

Client Satisfaction in Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office Samar

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Abstract — This study assessed client satisfaction and service delivery at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-PENRO) Samar with the goal of proposing client awareness activities. Employing a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, the research analyzed Client Satisfaction Measurement Forms from 2023 (n=62) and 2024 (n=69) alongside qualitative feedback. Findings revealed a significant shift in client demographics, with individual citizens becoming the predominant client type in 2024 (59.42%) compared to businesses in 2023 (43.55%). Citizen's Charter awareness increased significantly, with 69.57% of clients in 2024 reporting both knowledge and visibility of the Charter (up from 59.68% in 2023). Overall satisfaction improved significantly from 4.69 in 2023 to 4.80 in 2024 ($p=0.020$), with significant enhancements in Responsiveness, Access and Facilities, Costs, and Outcome dimensions. Statistical analysis confirmed significant relationships between age, client type, and both Charter awareness and satisfaction levels, while Charter perceptions strongly predicted satisfaction ($r=0.389$ to 0.573 , $p<0.001$). These findings suggest that enhancing service information accessibility, particularly for younger and individual clients, represents a high-potential strategy for further improving service delivery. The study proposes eight client awareness activities including age-stratified information strategies, enhanced Charter visibility, targeted support for individual citizens, and digital communication improvements to address identified gaps and leverage demographic insights toward more equitable and effective environmental governance services in Samar Province.

Keywords — *client satisfaction, environmental governance, citizen's charter, service delivery, public administration*

I. Introduction

The quality of public service delivery represents a fundamental bridge between citizens and their government, directly shaping public trust and institutional legitimacy. As Fukuyama (2022) suggests, the perceived accessibility and effectiveness of government services constitute the most tangible manifestation of the social contract between state and citizen. This relationship forms the cornerstone of democratic governance, particularly in environmental governance where public participation determines policy success.

Environmental services require heightened public engagement and understanding, as citizens must navigate complex regulatory frameworks governing natural resource management,

land use, forestry permissions, and environmental compliance certifications. The efficacy of these services profoundly impacts not only administrative efficiency but also ecological sustainability and community development. Globally, governments have increasingly prioritized citizen-centric service delivery models as cornerstone initiatives for public sector reform.

The United Nations' E-Government Survey revealed that 80 percent of countries have implemented citizen feedback mechanisms, yet only 37 percent effectively utilize this data to improve services, highlighting a critical implementation gap in translating citizen input into tangible service improvements (Setyawan et al., 2024). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports that nations with transparent service delivery frameworks experience 32 percent higher public trust ratings than those without such systems (Sadykova & Galy, 2024).

In the Philippines, Republic Act 11032 or the "Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018" mandated the implementation of Citizen's Charters across all government agencies, representing a significant legislative commitment to improving service delivery nationwide. Despite this legislative framework, the Civil Service Commission's Report on Public Service Delivery indicated that only 68 percent of Filipinos were aware of these charters, with satisfaction rates averaging 71 percent nationwide (Mata et al., 2022). The Eastern Visayas region faces particular challenges in public service delivery, compounded by geographic isolation, vulnerability to natural disasters, and resource constraints. According to the Department of Interior and Local Government Regional Performance Assessment, the region ranked 14th among 17 regions in citizen satisfaction with government services (Borongon & Naranong, 2022). Environmental governance poses additional complexities, with only 56 percent of residents reporting awareness of available Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-PENRO) services despite the region's vulnerability to environmental challenges (Baco, 2023).

In Samar Province specifically, preliminary data indicates that while government offices maintained Citizen's Charters, only 41 percent of constituents actively utilized these resources when accessing services in 2023, substantially below the national average (Alegado, 2021). This provincial context demonstrates a clear need for targeted interventions to improve client awareness and service navigation within DENR-PENRO Samar. The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance government service delivery through evidence-based recommendations that address specific challenges facing environmental governance in Samar. The findings contribute to implementing Republic Act 11032 more effectively while supporting broader governance objectives of transparency, accountability, and citizen empowerment.

Literature Review

Client satisfaction assessment represents a critical component of public service evaluation, particularly in specialized technical agencies like environmental departments. Research on land

management services demonstrates that clearly defined service procedures and accessible information significantly influence client satisfaction levels, with services using simplified technical language showing approximately 27% higher satisfaction compared to those maintaining complex bureaucratic terminology (Paradji & Asiri, 2024).

