
Public Servants' Competence and Citizens' Level of Satisfaction on the Service Delivery: A Perspective-Based Analysis

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Abstract — As the public demands more efficient, transparent, and responsive governance, the competencies of frontline public servants come to define community satisfaction. Thus, in the case of Ormoc City, wherein urban development and post-pandemic recovery are still shaping, measuring links between public servant performance and citizen perception becomes relevant for improving services. The study aims to find out how competencies of public servants correlate with how residents perceive service delivery, particularly with the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection, as well as Local Government Units (LGUs). Using a quantitative-descriptive research design, the study employed a validated Likert scale-based questionnaire administered to 120 public servants and 120 residents. A pilot test using Cronbach's Alpha confirmed the instrument's reliability. Data analysis utilized descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequency, mean, and Pearson correlation, to explore associations between competence and satisfaction. Findings indicate that public servants perceived themselves as highly competent, particularly in the areas of efficiency, communication, and ethical behavior. Residents reported moderate to high satisfaction levels, especially in service consistency, responsiveness, and courtesy. A significant positive correlation emerged between public servant competence and citizen satisfaction, suggesting that higher perceived competence is associated with increased public approval. Other aspects, like educational attainment and years of service, seemed to have a

moderate influence as well. Therefore, the study points out the need to further develop competencies in creating trust and better public service outcomes. It recommends periodic enhancement training for each public servant, performance evaluations based on outcome standards, and policy changes hinged on community expectations. The recommendations gathered through this study would help promote ethical, responsive, and people-centered governance in Ormoc City and everywhere else.

Keywords: public servants, citizen satisfaction, responsive governance, Local Government Units (LGUs), public service, transparent

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of public service delivery cannot be understated. It is important for governance, the legitimacy of institutions, and the development of communities. The public service employees, in democratic states, are the ones who are in most direct contact with the citizenry. They are the ones who implement the policies of the government, and their work can elevate or decrease the level of social welfare and public trust. In the case of the nation of the Philippines, the front-line government institutions are the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and the Local Government Units (LGUs), and they supply the people with security, emergency response, and front-line administrative services. The effectiveness of the personnel in these agencies, and the training that they have received, are factors that determine the citizens' perception of the performance and the credibility of the Government.

The public administration literature has recently shown that trust in institutions has an almost direct relationship with transparency, professionalism, and responsiveness in public service delivery. There are National surveys that have given positive evaluations of the public confidence in the local governments. However, there are still positive evaluations of the local governments. However, there are still negative evaluations of government service delivery. These are in the service delivery front-line personnel, and they have to do with slow processing, long waiting times, long and unclear policies, and the absence of responsiveness. These are a direct reflection of structural and competency deficiencies in the service delivery process, and even though there has

been a lot of reform and the establishment of a legal framework, such as the Local Government Code of 1991, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials, and the Ease of Doing Business Act, frontline governance continues to be a problem.

Beginning at a local level, Ormoc City is implementing some innovations in administration involving digital services and other streamlined processes. However, the lack of public engagement and the perception of a lack of digital citizenship or awareness of services is mitigated by an absence of digital services and awareness of services. Additionally, a lack of awareness of digital services is a result of an absence of digital services and awareness of services. Within the context of local services, the national level indicators remain out of focus. There is speculation about the absence of empirical studies in an appropriate context. The absence of focus of the national level indicators about local services emanates from a lack of understanding of how competencies at the frontline level within a specified local context.

The level of public service competence is recognized as an all-embracing construct with multiple facets. Among the components constituting the legacy of public service competence are knowledge, technical skills, efficiency, ethics, problem-solving, and communication. The multiple facets of public service competence are guided by an assortment of theories. These include Competency Theory, Public Service Motivation Theory, Expectations Disconfirmation Theory, Equity Theory, and other service quality theories, as in the case of SERVQUAL. All these theories collectively point to the fact that delivering quality public service is not merely a function of the underlying technical proficiency, but encompasses other components like integrity, empathy, adaptability, and responsiveness to the citizens.

