

# Citizen Service Quality Standard: Its Levels of Implementation and Satisfaction as Perceived by Clients, DepEd-Tagbilaran City

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## ABSTRACT

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Service Quality Standards (SQSs) means the level of management and organization service unit requirements. The study investigated the Department of Education (DepEd) Tagbilaran City Division frontline services. The study is descriptive-comparative in nature in gathering data through modified tools to measure the levels of implementation, satisfaction, and problems encountered by internal and external DepEd stakeholders in its service transactions. With the overall number of 956, a sample size of 536 was randomly selected (2.81% margin of error at 95% confidence interval). It used Spearman Rank Chi-Square, Mann-Whitney Test, and Kruskal Wallis. The Chi-Square test results revealed that an association exists between the position of respondents ( $X^2 (14) = 24.396, p < 0.05$ ) and the classification of respondents ( $X^2 (2) = 10.568, p < 0.05$ ) with their level of satisfaction. The Spearman Rank test showed a significant positive correlation between implementation and satisfaction ( $r_s (534) = 0.657, p < 0.05$ ). The Mann-



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Whitney test results revealed that internal stakeholders ( $Mdn = 3.25$ ) have higher satisfaction as compared to external stakeholders ( $Mdn = 3.00$ ),  $U(267,269) = 31380.500$ ,  $z = -2.532$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Although it fully implemented its service quality standard, it falls short in some service domains in that clients were moderately satisfied with their frontline services.

## INTRODUCTION

Service Quality (SQ) originated from the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, a model that compares perceived expectations (E) with perceived performance (P), giving rise to the equation  $SQ = P - E$ . This model, underscored by its focus on expectations, has become the dominant framework in consumer behavior and marketing literature. Valvi and West (2013) emphasize that clients experience favorable confirmation or satisfaction when performance exceeds expectations. Conversely, dissatisfaction occurs when performance falls short, creating a gap between expected and perceived services. The 'GAP model,' developed in 1985, highlights the essential requirements for delivering high-quality service. Customers frequently engage in the comparison of the service they 'experience' with what they 'expect,' positioning service quality as the output of the service delivery system, especially for service institutions.

Moreover, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is evident. The Customer Assessment of Service Quality Model by Zeithaml (2000) identifies four key factors influencing client expectations: word of mouth, personal needs, previous experience, and the service provider's external communications. Lovelock, Wirtz, Lapert, and Munos (2008) stress the importance of a "moment of truth" or experience with the service in assessing client satisfaction.

In the realm of Good Governance Theory, certain fundamental principles guide the operations of a good government, encompassing accountability, control, responsiveness, transparency, public engagement, economy, efficiency, and other concepts (Minogue, Polidano, and Hulme, 1998).

The Expectancy-Disconfirmation (E-D) Theory, grounded in consumer behavior, has enhanced our understanding of citizen contentment with government services. Deng, Turner, Gehling, and Prince (2010) shed light on the performance-satisfaction relationship. According to the E-D hypothesis, citizens evaluate government services based on how well they align with prior expectations of Total Quality Management (TQM).

Social psychology theories play a crucial role in addressing the demanding issue of ensuring and maintaining consumer satisfaction in modern business. The literature echoes various theories, including Dissonance Theory (Cash, 2012), Comparison Level Theory (Piechota, Glas, & Essig, 2021), Two Factor Theory (Thant & Chang, 2021), Cognitive Processing Theory (Kursan Milaković, 2021), Experience Norm Theory (Kim & So, 2022), and Congruity Theory (Usakli, Kucukergin, Shi & Okumus, 2022). These social psychology

theories converge on the idea that satisfaction involves an evaluative judgment comparing a product's performance to standards (Tiwari, 2022).

The Expectation Confirmation Theory further elucidates happiness with product performance and contentment with service. Valvi & West (2013) highlight that clients will be favorably confirmed or satisfied if performance exceeds expectations. Conversely, Sivanesan & Vivekanantha (2015) explain that consistent excellence in external customer service requires aligning internal systems to serve the external customer, making the internal customer (employees) the foundation of any organization's long-term growth.

Successful administration is directly impacted by societal segments, with the political system playing a pivotal role in total quality management. The way power is wielded to manage economic and social resources significantly influences how well governments formulate policies (World Bank, 1992). Exploring the government's role in promoting inclusive growth requires reevaluating government performance beyond traditional efficiency and effectiveness measures (OECD, 2015).