Decision Support System-enabled client feedback mechanisms have proven effective in capturing and analyzing satisfaction data for service improvement, demonstrating that systematic collection and analysis can translate subjective client experiences into actionable administrative improvements (Tapado et al., 2023). Several critical factors drive citizen satisfaction with public services, including compliance with rules, responsiveness, prompt service delivery, and hassle-free processing, with procedural transparency consistently ranking among the top three predictors of service satisfaction across multiple public service contexts (Lamsal & Gupta, 2022).

Environmental governance institutions face unique challenges in service delivery due to the technical nature of their mandate and complex regulatory frameworks. Community satisfaction analyses with local government administrative services reveal that even when technical aspects are handled competently, procedural delays create dissatisfaction that influences overall service perception (Saleh et al., 2024). Studies across different regional contexts consistently identify issues with service procedures, requirements, and clarity of service officers, indicating that procedural complexity remains a persistent challenge in government service delivery (Az, 2022).

The relationship between service quality perceptions and client satisfaction in government agencies follows distinct patterns that differ from private sector service models. Assessment of perceived service quality in government insurance systems reveals that reliability and assurance dimensions have the strongest influence on overall satisfaction in government service contexts (Sarande et al., 2022). When agencies demonstrate consistent performance and convey expertise in their respective domains, client satisfaction remains high even when other service dimensions receive lower ratings.

Citizen charter awareness and implementation represent critical components in enhancing government service delivery effectiveness. Customer satisfaction analysis of environmental department services using the Importance Performance Analysis method demonstrates that service visibility and public awareness initiatives significantly enhance both service utilization and satisfaction levels (Dewantara & Sulaksono, 2022). Areas implementing consistent information dissemination through multiple channels show up to 24% higher satisfaction compared to areas relying primarily on formal governmental notifications.

Public satisfaction research with civil registration services finds that communities are generally satisfied with services that have clearly communicated standards through citizen charters, with such services achieving satisfaction ratings 23% higher than services where standards remain ambiguous (Harsoyo & Suparno, 2021). Studies of user satisfaction with

government services consistently identify information accessibility and procedural clarity as key factors influencing overall satisfaction (Limbongan & Oktajayanice, 2023).

Digital transformation initiatives increasingly influence client satisfaction with government services. Customer satisfaction survey applications developed for utility companies demonstrate the capacity to streamline feedback collection and enable real-time service adjustments, with implementation resulting in up to 37% increases in problem resolution speed and corresponding 29% improvements in customer satisfaction ratings (Khairil, 2021).

Evaluations of enhanced program monitoring and document archiving systems for environmental initiatives find that information quality and system usability are significant predictors of user satisfaction among both internal staff and external stakeholders (Pitao et al., 2022). This suggests that digital systems can improve both operational efficiency and client experience in environmental governance programs.

Service quality dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles play varying roles in determining client satisfaction across different government service contexts. Research examining service quality and client satisfaction at urban transformation centers identifies reliability as the strongest predictor of overall satisfaction, explaining approximately 37% of satisfaction variance (Andrew et al., 2021).

Implementation of the SERVQUAL method to determine community satisfaction levels with business licensing services reveals consistent gaps between service expectations and perceptions across multiple dimensions, with the largest discrepancies typically appearing in responsiveness and reliability categories (Sembiring & Sinaga, 2021). Community satisfaction analysis demonstrates that prioritizing improvements in dimensions with the largest perception-expectation gaps produces more significant satisfaction increases than attempting to address all dimensions simultaneously (Mubaroq & Hidayati, 2022).

II. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate client satisfaction and service delivery at DENR-PENRO Samar for 2023-2024. The research utilized a sequential explanatory design, beginning with quantitative analysis of existing Client Satisfaction Measurement Forms followed by qualitative methods to provide deeper explanatory insights into the quantitative findings (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The quantitative component followed a descriptive-correlational approach to analyze client satisfaction data collected through standardized measurement forms (Panela 2025a, Panela 2025b). This component addressed research questions focused on examining satisfaction levels, relationships

between respondent profiles and awareness levels, connections between awareness and satisfaction, and year-to-year differences in satisfaction ratings.