Civic satisfaction measures the effectiveness of governance and the legitimacy of institutions. It is the result of citizens' assessment of the ease of access and reliability of services, promptness, equity, and professionalism. Constructive interactions with the services encourage trust, compliance with the law, and participation in civic duties, while negative interactions foster cynicism and apathy. The importance of civic satisfaction in public safety and emergency services is crucial, as it directly affects reporting, preparedness for emergencies, and the willingness of citizens to cooperate with the authorities.

There is a plethora of literature about the measurement of performance in the sphere of public administration; however, in the context of the Philippines, there is little to no literature, public or otherwise, on the measurement of satisfaction on citizens' perception of the public service responsiveness in the municipal area and the competencies of public functionaries. In the case of Ormoc City, as a zone of interest, there has been no evidence that has studied the impact of the competencies of the PNP, BFP, and LGU personnel on the satisfaction level of the community. The absence of this evidence in the literature greatly affects the ability of the local authorities to make policy decisions, especially those that are based on evidence, regarding the formulation of specific training programs and the revision of policies or structures.

This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing public servant competencies and citizen satisfaction in Ormoc City, Leyte. It specifically looks at competencies in the areas of knowledge and skills, efficiency at work, ethics, problem-solving, and communication, and how citizens perceive the quality of service in terms of the availability and quality of the service, the reliability, the responsiveness, and the service (empathetic) assurance. Based on the frameworks of competency-based governance and citizen-centered service, this research seeks to produce empirical evidence that can be used to promote institutional development and service improvements.

This study hopes to contribute to the development of an improved service operational plan for the frontline public institutions in Ormoc City. With a highly systematic and localized approach, the study intends to assist the development of policies, capacity-building frameworks, and performance management systems. It seeks to support public trust, enhance service delivery, and facilitate responsive, accountable governance in the context of urbanization and the post-pandemic period.

Research Problem and Purpose

The main research issue this study seeks to address is the lack of evidence on the effects of public servant competencies on the levels of citizen satisfaction in the case of Ormoc City. More specifically, little is known about whether citizens, in their assessments of the quality of service,

consider the knowledge and skills, work efficiency, and ethical standards, problem-solving, and communication of the frontline staff, staff who are often thought of as the face of public service.

The purpose of this study is to analyze public servant competencies and citizen satisfaction in Ormoc City, Leyte. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives: (1) establish the demographic and professional characteristics of the PNP, BFP, and LGU personnel and of the community respondents; (2) assess the extent of public servant competencies in the various key performance areas; (3) assess the extent of citizen satisfaction on the dimension of service delivery in terms of service (facilities, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and (4) understand the relationships among the respondent characteristics, levels of competencies, and levels of satisfaction.

Considering the objectives of this study, it is anticipated that a draft operational plan for the provision of improved quality services in frontline public units will be developed. This also entails training, improvement of service delivery, and accountability, public service of Ormoc City, and the reduction in the gap of citizens' trust to be improved.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive–correlational study design was used to assess the relationship between the competencies of public servants and the satisfaction of citizens in Ormoc City, Leyte. Such a design describes the respondents' attributes, the levels of their competencies and satisfaction, and the relationships among pertinent variables systematically, and also assesses these variables without experimentation. In assessing the variables of service delivery and performance of the institution, the study predominantly used quantitative survey methods.

The study used the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, where the input phase included participants' demographic data, competencies, and levels of satisfaction, the process phase involved a statistical assessment, interpretation, and validation of the data, while the output phase comprised development of a service operational plan to improve the processes, as supported by the data.

Study Setting

The study location was Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines. Ormoc City is a fast-growing first-class city in Eastern Visayas, with rapid urban growth, varied socio-economic profiles, and expanding public service systems. The city has significant front-line agencies such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Local Government Units (LGUs), thus it is suitable for studies on public service effectiveness and citizen satisfaction.

Population and Sampling

A total of 150 respondents participated in the study, and to achieve balanced representation of essential stakeholder groups, stratified sampling was employed. Respondents were divided into four strata: personnel of the Philippine National Police (30), personnel of the Bureau of Fire Protection (30), employees of Local Government Units (30), and residents of the community (60).