In recent years, Total Quality Management (TQM) has evolved into a social movement in the United States. Examining the writings of the movement's founders, including Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Kaoru Ishikawa, highlights the coherence, distinctiveness, and likely survival of this challenging management philosophy. Hackman and Wageman (1995) identify gaps in TQM processes and outcomes, analyzing the congruence between TQM practices and behavioral science knowledge on motivation, learning, and change in social systems. The commentary concludes with a prognosis and speculations that TQM will take root and prosper in the future.

Lewin's Change Management Theory addresses uncertainty and resistance to change, emphasizing the impact of organizational culture on client satisfaction. Hussain, Lei, & Akram et al. (2018) stress the intrinsic link between organizational behavior and performance. Deal & Kennedy (2000) argue that change should concentrate on group norms, roles, interactions, and socialization processes.

Global Goal 16, emphasized by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), promotes peaceful and inclusive societies by providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable, and robust institutions. The goal aims to significantly reduce government corruption and bribery in all forms, with client satisfaction serving as a mandated indicator of good governance. The DepEd Quality Management System (QMS) integrates the Citizen Satisfaction Survey (CitSat) report of the Government Quality Management Program (GQMP). It reflects the entire clients' experience, expectations, and satisfaction described in the study. It is more likely to describe clients' perceptions of the level of implementation and satisfaction of a given citizens' service quality standard.

Several studies have been conducted on service quality and client satisfaction. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2015) suggests that the government's role in promoting equitable

growth should be investigated as the administration influences society. The political system of total quality management governs how economic and social resources influence government policymaking.

A study investigating the impact of total quality management practices and Six Sigma processes on enhancing the quality and reducing the cost of quality, the case of Dubai by Alzoubi, In'airat, and Ahmed (2022), showed that the implementation of TQM and Six Sigma in Dubai's plastics business is renowned for its dedication to producing high-quality goods at low rates. They were making Dubai a global shopping destination in the plastic industry. The literature demonstrates that TQM and Six Sigma effectively achieve quality, cost/price, efficiency, competitiveness, consumer happiness, and profitable businesses. The study's results revealed a nearly one-to-one link between TQM and Six Sigma, which would enable businesses to carefully plan their quality and costs to attain total quality commitment. The policy implies incorporating the expanding environmental issue into the dynamics and calculations of TQM and Six Sigma.

Another similar study by Ismail, Othman, and Amat (2010) assessed contractors' service quality and client satisfaction. Data was collected through the SERVQUAL questionnaire that measures reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. From these five factors, 32 attributes affect refurbishing project service quality. Findings suggest that service reliability is most important. The studies also showed that contractors failed to meet customer expectations in renovation projects. Finally, empathy and assurance influenced consumer happiness, according to the study.

In 2016, a study by Prinja, et al. (2016) pointed out a cross-sectional study of clients' satisfaction with outpatient and inpatient services in a North Indian state. Their study focused on access and facilities in 22 randomly selected districts, subdistricts, CHCs, and PHCs. A 60-item validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Healthcare facilities interviewed participants (3,278 outpatient departments [OPD] and 1,614 inpatient departments [IPD]). Most OPD participants were happy with registration, treatment providers, and health facility safety and security. Dissatisfaction stemmed from long wait periods and patient anxiety during lab testing and x-rays. Most IPD participants were happy with nurses' and doctors' care, medicine availability, and hospital environment. The rooms' cleanliness and nighttime stillness were issues. Experiences in new medicine information, pain control, and toilet or bedpan access were rated differently during the stay. Public health facility satisfaction varies. In the study, discontent was caused by a lack of pharmaceuticals and supplies, medication information, a long wait, inadequate hygiene, loss of privacy, and peace.

A similar study by Perez and Ilagan (2019) measured client satisfaction at a government-run HEI in Leyte, Philippines. The report was based on Republic Act 9485, the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007. (ARTA). It used quantitative and qualitative methods and a self-structured survey. The study evaluated punctuality, knowledge, competence, civility, fairness, and ethics. The HEI's services pleased students, instructors, and alumni. Competence ranked highest while basic

facilities were lowest. The government HEI provided good services, but not enough to please clients. Management should study consumer complaints and improve service.