Sample and Data Collection

The study analyzed all available Client Satisfaction Measurement Forms from DENR-PENRO Samar for 2023 and 2024, totaling 131 responses (62 in 2023, 69 in 2024). These forms contained standardized satisfaction ratings across multiple service dimensions, demographic information about clients, and data regarding awareness and perception of the Citizen's Charter. The research instruments utilized the Client Satisfaction Measurement Form (CSM Form), officially standardized and implemented by DENR in compliance with Anti-Red Tape Authority requirements. The form consists of three major sections: Client Profile, Citizen's Charter Awareness, and Service Quality Assessment using a five-point Likert scale across nine service dimensions.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS and JASP, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis determined frequency distributions and percentages for demographic variables, while weighted means and standard deviations assessed awareness levels and satisfaction ratings. Prior to correlation analysis, Shapiro-Wilk tests confirmed data normality, allowing for parametric statistical procedures. Pearson's r determined relationships between continuous variables, point-biserial correlation analyzed relationships between dichotomous variables and continuous satisfaction ratings, and ETA correlation examined relationships between nominal variables and satisfaction levels. All statistical tests maintained a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ with 95% confidence intervals.

III. Results and Discussion

Client Demographics and Service Utilization

The respondent profile revealed significant demographic shifts between 2023 and 2024. The age distribution transitioned toward older age groups, with 40-49 years old representing the largest segment at 24.64% in 2024, compared to 20-29 years old (22.58%) being predominant in 2023. Gender distribution remained relatively balanced across both years, with slight male predominance (51.91% overall).

A dramatic shift occurred in client composition, with individual citizens becoming the dominant category at 59.42% in 2024 compared to only 20.97% in 2023. Conversely, business/company representation decreased substantially from 43.55% in 2023 to 10.14% in 2024. This transformation suggests substantially improved public awareness and engagement with environmental governance services among individual citizens.

Service utilization patterns also evolved significantly. While Processing Payments of Claims was most frequently utilized in 2023 (45.16%), Issuance of Certification of No Records/Appeal for Motion

Reconsideration became predominant in 2024 (42.03%). All services maintained high satisfaction scores exceeding 4.65 on a 5-point scale, with overall satisfaction improving from 4.71 in 2023 to 4.86 in 2024.

The substantial shift from predominantly business clients to individual citizens represents a fundamental transformation in service utilization patterns at DENR-PENRO Samar. This evolution suggests significant changes in public awareness and engagement with environmental governance services, potentially reflecting successful awareness initiatives or changing regulatory environments that affect individual citizens more directly. The consistently high satisfaction across diverse client segments indicates successful adaptation to this changing composition.

This demographic transition aligns with broader trends in environmental governance participation, where individual citizens increasingly recognize the relevance of environmental services to their daily lives. The shift also reflects what Panella (2025c) identified in mapping research landscapes, where individual engagement with government services has evolved significantly in response to changing social and environmental conditions. The agency's ability to maintain high satisfaction while serving this transformed client base demonstrates organizational adaptability and effective service delivery practices.

Citizen's Charter Awareness and Perception

Awareness levels showed substantial improvement between 2023 and 2024. The percentage of respondents both knowing what a Citizen's Charter is and seeing it in the office increased from 59.68% in 2023 to 69.57% in 2024. Correspondingly, those with no knowledge of the Charter decreased from 4.84% to 2.90%.

Visibility and accessibility perceptions improved markedly, with 69.57% finding the Charter "Easy to see" in 2024 compared to 56.45% in 2023. The combined percentage finding it either "Easy to see" or "Somewhat easy to see" increased from 88.71% to 92.76%.

Perceived helpfulness demonstrated the strongest positive trend, with 72.46% finding the Charter "Very Helpful" in 2024 compared to 61.29% in 2023. Those finding it "Not Helpful" decreased from 6.45% to 2.90%. The combined percentage finding it either "Very Helpful" or "Somewhat Helpful" reached 97.10% in 2024.

Client Satisfaction Levels and Trends

Overall client satisfaction showed statistically significant improvement from 4.69 in 2023 to 4.80 in 2024 ($t = -2.347$, $p = 0.020$). Four specific dimensions demonstrated significant improvements: Responsiveness increased from 4.66 to 4.81 ($p = 0.022$), Access and Facilities from

4.68 to 4.81 ($p = 0.045$), Costs from 4.41 to 4.63 ($p = 0.010$), and Outcome from 4.76 to 4.88 ($p = 0.028$). The Costs dimension showed the most substantial improvement, advancing from "Agree" (4.41) to "Strongly Agree" (4.63) descriptive ratings. The Assurance dimension consistently received the highest ratings across both years (4.82 in 2023, 4.87 in 2024), while maintaining statistical stability.

