain an reputation, which may government's approach and the credibility of the governance ecosystem may be affected. Therefore, the role of civil servants as agents of change must be enhanced through certain elements of employee behaviour and achievement, i.e., integrity, accountability transparency (Mehrabian, 2000). In land administration systems, organisation is significant as it is key to delivering effective and efficient public services (Samsudin, 2020). Embracing the new era of technology leverage, there is a demand for land administrators in particular to be responsive to environmental problems and wise in making good decisions that align with the current changes and public demand. It is important to critically anticipate the new strategic approaches and produce more people-friendly decisions so that all planned state developments and designs are balanced by an adherence to land rules and regulations.

The interrelation between competency and effectiveness in the chain process leads to the need for the provision of competent human resources in order to perform the entire process and meet an organisation's goals. Benberahim *et al.* (2017) and Sefiani (2014) defined individual competencies as an individual's ability to combine and coordinate resources, to achieve organisational goals.

Hence, an organisation needs to be responsible for providing as well as empowering a comprehensive strategy to develop personal competencies.

Determining the criteria of a competent individual can involve a conflict of perspective. This is a reflection of Taylor *et al.* (2009), who noticed that the debates on competency criteria and their evaluation methods had not been finalised. However, the minimum requirements of the competency criteria for basic human resources should at least be identified to ensure an organisation has a sufficient number of qualified employees. Thus, this study was conducted to identify the land administration competency sub-criteria and their components, via exploratory factor analysis, to develop a land administrator personal competency model.

2. The Criteria for Personal Competency in Land Administration

According to Coetzer and Sitlington (2013) and Dessler (2006), human resource development should lead to three main improvement areas, namely knowledge, attitude and skills. Harris (2002) proposed that to identify competent employees who will contribute to the organisation, they should be required to possess knowledge, skills and extensive experience so they are capable of making effective decisions for the organisation. Buoy (2002) and McLemore (2015) agreed, stating in their findings that the optimal use of skills, knowledge, experience and

^{*}Corresponding author Email address: robiah@utm.my

motivation are necessary for maximum productivity and that this could influence organisational and employment performance levels.

He et al. (2016), Hoge et al. (2005) and David (1973) described competencies as consisting of four criteria, namely knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes. Knowledge includes the necessary information, facts and principles to complete the task successfully (Ebisu & Ichise, 2019; Perkins, 2013; Mirable, 1997), which will be achieved by undertaking learning processes alongside a lot of experimentation. The term 'skills' refers to a person's psychological or practical capability to achieve any task with a specific output (Warr, 2020; Vernon, 2014; Marrelli, 1998), while ability expands or supports the skills involved in performing work, which spans a wide range of job scopes (Marrelli, 1998). Hence the interrelated nature of the knowledge and skills involved in the job scope; these include completing forms and addressing abstract concepts, like being a team meeting facilitator (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999).

Other than that, attitude is an equally important land administrator personal competency. Attitude is acquired naturally and likely to be shaped and nurtured through certain methods. Attitude determines the actions of an individual in the organisation. Based on the work of Schiffman and Kanuk (2004), attitudes are acquired predispositions to act in a consistent manner towards a particular topic or item, whether favourably or otherwise. A further description of attitudes was given by Jayalath (2016), who deemed them psychological and neutral states of readiness whose organisation depended on certain experiences. These would directively or dynamically affect how an individual behaved towards all the targets and circumstances they encountered. In practice, concepts like values, judgements, views, emotions, opinions, intentions and intentions are interchangeably used with the term attitude. The presence of different attitudes plays a significant role in many applications, so measurements would help to vital decisions to be made in different domains (Jayalath, 2016). In short, through attitude, organisations can evaluate and assess the performance of individuals.

Lauby (2013) defined ability as an individual demonstration of quality while doing things. There is a fine line between ability and skill. Ability is a skill acquired naturally by an individual, while skill is a talent acquired through learning and experience. According to Appelbaum and Fewster (2002), abilities are the necessary traits for performing specific activities, while determining whether a person is capable depends on their current qualities. In summary, the criteria of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities of an individual in an organisation will influence their behaviour, which affects their performance and that of the organisation.

As a result of an extensive search of past studies and discussions on the topic of land administration personal competency, 15 sub-criteria of skills, 15 sub-criteria of attitudes and 12 sub-criteria of abilities were reviewed, added to and verified through a focused group discussion consisting of experts and practitioners in the land

administration and development field. Adhering to the method of this study, the criteria of knowledge in the land administration personal competency concept will be discussed separately. Therefore, the following sections explain the competency sub-criteria of skills, attitudes and abilities. These were identified and accepted by the experts and practitioners, so they could be applied for the development of a land administration personal competency model.

