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PUBLIC TRUST AMONG CITIZEN: INNER CULTURAL QUESTIONS

Abstract:

The new democratic governments often inherited a citizenry with low levels of trust in public institutions and with the habit of relying on inter-personal relations, not public institutions and laws. Public administration scholars generally agree that public ethics are a prerequisite to public trust and a keystone of good governance. Lewis and Cartron (1996, p. 699) stated that "Public service is a public trust. If there is anything unique about public service, it derives from this proposition". When people think of public ethics, honesty is an important substantive value with a close connection to trust for it implies both truth - telling and responsible behavior that seeks to abide by the rules (Rose - Ackerman, 2001). Fair and reliable public services inspire public trust and create a favorable environment for businesses, thus contributing to well - functioning markets and economic growth (OECD, 2000; 2004). This article aimed to study the level of public trust among Thai citizens which were perceived on ethics of government and officials (Yingluck's government period). Both questionnaires and interview schedule were synthesized from relevant literatures to explore a field. The findings are as follows: (1) citizen perception on the ethics of honesty of government and officials is at very low level, (2) citizen trust in government and officials was shown at a low level among three realms of trust perception - trustworthiness/ basis trust/ trust culture, (3) relationship between the ethics of government and officials and citizen trust were positively correlated in the same direction at high level ($r=.928$), (4) apparent behaviors of government and officials' honesty have disparity from those expected ones at very high level (sig .876) and (5) major barriers of public trust were caused by unethical norms and behaviors, distrust culture, bureaucracy and parliament intervention, unethical leader, mega-project corruption, illegal policy such as 'amnesty bill' (6) alignments to cultivate public trust are incorruptibility, public interest and justice preservation, transparency and accountability, respect for the worth, dignity, and diversity, commitment to excellence and to maintaining the public trust. The article postulates sufficient evidence to conclude that citizen trust on the ethics of government and officials is at low level. It highlights where existing measures match the theories and shows a number of trust deficiency, especially over the content of the trust belief correlated with the ethics of honesty and the possible alignments for re contributing public trust among citizen.

Keywords:

Public Trust, Ethics of Honesty, Corruption, Inner Cultural Questions