Tagbilaran City, a third-class component city, spans an estimated land area of 32.7 square kilometers and proudly stands as the capital city of Bohol, Philippines. According to the 2020 Philippine Census, the city boasts a population of 104,976 residents. The city's core is strategically divided into three distinct political districts: Poblacion I, II, and III. Each district has its own Punong Barangay, Barangay Kagawad, and Kagawad for Education. The remaining expanse is further organized into twelve barangays or districts, namely Bool, Booy, Cabawan, Cogon, Dao, Dampas, Manga, Mansasa, San Isidro, and Tiptip. Within each district, public elementary schools contribute to the educational landscape (DepEd-Tagbilaran Planning Unit, 2021).

Despite Tagbilaran City's dynamic composition and civic vitality, no prior study has scrutinized the agency's reporting of service fulfillment through client satisfaction in the past three years. This study marks the city's inaugural attempt to delve into the analysis of its service accomplishments, utilizing a compilation of conducted studies as a basis.

The research aims to discern clients' perceptions regarding the level of implementation, satisfaction, and challenges encountered concerning specific service quality standards. The insights garnered from this study are poised to be a valuable resource for the expansion plans of DepEd-Tagbilaran City, particularly in crafting a client-centered service improvement plan.

The study intends to address several key questions:

1. What is the perception of respondents regarding the level of implementation of citizen service quality standards in dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, access and facilities, communication, costs, integrity, assurance, and outcome?
2. What is the perception of respondents regarding the level of satisfaction with citizen service quality standards, considering dimensions such as reliability (quality), responsiveness, access and facilities, communication, costs, integrity, assurance, and outcome?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the implementation and satisfaction?
4. Is there a significant difference on the levels of satisfaction between internal and external stakeholders?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Design.** The study employed a descriptive-status method, utilizing a standardized tool to generate numerical data on respondents' profiles and their perceptions of the implementation, satisfaction, and encountered problems regarding a specified service quality standard.

**Respondents.** Internal and external stakeholders of DepEd - Tagbilaran City participated in the study. Internal stakeholders included 23 school heads,

196 public school teachers, and 119 DepEd non-teaching personnel. External stakeholders comprised 14 Punong Barangay/Kagawad for Education, 19 private school administrators, 16 school-based non-teaching staff, and 24 parent presidents of the Parents-Teachers Association. A total of 268 internal and 268 external stakeholders were included to ensure a balanced representation of both perspectives.

**Instrument.** The Citizen/Client Satisfaction Survey (CCSS) Report framework, a standardized tool administered by the Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development–Organization Effectiveness Division (BHROD–OED) of the Department of Education, was employed. A self-constructed questionnaire adopting CCSS core areas assessed service criteria, implementation extent, client satisfaction, and problems encountered. The instrument comprised three parts: Part 1 gathered respondent profiles; Part 2A measured the implementation extent; Part 2B assessed client satisfaction; and Part 3 investigated client issues during transactions. Face validity was ensured through assessment by three experts from the Department of Education–Tagbilaran City. Pretesting involving 81 respondents with a socio-demographic profile similar to that of the actual respondents was conducted. Internal consistency, evaluated through Cronbach’s Alpha Test, yielded a result of .913, indicating excellent reliability.

**Data Collection.** Following pretesting, data collection commenced with the informed consent of participants. The subsequent data cleaning and editing utilized codes specified in the codebook for analysis. A Shapiro-Wilk test determined the statistical treatment best suited for the research based on the normality of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Perception of Implementation.** The study indicates a fully implemented citizen service quality standard with an overall mean of 3.30. While certain dimensions like responsiveness, integrity, assurance, communication, and outcomes are entirely evident and implemented, improvements are needed in reliability, access, facilities, and costs.

**Perception of Satisfaction.** Respondents express high satisfaction (composite mean of 3.22) with integrity and outcome dimensions, signifying the DepEd Tagbilaran City’s success in meeting its goals. However, moderate satisfaction is reported for assurance, responsiveness, communication, cost, and reliability, with access and facilities receiving the least satisfaction.

**Services on Integrity.** High satisfaction (composite mean 3.288) is noted for integrity services, where frontline workers exhibit ethical conduct. Leadership integrity influences followers positively, aligning with organizational honesty and fairness.