Table 1
The list of verified sub-criteria of the personal competency of land administrators

adminis								
	Sub-Criteria							
Skills								
A1	Skill of giving instructions							
A2	Skill of risk management							
A3	Skill of active action							
A4	Skill of evaluating and making decisions							
A5	Skill of understanding and influencing							
A6	Skill of adapting							
A7	Skill of carrying out duties and responsibilities							
A8	Skill of knowledge sharing							
A9	Skill of understanding and adhering to regulations							
A10	Skill of being supportive							
A11	Skill of coping with pressure							
A12	Skill of technology knowledge enhancement							
A 12	Skill of being proficient in using systems and modern							
A13	technology							
A14	Skill of being organised by priorities							
A15	Skills of collecting, analysing and synthesising							
AIJ	information, doing assessments and preparing proposals							
Attitude								
В1	Attitude of being responsive and willing to problem-							
ы	solve							
B2	Attitude of being reliable							
В3	Attitude of being meticulous, detailed and focused							
B4	Attitude of being creative and innovative							
B5	Attitude of being logical and reasonable							
B6	Attitude of being ready for challenges and pressures							
B7	Attitude of being controlled by emotions and behaviours							
B8	Attitude of being dynamic and open-minded							
B9	Attitude of being committed in accomplishing tasks							
B10	Attitude of being smart and thoughtful							
B11	Attitude of being independent							
B12	Attitude of being diligent and earnest							
B13	Attitude of being accountable in leadership							
B14	Attitude of being trusted, honest and ethical							
B15	Attitude of being neutral and equitable							
Abilitie	S							
C1	Ability to review and understand oral information							
C2	Ability to deliver information							
C3	Ability to review and understand written information							
C4	Ability to deliver information in writing							
C5	Ability to deliver information in a clear and easily							
CJ	understandable way							
C6	Ability to give attention to responses and feedback							
C7	Ability to observe and review in short sight							
C8	Ability to make deductive determinations							
C9	Ability to conduct inductive reasoning							
C10	Ability to selectively concentrate when making decisions							
C11	Ability to cooperate and collaborate							
C12	Ability to actively enhance knowledge and skills							
	<u> </u>							

Referring to Table 1 above, the additional sub-criteria of skills and attitudes have been emphasised by experts and practitioners to ensure a wise, fair (neutral) and non-biased element in making decisions related to land administration. Procedurally, these verified sub-criteria of the land administration personal competency were distributed to the group targeted in the study.

3. Methodology

In the current research, the purposive sampling method was employed since a small number of individuals are able to become primary sources of data. This is because of the characteristics of a particular study, such as its design, targets and goals. The authors deliberately choose the study area and those who participate so that a phenomenon can be reviewed deeply (Creswell, 2005). According to Kamarul (2015), as well as Bailey and Bailey (2006), the number of respondents chosen for purposive sampling may be minimal, but the most important aspect is that the selected respondents must be knowledgeable for the systematic studies to succeed. This study involved 166 respondents from the Johor Civil Service, all of whom had a background in land administration from grade N41 to Turus III. The survey consisted of 53 Johor Civil Service personnel who were serving in land administration at the time of writing and 113 Johor Civil Service personnel who had served in land administration for more than a year before transferring to other fields.

4. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Factor analysis is conducted on the items of a study to classify the items according to the structure of factors (Hair et al., 2010) and to assess the accuracy of the subsequent analysis (Chua, 2009). Factor analysis is an appropriate method of analysis for identifying, reducing or rearranging the variables involved to identify their relationships with each other (Yong and Peace, 2013; Chua, 2006). It was also stated by Hair et al. (2010) and Chua (2009) that the statistical method of factor analysis employed when analysing inter-variable relationships, as well as describing differences between variables that are being observed and correlated in regard to factors. These unobserved variables might be fewer in number than the observed variable. The advantage of applying factor analysis is it will reveal the implied factors of a large group of independent variables. This form of analysis aims to identify the scale of the importance, significance and satisfaction of a factor. Factor analysis seeks to summarise or minimise a large set of items into a smaller set of factors (Ayob, 2005). Hence, factor analysis enables researchers to identify a concept that is difficult to measure through a simple calculation. Simply put, factor analysis is simplified by collapsing large items into smaller and easy interpretable factors (Rahn, 2018). This analysis method uses SPSS software, which is known as a data reduction technique (Doling et al., 2006).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) can be described as an order to summarise interrelated variables. It is a variable reduction technique that shows the number of latent

constructs and the structure of the factors underlying a set of variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Chua, 2009). According to Child (1990), EFA is used to explore the structure of the factors that might underlie a set of variables without forcing the structure to be formed. Thus, EFA must be employed to reveal the latent structure underlying scale development research (Orcan, 2018; Schumacker and Lomax, 2010; Brown, 2006). Through EFA, the number of constructs and structures of the factors underlying the variables studied can be identified.

