

# Does The Income Level Influence Consumer Complaining Behaviour?

Nursalihah Ahmad Raston, Zainol Mustafa and Nur Riza Mohd Suradi

Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

## Abstract

Complaining is one way for consumers to communicate their unhappiness. Understanding the behaviour of consumer complaints is important thing to an organization, however it is not easy. This paper aims to investigate the differences in income level influence complaint behaviour among consumer in public services at Klang Valley. The questionnaire is based on a review of the current data, a survey of 273 respondents is conducted and responses from 215 respondents are collected. Most of the respondent (39.1%) have monthly income from RM2000 to RM4000, followed by those with monthly income less than RM2000 (28.8%). A one way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether a significant difference exists between complaining behaviour and income level among public service consumer's. However, the findings clearly indicate that complaint behaviour does not differ by income level. Therefore, there is no significant difference in consumer complaining behaviour in terms of monthly income level of the respondent.

**Keywords:** Consumer complaining behaviour, monthly income level, public services, ANOVA

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## Introduction

A variety of studies have been performed over the years to determine the determinants of Consumer Complaining Behaviour (CCB). Previous research has found that CCB is a dynamic phenomenon affected by a multiplicity of variables in the choices of a specific complaining behaviour. Understanding the complaining behaviour of dissatisfied consumers of products and services has long been an important agenda for marketers and researchers. Consumers are becoming more educated, more qualified, more demanding and more able to pay for quality services or even meet their standards. Income will be one of the primary factors leading to customer complaint conduct. It tends to have an effect on the purchasing behavior in terms of quantity, styles and prices of the commodity. (William, 2002).

Several empirical consumer complaint behavior studies have been conducted on European and American consumers (Huefner & Hunt, 2000; Lerman, 2006; Bunker & Bradley, 2007). While, studies in Asian countries are deficient, so researchers' focus in Asian countries consumers has been shifted (Phau & Sari, 2004; Ndubisi & Ling, 2006; Yuksel et al., 2006). The study by Phau

and Sari (2004) found that higher wages and education were among those consumers who were complainants. Consumer exhibited more faith in themselves, were more willing to take chances and had a constructive attitude to complain.

In addition, it is common to see that higher income consumers would buy more items and more costly goods. Given the samples and restricted scope of most of these studies, it is not surprising that Garrett and Tourmanoff (2010) stated that the literature is divided on how the probability of customer complaints is influenced by demographics such as age, income, education and ethnicity.

Furthermore, income moderates the private complaint defection relationship. Lower income customers are more likely to defect without a word to the bank than higher income customers (Ndubisi & Tam, 2006). Then, the study highlighted the complainers characteristics on complaining behaviour by Tronvoll (2007) also found that there is a significant difference between income and consumer complaint behaviour. Then, the study of consumer competency and relationship between dissatisfaction and complaint behaviour by Chinedu (2017) have found that only

religion ( $\beta=.15$ ) and level of income ( $\beta=.12$ ) out of the six background variables made unique significant contributions to complain behaviour.

However, Azmi et al (2015), have studied regarding income differences and complaint behaviour among automobile repairs and service consumers and the result indicates that, there is no significant different in consumer complaint behaviour in term of respondent's monthly income. Then, the study by Kumar (2016) indicates that low middle income does not moderate the relationship between public complaint and defection. In addition, the lower income group was described as having most issues with unfair offers and deceptions on the market relative to other customer group (Nurzatul Hakimah et al.,2010). Therefore, there is need for additional research on this variable.

### Methodology

Data for the current study has been collected through public service consumer surveys in Klang Valley area. This public service is not distinguished in the form of service, a query that is ideally suited to dissatisfaction, regardless of product or service, because dissatisfaction leads to complaint in all situations. A questionnaire is built on the basis of a study of existing results, a survey

of 273 respondents was polled and responses from 215 respondents were obtained. Respondents are asked to answer 23 questions, five of which relate to the demographic characteristics of those respondents, including the level of income. The remaining 18 are statements intended to reflect the complaining actions of these people.

### Results and Discussion

In this study, 119 (55.4%) females and 96 (44.6%) males are present in Table 1. Most respondents are between 29 and 35 years old (47.4%). Followed by respondents aged 25 to 29 years (37.7%), aged 35 to 39 years (7.9%), more than 39 years old (4.7%) and only five (2.3%) respondent are less than 25 years old. In addition, the majority (71.2%) of respondents are Malays due to high Malay living in this area followed by Chinese (26.9%) and Indian (1.9%). Majority (40.5%) of respondents are from private sector. Furthermore, most of the respondent (39.1%) have monthly income from RM2000 to RM4000, followed by those with monthly income less than RM2000 (28.8%), 25.6% who have monthly income from RM4001 to RM6000. While, the rest of respondents (6.5%) have the monthly income more than RM6000 It indicates that respondents were middle-income earners.

Table 1. Respondent's Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	96	44.6
Female	119	55.4
Age (years)		
< 25	5	2.3
25 – 29	81	37.7
30 – 34	102	47.4
35 – 39	17	7.9
>39	10	4.7
Ethnicity		
Malay	153	71.2
Chinese	58	26.9
Indian	4	1.9
Others	0	0
Occupation sector		
Private	87	40.5
Government	56	26.0

Self employed	45	20.9
Unemployed	27	12.6
Level of income		
<RM2000	62	28.8
RM2000 – RM4000	84	39.1
RM4001 – RM6000	55	25.6
>RM6000	14	6.5

Table 2 provides some very useful descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation for the dependent variable (Consumer Complaining Behaviour) for each

separate group of personal income, as well as when all groups are combined (Total).

Table 2. Descriptives

Income Level	n	Mean	Standard Deviation
< RM2000	62	7.92	0.669
RM2000 – RM4000	84	7.10	0.137
RM4001 – RM6000	55	6.55	0.551
>RM6000	14	8.14	0.496
Total	215		

To determine whether a relationship exists between complaining behaviour and level of income among public service consumers, a one way ANOVA was conducted. Normal distribution of sample (n = 215) due to the large sample size and the assumptions of central limit theorem (Ott

& Longnecker, 2010; Robertson, 2002). The results of the ANOVA revealed no significant influence between income level ( $F = 0.1995$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.179) and the consumer complaining behaviour. Therefore, the hypothesis shall be rejected.

Table 3. ANOVA

	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39.417	3	13.139	0.1995	0.179
Within Groups	197.561	211	65.854		
Total	236.978	214			

**Conclusion**

The study examined consumer complaining behaviour among a sample of public service consumers’ in Klang Valley area as related the respondent’s income levels. However the results of the analysis supported the null hypothesis. Therefore, the findings clearly indicate that complaint behaviour does not differ by income level of the respondents. The finding study were contradicted with the previous study conducted by Chinedu (2017) which focusing on income level have found a direct relationship between the level

of income and complaining. In contrast to this study also reported those who complain to have higher income compared to non-complainers (Tronvoll,2007).

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