**Services on Outcome.** Outcome services receive high satisfaction (composite mean 3.251) with notable improvements in public service delivery.

However, respondents express moderate satisfaction with response promptness and timeliness, indicating room for enhancement.

**Services on Assurance.** Assurance services achieve moderate satisfaction (composite mean 3.244), with friendly and accommodating frontline personnel. Suggestions for improvement include regularizing staff and providing receptionists for inquiries.

**Services on Responsiveness.** Responsiveness services are moderately satisfying (composite mean 3.225), with the frontline adequately meeting needs. However, the need for specific and innovative approaches, especially during the pandemic, is highlighted.

**Services on Communication.** Communication services are moderately satisfied (composite mean 3.205), with concerns about late issuances of division memorandums confusing. Improvements in relevant information dissemination are suggested.

**Services on Costs.** Cost-related services receive moderate satisfaction (composite mean 3.196). Improvements are recommended in identifying end-users' needs, transparently disseminating financial requirements, and providing feedback on teachers' claims.

**Services on Reliability (Quality).** Reliability services show moderate satisfaction (composite mean 3.193), with concerns about increased waiting time and procedural delays. Automation and streamlined processes are recommended. The research findings align with the outcomes of Stiakakis and Georgiadis's (2009) study, highlighting reliability as a pivotal factor for ensuring high-quality services. Reliability encompasses the consistent delivery of expected standards, effective resolution of customer service issues, accurate execution of services on the first attempt, timely service provision, and the maintenance of an error-free record.

**Services on Access & Facilities.** Access and facilities services achieve moderate satisfaction (composite mean 3.162). Concerns include the inconvenient location and inadequate amenities, suggesting a need for infrastructure enhancements, especially during the pandemic.

The findings emphasize the overall success of DepEd Tagbilaran City's service quality. However, specific areas requiring attention, innovation, and infrastructure improvements have been identified for a more comprehensive and satisfactory citizen service experience.

The research findings align with the conclusions drawn by Pollock et al. (2020), emphasizing that the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity for contemporary infrastructure, capabilities, and controls within public sector organizations to navigate disruptions resulting from global health crises effectively. Organizations utilizing cloud services exhibited heightened responsiveness, showcasing agility, scalability, and speed in remote operations to serve both customers and citizens efficiently.

Maxwell further proposed a pragmatic recommendation for governmental



entities to enhance service quality amid the pandemic. He suggested reskilling the workforce and leveraging remote services, particularly through the utilization of online help desks. This approach ensures that the government can adapt swiftly to evolving circumstances, delivering quality services while prioritizing the safety and well-being of both its workforce and the public.

**Correlation Between the Level of Implementation and Level of Satisfaction.** Between implementation and Satisfaction, results showed a significant relationship (Spearman’s rho Test = .657, p-value = .000) between the level of implementation and satisfaction. It implies that although the government does not compete for customers, it is expected to serve the public (See Table 1). Moreover, it must establish service quality standards to meet the needs and expectations of its clients. The findings of the research run parallel with the result of the study of Mehra and Agrawal (2003), which emphasizes the importance of customer focus in implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) and established that TQM is customer-oriented. They also stated that customer satisfaction and loyalty are critical components for organizations that value customer focus.

**Table 1. Correlation between Level of Implementation and Level of Satisfaction**

| Variables                            |                         | Overall Mean Level of Implementation | Overall Mean Level of Satisfaction |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Overall Mean Level of Implementation | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                                | .657**                             |
|                                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                                    | .000                               |
|                                      | N                       | 536                                  | 536                                |
| Spearman’s rho                       | Correlation Coefficient | .657**                               | 1.000                              |
|                                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .000                                 | .                                  |
|                                      | N                       | 536                                  | 536                                |

**Decision: Reject Null Hypothesis**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents a distinction in satisfaction levels, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U Test (U = 31380.500, p-value = 0.011), highlighting a significant difference in perceptions between internal and external stakeholders. The data reveals a pronounced contrast, with internal stakeholders-comprising public school heads, teachers, and school-based non-teaching personnel expressing greater satisfaction with services compared to external stakeholders,



including parents, private school representatives, and local government units.