5. Results and Discussions

The researchers conducted exploratory analysis based on the recommendations of Zainudin (2012), as well as those of Hoque and Zainudin (2016), which were to adapt and customise the previous instruments constructed before running the EFA. The reason was that the subject area and the study population of the current research differed considerably from past research in regard to socioeconomic rank, ethnicity, location and cultural circumstances. Therefore, the likelihood is that the small number of past studies are now unsuitable for today's researchers to use; alternatively, a new study might contain a newly developed set of items. Thus, the current instrument's reliability has to be determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The value of reliability is interpreted based on the Reliability Value Table (Lim, 2007). According to Borg et al. (1993) and Konting (1990), a numerical alpha value of 0.60 or more is good and acceptable. Pallant (2010) also considered that a minimum value of 0.60 is acceptable for instruments. Table 2 shows the reliability evaluation instrument for the 166 respondents from the Johor Civil Service.

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha Values for Skills, Attitudes and Abilities

Criteria	Item	Value of Alpha	Interpretatio n
Skills	15	0.915	Very good
Attitudes	15	0.907	Very good
Abilities	12	0.907	Very good
Average Value	of Alpha	0.910	Very good

Based on Table 2 above, it was found that the value of Cronbach's Alpha for each construct (criteria) was in the range of 0.907 to 0.915. The construct of attitude and ability recorded the lowest reliability value of 0.907 while skills recorded the highest reliability value of 0.915. Meanwhile, the average Cronbach's Alpha value for this instrument was 0.910. This finding shows the instrument of personal competency in land administration was highly acceptable and suitable for this study.

Procedurally, this study applied EFA to obtain the value of construct validity. EFA aims to identify and rearrange the items by factors (dimensions) based on data samples (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Since this analysis is employed to identify the factors (or components) that will be formed, the termination of non-correlated items during the construction process may occur. However, the construct validity test is based on Hair *et al.*'s (2010)

recommendation that the minimum loading value accepted is 0.40. The loading value of a factor formed is an indicator that explains the correlation between the variable (item) and the factor. Thus, if the factor's loading value is higher, the variable is of greater importance in the factor's interpretation. In addition, the range of load factor values between 0.40 to 0.60 is also a value range that is commonly used in social science. In this study, a factor as high as 0.40 was classified as a having a significant factor loading value because an adequate sample (Hair *et al.*, 1998) of 166 respondents was used.

Following the EFA procedure, the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction technique and Varimax rotation were carried out on all 42 items (15 items of skills, 15 items of attitudes and 12 items of abilities) in order to accurately obtain the factors (components) of the personal competency (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Table 3 shows the value of the sampling adequacy measurement via Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and the value of the sampling reliability measurement via Bartlett's Test.

Table 3
The value of KMO and Bartlett's Test of Skills, Attitudes and Abilities

		Skills	Attitudes	Abilities
Kaiser-Meyer- of Sampling A	Olkin (Measure dequacy)	.855	.801	.888
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi- Square	1429.778	1393.794	1162.444
(Test of Sphericity)	df	105	105	66
Spliencity)	Sig.	.000	.000	.000

The values of KMO recorded for all the three constructs - 0.855, 0.801 and 0.888 - were above the minimum of 0.60 (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, 1970), which indicated that the values in the matrix were sufficiently distributed. Meanwhile, for the value obtained by Bartlett's test of sphericity, p was 0.000 for all three constructs, which was highly significant at p < 0.001 level (Bartlett, 1954). This indicated that the data were approximately multivariate normal (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Thus, these data met the assumptions necessary to conduct EFA.

Next, the value of communalities indicated the ratio of the variable variances described by the factors. This value usually needs to exceed 0.50. A higher communalities value indicates there is a strong influence from the constructs listed in Table 4.

Table 4
Principal Component Analysis for Skills, Attitudes and Abilities

Criteria and Component	Initial Total	Eigen values % of Variance	Cumulative%	Extraction Total	Sum of Squared % of Variance	Loadings Cumulative	
Skills							
1	6.971	46.475	46.475	6.971	4.483	29.890	
2	1.331	8.873	55.349	1.331	2.550	46.893	
3	1.272	8.479	63.828	1.272	2.540	63.828	
Attitudes							
1	6.637	44.248	44.248	6.637	4.466	29.770	
2	1.781	11.873	56.121	1.781	2.835	48.669	
3	1.043	6.953	63.074	1.043	2.161	63.074	
Abilities							
1	6.069	50.578	50.578	6.069	4.584	38.200	
2	1.414	11.785	62.364	1.414	2.900	62.364	