Demographic Correlations with Awareness and Satisfaction

Age demonstrated significant positive correlations with Charter awareness ($r = 0.219$, $p = 0.032$) and visibility perceptions ($r = 0.247$, $p = 0.015$), indicating that older clients tend to demonstrate higher awareness levels. Age also showed significant positive correlation with overall satisfaction ($r = 0.201$, $p = 0.047$). Client type exhibited significant correlations with all Charter perception dimensions: awareness ($r = 0.236$, $p = 0.021$), visibility/accessibility ($r = 0.254$, $p = 0.013$), and perceived helpfulness ($r = 0.315$, $p = 0.002$). Client type also demonstrated highly significant correlation with satisfaction ($r = 0.284$, $p = 0.005$), with organizational clients consistently reporting higher levels than individual citizens.

Gender showed no significant correlations with either Charter perceptions or satisfaction levels, indicating equitable service experiences across gender groups. Service type availed similarly showed no significant correlations, suggesting consistent service quality across different transaction types.

Charter Awareness-Satisfaction Relationships

All three dimensions of Charter perception showed highly significant positive correlations with satisfaction: awareness ($r = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$), visibility/accessibility ($r = 0.452$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived helpfulness ($r = 0.573$, $p < 0.001$). The progressively stronger relationships from awareness to helpfulness indicate that practical utility of service information plays the most crucial role in determining satisfaction outcomes.

These correlations provide compelling evidence that service information accessibility represents a critical determinant of client satisfaction. The exceptionally strong relationship between perceived helpfulness and satisfaction ($r = 0.573$) suggests that ensuring practical applicability of Charter information yields the most substantial satisfaction improvements.

Information Accessibility as Satisfaction Driver

The strong correlations between all Charter perception dimensions and satisfaction provide robust evidence that information accessibility fundamentally shapes client experiences. The progressively stronger relationships from basic awareness ($r = 0.389$) to practical helpfulness ($r = 0.573$) indicate a hierarchy of information value, where practical utility exceeds mere availability or visibility in determining satisfaction outcomes.

These findings support Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, which posits that satisfaction results from the comparison of expectations and perceived performance (Sinha et al., 2019). The Charter functions as an expectation-setting mechanism, and its perceived helpfulness facilitates successful navigation of service processes, potentially enhancing both experience and outcome achievement. This aligns with research by Bulos (2021), who demonstrated that awareness initiatives significantly improve both utilization rates and satisfaction scores in Philippine contexts.

Service Quality Enhancement Patterns

The significant improvements in overall satisfaction and four specific dimensions between 2023 and 2024 provide evidence of systematic service enhancement at DENR-PENRO Samar. The pattern of selective improvements in responsiveness, access and facilities, costs, and outcome dimensions, while maintaining stable high performance in other areas, suggests effective targeted enhancement strategies rather than scattered improvement efforts.

The substantial improvement in cost perception (from 4.41 to 4.63) represents particularly noteworthy progress, as this dimension previously received the lowest ratings. This enhancement may reflect improved fee transparency, enhanced service value communication, or actual structural adjustments to fee systems. The improvement addresses what Brucal et al. (2022) identified regarding the importance of value-for-money perceptions in overall satisfaction, particularly in public sector contexts where traditional market mechanisms do not apply.

Demographic Variations and Equity Implications

The significant correlations between both age and client type with Charter awareness and satisfaction levels reveal important equity considerations in service delivery. Older clients and organizational clients consistently demonstrate higher awareness and satisfaction, suggesting potential barriers for younger individuals and individual citizens in accessing and utilizing service information effectively.

These patterns reflect what Sapioper et al. (2021) observed regarding significant variations in satisfaction levels across different demographic groups in land office services. The findings suggest that while DENR-PENRO Samar delivers high-quality services overall, differential access to information and varying service experiences across demographic segments warrant attention to ensure equitable service delivery.

The absence of gender differences in both awareness and satisfaction represents a positive finding for service equity, indicating successful implementation of gender-neutral service practices. This achievement contrasts with broader regional challenges noted by Camarillo and Bellotindos (2021), who reported gender-based disparities in service access in rural and geographically isolated areas.

Theoretical Implications and Service Design

The exceptionally strong relationship between Charter perceived helpfulness and satisfaction validates the practical application of service quality theories in environmental governance contexts. The SERVQUAL Model's emphasis on multiple service quality dimensions finds empirical support, with particular strength in the reliability and assurance dimensions that showed consistently high ratings.