This discrepancy suggests that external stakeholders hold higher expectations, possibly influenced by benchmarks set by private schools and other government institutions. In contrast, internal stakeholders are content with the services provided by DepEd Tagbilaran. This finding implies a divergence in expectations and satisfaction levels, prompting the need for strategic improvements to meet external stakeholders' higher service standards.

**Table 2. Significant Difference Between the Levels of Satisfaction (Internal and External Stakeholders)**

| <b>RANKS</b>                               |                      |     |           |              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Mean                                       | Type of Respondents  | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
| Overall Mean<br>Level of<br>Implementation | Internal Stakeholder | 267 | 267.08    | 71309.50     |
|                                            | External Stakeholder | 269 | 269.91    | 72606.50     |
|                                            | Total                | 536 |           |              |
| Overall Mean<br>Level of<br>Satisfaction   | Internal Stakeholder | 267 | 285.47    | 76220.50     |
|                                            | External Stakeholder | 269 | 251.66    | 67695.50     |
|                                            | Total                | 536 |           |              |

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it is concluded that DepEd Tagbilaran City has fully implemented its citizen service quality standards. Further concluded that the result of the cross-tabulation showed that internal stakeholders were less contented with how DepEd – Tagbilaran implements its citizen's service standards. However, they are delighted with its services; It implies that the public school principal, teachers, and school-based non-teaching DepEd Tagbilaran knew there was still much to be done. The cross-tabulation on position/designation and level of satisfaction revealed that school principals are the most dissatisfied among the group. Public school principals have issues with the Division Office regarding implementing the service.

On the other hand, external stakeholders are content with the implementation as they absorb what is being offered. However, they are less satisfied and are more critical of the problems encountered than the internal stakeholders. It implies that the external stakeholders are looking for far more improvements as they can compare it to their schools and establishments.

It is further concluded that respondents' perceptions of service are

significantly related to policy and cultural factors, the quality of the human resource system, and the kind of public servants that significantly correlate with their satisfaction with the services rendered. Respondents were highly satisfied with the service quality on integrity and outcome, while they were moderately satisfied with the other service quality characteristics. The office falls short of giving quality services to assurance, responsiveness, communication, cost, reliability, access, and facilities as perceived by the respondents. Further concluded that the personal integrity of the organization's leadership affects outcomes like trust, satisfaction, performance, and followers' integrity through a series of propositions.

Therefore, it is concluded that while it is perceived that external stakeholders are more critical in satisfying their needs and expectations, there is a clear link between internal customer relations and external customer satisfaction. DepEd Tagbilaran City needs to level up its internal service practices to improve its customer service. Excellent external customer service requires healthy internal service practices.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Enhancing Citizen Service Quality at DepEd-Tagbilaran City:

1. **Streamlining Contact Methods.** Improve citizens' contact methods by streamlining crucial processes to meet client needs better. Enhance communication channels and responsiveness to ensure a more efficient and accessible service experience.
2. **Frontline Facilities Re-engineering.** a. Re-engineer frontline facilities to enhance service accessibility, providing a more user-friendly environment for clients. b. Increase service availability by implementing web access to frontline services, catering to the evolving needs of clients in the new normal.
3. **Efficiency Improvement.** Increase overall efficiency by enhancing accuracy in the services offered. This involves refining processes, minimizing errors, and ensuring a smoother transactional experience for clients.
4. **Quality Management System (QMS) and ISO:9001 Certification.** Clarify directions, office functions, processes, and systems by seeking QMS-trained assistance and pursuing ISO:9001 Certification. This step ensures adherence to international standards, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
5. Develop a comprehensive SIP tailored to the developmental needs of frontline services at DepEd Tagbilaran City Division. This plan, aligned with the SQS Journey, addresses emerging needs based on client feedback and recommendations, striving for continuous service enhancement.
6. **SQS Journey Framework.** The SQS Journey framework comprises four key steps:
  - 1.1 **"Where are we now?"** Assess citizen and business satisfaction to

understand the current state.

- 1.2 **“Where do citizens and businesses want us to be?”** Gauge expectations and identify priorities based on citizen and business responses.
- 1.3 **“How will we get there?”** Plan the journey by establishing goals and developing plans for service quality improvement.
- 1.4 **“How do we make it happen?”** Implement, monitor, measure, and ensure accountability for the established plans.

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