Table 4 shows that the three factor structures for skills and attitudes, as well as the two factor structures for abilities, were formed using the PCA extraction technique, based on the variable data involved. The analysis results produced three factors of skills and attitudes, while they produced two factors of abilities with eigen values exceeding 1.0. The eigen value is the sum of the variance described for each factor. Therefore, only factors with variances greater than 1.0 can be considered. The cumulative total of the three factors of skills was 63.828 per cent with a variance percentage value for factor 1 (46.475 per cent), factor 2 (8.873 per cent) and factor 3 (8.479 per cent); attitudes was 63.074 per cent with a variance percentage value for factor 1 (44.248 per cent), factor 2 (11.873 per cent) and factor 3 (6.953 per cent); while abilities was 62.364 per cent with a variance percentage value for factor 1 (50.578 per cent) and factor 2 (11.785 per cent). In addition, the scree plots shown in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 below support the PCA results, whereby there were three main components (factors) each for skills and attitudes, as well as two main components (factors) for abilities that could be extracted to represent the data.

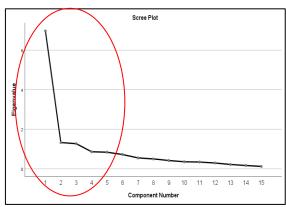


Fig. 1. Scree plot of skills

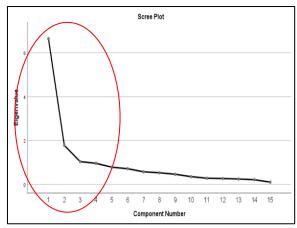


Fig. 2. Scree plot of attitudes

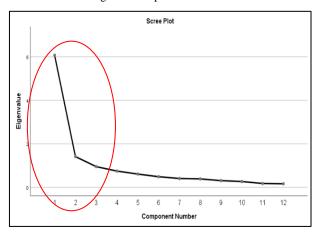


Fig. 3. Scree plot of abilities

Thus, Table 5 shows the identification of underlying factors as the main components of skills, attitudes and abilities of land administrators using the Varimax rotation method. The method was chosen because it reduces the number of complex variables and increases the expected results. The results indicate how variables are categorised based on the similarity of the characteristics among the variables.

Table 5 Components Rotated of Skills, Attitudes and Abilities

Criteria	Construct	1	2	3	Component
	A7	.791			
	A4	.782			
	A8	.775			Skill of carrying
	A6	.764			out tasks
	A11	.703			efficiently and
	A2	.609			excellently
	A9	.563			
Skills	A15	.560			
	A3		.836		
	A5		.741		Skill of working as
	A1		.719		a team
	A10		.446		
	A13			.860	Skill of applying
	A12			.851	technology and
	A14			.434	managing time
	B4	.824			Attitude of
Attitudes	B9	.819			readiness,
	B8	.801			perseverance and

	B11 B12 B5 B10 B3	.721 .659 .630 .616			wisdom; and of thinking creatively, innovatively, dynamically and reasonably
	B7 B1 B6 B2		.779 .769 .738 .634		Attitude of being responsible
	B15 B14 B13		.031	.775 .612 .486	Attitude of morality, ethics and integrity
	C4 C5 C3	.810 .790 .781			Ability to being
Abilities	C2 C1 C12	.755 .751 .734			responsive, understanding and delivering information
Tomues	C11 C6 C9	.628 .626 .837			precisely
	C8 C10 C7		.808 .744 .672		Ability to manifest wisdom in decision making

The results in Table 5 explain that the data were categorised in accordance with the variables involved. The values shown are the coefficients or factor loadings that inclined to each item. Factor loading values indicate a correlation between the items to be categorised and branded as the new components. The skill of carrying out tasks efficiently and excellently was recorded as the most important component of skills in developing the personal competency model of land administrator, followed by the skill of working as a team and the skill of applying technology and managing time. Meanwhile, the attitude of readiness, perseverance and wisdom; and of thinking creatively, innovatively, dynamically and reasonably was reported as the most important component of attitudes. followed by the attitude of being responsible and the attitude of morality, ethics and integrity. Lastly, the ability to be responsive, understanding and deliver information precisely was identified as the most important component of abilities, followed by the ability to manifest wisdom in decision making. All these components were reliable and validated for land administration personal competency development.

6.Conclusion

performance Developing excellent among land administrators can be achieved when skilled, highly able civil servants with good attitudes are available to lead, face challenges and make decisions. This criterion of competency should improve the achievements of land administrators, thus convincing the population of the quality of the services promised. Therefore, human resource management should strengthen implementation of action plans and strategies in accordance with the model of competency. Strengthening the government's approaches through processes and systems will enable a focus on improving land administration services, specifically by enhancing decision-making capabilities and strengthening the governance ecosystem. Through this study, eight components of land administration personal competency criteria have been extracted and identified via EFA. In the future, these identified sub-criteria and components should be assessed for verification purposes before being implemented in the land administration personal competency model in Johor.

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