Only frontline public servants were included, as they were the only ones who directly engaged with the recipients of the services. From the 60 most populated barangays, community respondents were chosen through random sampling, and as the local officials had recently engaged and served, referrals were considered. Participation was voluntary, and only eligible respondents selected from the inclusion criteria were recruited.

Research Instruments

Two structured survey questionnaires were used to gather data: one intended for public servants and the other for community members. The surveys were created following the relevant public administration and service quality literature and the purpose of the research.

The questionnaires were composed of two parts. The first part obtained some demographic information, such as age, sex, civil status, education level, rank, years of service, participation in training, and occupation. The second part had 25 Likert scale items to measure both the competencies of public servants and the satisfaction of citizens.

Public servants' competencies were assessed in the following five areas: knowledge and skills, work efficiency, ethical behavior, problem-solving, and communication. Citizen satisfaction was evaluated in all of the following areas: the quality of the service, the reliability and timeliness of the service, and the staff's empathy and assurance. Furthermore, other items assessed the perceived challenges and strategies for improvement.

Instrument Validation and Reliability

The questionnaires were evaluated for content validity by experts in public administration as well as members of the research panel. Modifications were made for the purpose of improving clarity, relevance, and alignment to the constructs.

A pilot test was conducted on 75 respondents who were excluded from the main sample to evaluate reliability. The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The results demonstrated acceptable to excellent reliability ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). Hence, the instruments were confirmed to be appropriate for data collection.

Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data, questionnaires were approved by the appropriate government departments. For accessibility, questionnaires were distributed personally and by some approved coordinators.

To respond, participants utilized a 5-point (one to five) rating scale. Service records and institutional reports were analyzed to corroborate the survey results. The data collection process was carried out within the timetable to avoid disturbing the respondents' professional activities.

Data Analysis

The collected data were encoded and processed in Microsoft Excel, which involved various statistical methods, both descriptive and inferential.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were calculated for the demographics, competency, and satisfaction scores. For the assessment of normality, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests were used to determine whether parametric tests were appropriate.

For the inferential analyses, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the differences in the respondent groups, and Pearson’s correlation coefficient was applied to public servant competency and citizen satisfaction. A significance level of 0.05 was set for the statistical analyses.

The coding and classification of qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were done thematically to support the quantitative results.

Scoring and Interpretation

Responses were analyzed using a five-point Likert scale. The public servant competencies were measured as “Highly Competent” to “Lacking Competence”, and citizen satisfaction levels were from “Highly Satisfied” to “Generally Lacking in Satisfaction”.

Correlation coefficients were classified as very strong, strong, moderate, weak, or very weak relationships. The relationships among the public servant competencies and citizen satisfaction levels were measured using ANOVA, and the results were evaluated with F-values and p-values to determine the presence or absence of statistical significance and to assess the null hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethics approval from the Northwest Samar State University Ethics Review Committee. All relevant ethical considerations about informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respect for autonomy were adhered to.

Before participating in the study, all subjects were briefed on the purpose of the study, the procedures, and the associated risks and benefits. Data collection was preceded by the signing of

informed consent. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence.

Data from which personal identifiers could be found were destroyed, and all data were retrieved from a secured and encrypted database to which only the research team had access. Findings were reported in aggregate to protect the identity of participants.

Use of Data

All collected data was solely used for academic and research-related needs. No individual data was shared with any external entities. The institution's data handling and reporting practices concerning ethics and research policies were followed.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profiles

Data was collected involving 150 participants, of whom 90 were public employees of the LGU, PNP, and BFP, and 60 were residents of the community. The majority of public servants are men, 31-35 years old, married, graduates, and have 1-5 years of job tenure. This suggests a young, developing, and highly educated workforce, but with little long-term experience.

The majority of respondents who were citizens were also women, in the same age category of 31-35, and mostly married. The majority were also graduates and employed or self-employed. This profile demonstrates that public servants and citizens had the education and the social structures to accurately evaluate the services rendered by the public sector.