Public Service Motivation Theory also finds validation in the consistently excellent assurance ratings (4.87 in 2024), suggesting successful cultivation of prosocial motivations among DENR-PENRO Samar staff. The high integrity ratings (4.84 in 2024) further support this theoretical perspective, indicating that public service values effectively translate into client-perceived fairness and equal treatment.

Regional Context and Comparative Performance

The consistently high and improving satisfaction scores are particularly significant given the regional context. Eastern Visayas ranks 14th among 17 regions in citizen satisfaction with government services (Borongon & Naranong, 2022), yet DENR-PENRO Samar achieves satisfaction levels that exceed national averages. This performance suggests effective local management practices that overcome regional challenges through focused attention to service quality and client engagement.

The findings demonstrate that localized service excellence is achievable even within challenging regional contexts. This success potentially reflects what Panela (2025d) identified regarding building capacity and navigating barriers in challenging environments, where focused organizational efforts can yield significant improvements despite broader systemic constraints.

Service Information as Strategic Asset

The research provides compelling evidence that service information, particularly through the Citizen's Charter, functions as a strategic asset rather than merely a compliance requirement. The strong correlations between Charter perceptions and satisfaction suggest that information accessibility directly contributes to organizational effectiveness and client loyalty.

This finding has implications beyond immediate satisfaction outcomes, potentially affecting broader institutional legitimacy and public trust. As Fukuyama (2022) noted, "The true measure of public service lies not in what we provide, but in how citizens perceive and access these services." The strong information-satisfaction relationships indicate that strategic investment in information accessibility yields measurable returns in client experience and institutional reputation.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into client satisfaction and service delivery at DENR-PENRO Samar, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The research relies on administrative data from satisfaction forms, which may exhibit response bias toward more satisfied clients who choose to complete evaluations. The documentary analysis approach, while methodologically sound, limits the depth of qualitative insights that might emerge from direct client interviews.

Future research could benefit from longitudinal tracking of individual client experiences to better understand satisfaction trajectories over time. Additionally, comparative analysis with other DENR regional offices could provide broader insights into best practices and transferable improvement strategies. Investigation of the specific mechanisms through which Charter awareness translates into satisfaction could inform more targeted information design strategies.

The study's focus on satisfaction outcomes, while important, could be complemented by research examining actual service effectiveness and environmental governance outcomes. Understanding the relationship between client satisfaction and substantive environmental protection achievements would provide a more comprehensive assessment of service quality and institutional effectiveness.

IV. Conclusion

This comprehensive assessment of client satisfaction and service delivery at DENR-PENRO Samar reveals a high-performing organization that has achieved significant improvements while maintaining consistently excellent service quality. The substantial demographic transformation toward individual citizen clients, coupled with improved awareness and satisfaction levels, demonstrates successful adaptation to changing service demands and effective implementation of citizen-centered approaches.

The exceptionally strong relationships between Citizen's Charter awareness and client satisfaction provide compelling evidence that information accessibility represents a critical determinant of service quality in environmental governance contexts. The progressive strengthening of correlations from basic awareness to practical helpfulness indicates that service information must transcend mere availability to achieve meaningful utility in facilitating client transactions.

The significant improvements in overall satisfaction and multiple service dimensions between 2023 and 2024, particularly in responsiveness, access and facilities, costs, and outcomes, demonstrate systematic enhancement of service delivery quality. These improvements occurred

while maintaining excellence in already high-performing areas, suggesting effective targeted enhancement strategies rather than scattered improvement efforts.

The demographic variations in awareness and satisfaction levels, particularly between age groups and client types, highlight important equity considerations that warrant continued attention. While overall service quality remains high across all segments, ensuring equitable access to information and service experiences requires ongoing commitment to differentiated support strategies.

The proposed client awareness activities, grounded in empirical findings regarding demographic variations and information-satisfaction relationships, offer evidence-based approaches to addressing identified gaps while leveraging organizational strengths. These initiatives represent strategic investments in information accessibility that can yield substantial returns in client experience, institutional legitimacy, and environmental governance effectiveness.

DENR-PENRO Samar's achievement of service excellence within a challenging regional context demonstrates that focused organizational commitment to service quality and client engagement can overcome broader systemic constraints. The agency's success provides a model for other environmental governance institutions seeking to enhance service delivery while maintaining technical competence and regulatory effectiveness.

The study contributes to the broader literature on public service quality by demonstrating the critical role of information accessibility in environmental governance contexts and validating theoretical frameworks regarding service quality dimensions and satisfaction formation. The findings support continued investment in client-centered service approaches as fundamental components of effective environmental governance and institutional legitimacy.

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