The profile constructed provides a basis for understanding the differences in the perceived effectiveness of the services and the level of satisfaction. The profile also indicates the importance of having a developing career and the participation of citizens in the local governance process.

Perceived Competence of Public Servants

Public servants evaluated their competencies in five areas: 'knowledge and skills', 'efficiency at work', 'ethics', 'problem solving', and 'communication'.

The respondents reported they were 'competent' in all areas of evaluation, and the grand means for the five areas fell between 3.82 and 4.02. The highest score on the scale of ethical adherence was $M = 4.02$, followed by $M = 3.97$ on work efficiency and $M = 3.96$ on communication. Knowledge and skills $M = 3.85$ and problem-solving $M = 3.82$ were rated the least, but still in the range of competent.

It can be deduced from the data that public servants in Ormoc City have strong ethical, operational, and communicative efficacy. The relatively low score on digital and problem-solving competences suggests training is warranted on strategic planning, innovation, and technology-enabled service delivery.

The results affirm the existing body of work on the significance of ethics, managerial efficiency, and communication as key skills in public administration.

Citizen Satisfaction with Public Service Delivery

Citizen satisfaction was analyzed in five key areas: public needs understanding, service dimension of consistency and accuracy, courtesy and competence, willingness and timeliness to assist, and resources and facilities.

Mean scores across the aspects rated "Generally Satisfied" fell between 3.95 and 4.14. The highest satisfaction score was obtained in the area of Timeliness and Willingness to Assist ($M=4.14$), reflecting positive evaluation of courtesy and responsiveness, while service consistency ($M=4.06$) and facilities and resources ($M=4.08$) received positive ratings too.

Competence, Trust, and Courtesy was the lowest rated dimension ($M=3.95$), reflecting slight concern or confidence in the professionalism and inter-personal aspect. Overall result is, however, an indication that the public services in Ormoc City are Citizen-Oriented, Reliable, and Responsive.

The result is consistent with the SERVQUAL model that identifies factors highlighting reliability, responsiveness, and empathy as the most important dimensions of satisfaction in public service.

Relationship Between Demographic Profiles and Perceptions

The demographic and psychographic characteristics of the respondents show a correlation. However, with the respondents' demographic classification (age, gender, civil status, years of service, educational attainment) and the psychographic dimensions (public servant competence/perceived competence and citizen satisfaction/perceived satisfaction) studied, the correlation is minimal.

In the case of competence, the age of the respondent is the only variable that shows correlation. There is a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.363$, $p < .05$) where older respondents rated the competence of public servants as lower, although the gap is small. The other demographic classifications (i.e., gender, civil status, years of service, and educational attainment) and the psychographic characteristics did not show significant correlation.

Educational attainment ($r = 0.340$, $p < .05$) and years of service ($r = 0.373$, $p < .05$) show a positive correlation with satisfaction. Hence, more educated citizens and those with longer years of service have a higher satisfaction level. This may mean that they have a better grasp of the workings of the government and have realistic expectations.

Demographic variables have less impact on the perception, except for age and educational attainment. When designing services, the age and educational attainment of the citizens who will be receiving the services must be considered.

Relationship Between Public Servant Competence and Citizen Satisfaction

Positive correlation was discovered between perceived public servant competence and citizen satisfaction ($r = 0.566$, $p < .001$). Meaning that, as perceived public servant competency improves, so does citizen satisfaction.

As such, the public perception of civil services is influenced by the public servant's competency in knowledge, efficiency, ethics, communication, and problem-solving. These competencies should be developed in order to improve the public's trust and the institution's credibility.

Challenges in Public Service Delivery

Public servants indicated moderate severity for most challenges, primarily placing items in the 'Sometimes' category. Challenges in the largest number of reports were lack of financial and material resources ($M = 2.91$), and then excessive workload and bureaucracy ($M = 2.64$).

Challenges reported less frequently include the lack of training, poor inter-agency coordination, and low public awareness of the process. This shows us that the Structure and resource challenges are still the primary obstacles to effective service delivery.

To maintain the quality of the services, these challenges can be overcome by improved funding, workforce planning, and streamlining of administration.

Proposed Enhanced Service Operational Plan

A refined operational plan for services was created on the organizational findings, which focused on the following skills: communication, digital, resource improvement, operational process, and professional development. It also included feedback systems and public education.

The plan is designed to specify activities and responsible units along with indicators of performance, timelines, and budget. Implementation of the plan is designed to systematically build capacity and, in turn, improve responsiveness of services, operational efficiency, and, most importantly, the satisfaction of citizens, while also incorporating participatory governance.

Integrated Discussion

The research shows that the officials of the Ormoc City civil service are sufficiently competent, and the people are sufficiently satisfied with the delivery of services to the public. The strong points are in the ethical aspects and the efficiency of the work. The weaker points are in the problem-solving and digital areas.

The strong relationships between competence and satisfaction emphasize the importance of the development of people as resources in public governance. The demographic factors are no more than marginal, indicating that the improvement of service quality should be implemented uniformly across all services.

The challenges indicate to us that there is a great infrastructural change and a lasting institutional need. The operational plan is the first step to put the findings from the research into a usable form that is easy to link to a change in the structure of public administration.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The public servants in Ormoc City are typically early in their careers and are young college graduates. In contrast, the citizen respondents are predominantly female, belong to the working-age population, and have at least secondary or tertiary education.
2. Self-assessments by public servants across five domains of service delivery showed confidence in all domains. The highest ratings were in ethical standards and work efficiency, and ratings were relatively lower for problem-solving and digital skills.
3. Although satisfaction ratings were the lowest in the areas of empathy, trust, and courtesy, respondents were satisfied with service delivery in all areas.
4. The only demographic variable that was related to ratings of competence was age. Respondents with higher ages reported lower ratings. Positive relationships were found for the educational attainment and years of service with citizen satisfaction.
5. Citizen satisfaction and public servant competence showed a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship. Higher public servant competence levels resulted in more positive public servant citizen satisfaction ratings.

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6. Public servants cited limited financial and material resources, extensive workloads, and bureaucratic procedures as their main impediments.
 7. An enhanced operational plan was developed based on the findings with an emphasis on operational communication, digital literacy, resource allocation and management, training and development, and citizen feedback mechanisms.

V. CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the competency of public employees in Ormoc City and its effect on citizens' perceptions of public services. Findings indicate that public employees have sufficient knowledge and ethical/efficient behavior and can communicate and solve problems to provide services. Likewise, citizens are satisfied with the public services in terms of quality, availability, and dependability.

The absence of competence and sufficient public trust and service approval bestowed on public employees attests to the undeniable fact that, in the midst of the ethical and operational institutional efficiencies, public employees still maintain the status quo. With the other digital, agile, and collaborative problem-solving within and across public service delivery systems (PSDS) units, digital PSDS problem-solving and collaborative coordination are public employees' enduring challenges.

Empirical evidence puts the public service system in Ormoc City intact, reliable, and functional, with the demand to quickly change to meet the needs of the community. system.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that LGU, PNP, and BFP implement and reinforce digital literacy, problem-solving, and innovation in service delivery as part of their professional development initiatives.
2. To maintain standards, the organization should provide continuous and recurrent ethics training and ongoing performance evaluations.

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3. To achieve the organization's goals of time and efficiency, resource allocation should streamline internal processes, designate appropriate resource managers, and alleviate restrictive resources (e.g., 'red tape').
 4. To enhance service delivery and address operational challenges, the organization should prioritize resource allocation to improve facilities, equipment, and personnel.
 5. Participatory governance should be complemented by regular client feedback mechanisms, including digital surveys and suggestion systems, to facilitate stakeholder participation.
 6. To enhance the understanding of the public, especially the less educated, public information campaigns and simplified service guidelines are necessary.
 7. Future studies should adopt qualitative approaches and larger sample sizes to better understand the complexities of service delivery, especially the challenges and best practices in different localities.