

CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH BASIC SERVICES IN SANTIAGO CITY, PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT: This study shows the results of the 2017 survey of citizen satisfaction in the City of Santiago, Philippines. The survey provides an assessment of the citizens' awareness, availment, and satisfaction of the local government's provision of essential basic services. The paper also provides comparative research and analysis of the 2017 and 2014 survey results to look if there have been changes in the perceptions and opinions of the residents for the past three years. The citizens assessed the basic services of Santiago City positively. In line with the comparative results of the 2014 and 2017 surveys, data revealed a remarkable fair increase in the overall assessment of programs and services in 2017 as compared to 2014. While the results indicate continues opportunity to improve overall satisfaction with specific local government services, most citizens keep a positive opinion about the city government of Santiago and the services provided.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Availment, Basic Service, Citizen Satisfaction Index System, Local Government, Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION

The performance of government is very relevant in public administration research. Globally, governments are adopting performance assessment systems to gauge how efficient programs provide citizen's needs. In spite of the need for quality performance measures, specialists face challenges in assessing the performance of the government because the notion of performance itself is inexplicit. Generally, there's no universally accepted public sector performance measure thus far. Accordingly, several indicators, such as citizen satisfaction, administrative performance score, and employee valuations, have been utilized to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of public service. However, even with the extensive use of these measures in academic and real settings, the relationship between diverse performance measures has only been considered intermittently and in a limited public administration context (Andersen, Boesen, and Pedersen; Radin; Boyne; Andrews, Boyne, and Walker; and Rainey in Song & Meier, 2018).

The usage of citizen satisfaction surveys tools to examine the performance of government services has been growing in recent years. This is reasonable in light of the current attention on citizens as clients or customers. According to Hjortskov (2017), citizen satisfaction measure promises an all-encompassing tool to gauge performance in complex and even highly complex services with few available objective measures. This makes citizen satisfaction assessments a good choice for measuring the performance of government (Miller et al., and Moynihan in Hjortskov, 2017).

To Park & Blenkinsopp (in Mishra & Geleta, 2019), citizen satisfaction is impressive to public organizations that acts as supplier of service to their citizens. The idea of citizen satisfaction has been extensively used as survey tool in a variety of fields. In fact Locke, one of the earliest proponents, defined satisfaction as a "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job" (Mishra & Geleta, 2019).

Citizen satisfaction can be conceptualized as evaluative attitudes towards some object or experience, and citizen satisfaction literature has conventionally concentrated on the backgrounds of satisfaction, such as demographics, reliance in government, and quality of services, personal contact with street-level officeholders, ideology and local political efficiency (James, Lyons, et al., Hero and Durand, and Beck et al. in Hjortskov, 2017).

Improved citizens' satisfaction puts the government in the helm of power for long, hence, it can think of new means to deliver services to people to gain its support (Mishra & Geleta, 2019). New public administration, which perceives citizens as clients or customers who pay duties and taxes and consequently would obtain the service, must satisfy clients or customers requirement about high-quality services (Magoutas and Mentzas in Wirtz & Kurtz. 2016).

Thus, the use of satisfaction gauges offer new and corresponding information, and it adds to the growing interest in the measurement and use of this kind for policy purposes. It is noteworthy as it becomes important in the monitoring progress, informing policy makers about policy design and policy review (Sánchez, 2020).

The existing direct democratic contact between citizens and the prevailing governance mechanisms of the local government is frequently seen as the most accountable public service (Murphy, Ferry, Glennon, & Greenhalgh, 2019).

In 2013, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) started the implementation of Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS) to gauge the awareness, availment, and satisfaction of citizens in the provision of required basic services by their local governments. This was continuously undertaken by the Department to empower local government units (LGUs) by assisting them in the performance of their obligation of guaranteeing the welfare of the citizens, and offer supervision in areas that needs improvement in the delivery of basic services as mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991. This paper is a result of Isabela State University (ISU) engagement with the Department for the conduct of CSIS in Santiago City.

CSIS is a client/citizen perception-based performance valuation that measures the respondent's awareness, availment, satisfaction and importance of the seven basic services such as health, education, social welfare, governance and response, public works and infrastructure, environment, economic and investment promotion delivered by Santiago City administration.

Since 2013, a total of 140 cities including Santiago City, have been covered by the CSIS. Again in 2017, Santiago City was selected for the second round of CSIS. Similar to the first CSIS implementation in 2014, the satisfaction indexing system evaluates citizens' perception by face-to-face interview with resident-respondents chosen through a multi-stage probability sampling.

The paper also provides comparative research and analysis of the 2017 and 2014 survey results to analyze if there have been changes or difference in the perceptions and opinions of the residents or citizens over the past three years. The reround also aims to find out the significant improvements done by the local government's program interventions.

II. METHODOLOGY

The CSIS is a performance assessment that examines the citizen's perceived awareness, availment, and satisfaction of the various services being provided by the LGU. The framework of CSIS is a multi-level and multi-component performance assessment that captures in what manner local government services are disseminated to the target recipients and the experience of the recipients in the availment of the services.

The CSIS framework has four stages, the first stage looks into how effective the local government unit is in connecting the gap between the services it plans to offer and its target client. It looks into how familiar are the clients to the services offered by the LGU. In this study, awareness is defined as the respondent's familiarity or knowledge of the service being offered by the LGU. The second stage looks into the effectiveness of the LGU in convincing the targeted clients to avail the services. For this study, availment is defined as the interaction of the clients/customers to LGU because of the programs and services being offered. The third stage seeks to identify the satisfaction level of the clients after experiencing the service offered. Satisfaction is defined as the respondent's gratification after experiencing the services offered by the LGU. The fourth or last stage seeks to determine the perception of the client if there's still a need for action or additional action on the programs and services offered by the LGU. Need for action refers to the respondents' view of obligation for the LGU to improve the services provided.

In the selection of 150 respondents, a multi-stage probability sampling method was used, with a margin of error (MOE) of +/- 8 percentage points at a 95% confidence level (CL). Multi-stage probability sampling warrants an adequate representative sample of citizens in an LGU is included in the study. This method essentially permits each citizen, 18 years old and above, to have an equal chances like anyone else to be selected as respondents for the survey. Through this it makes possible that different political inclinations, levels of social proximity to the presence of government, livelihoods, and level of income will have proportionate opportunities of being represented in the survey.

In detail, 20 sample barangays were selected out of the 37 total barangays in the Santiago City based on a share in their 2015 PSA population. Thirty sample spots with 5 respondents per spot were determined. Households were selected with a set interval from a starting point. Respondents were randomly selected through a Kish Grid.

To describe and analyze the awareness, availment, and satisfaction (assessment) score per service delivery area, the criterion reference rating on Table 1 is used.

Table 1 Criterion Reference Rating

SCORE RANGE	DESCRIPTION	
80.01-100	Very High	Demonstrates excellent performance/outcome. Little or no improvement is needed.
60.01 – 80.0	High	Generally demonstrates very satisfactory performance/outcome. Improvement continues to be applied when needed.
40.01 – 60.0	Fair	Exhibits desired/satisfactory performance as expected. On-going intervention and additional effort toward improvement is necessary.
20,01 – 40.0	Low	Rarely exhibits desired performance. Considerable improvement and significant interventions are necessary.
20 and below	Very Low	Performance is consistently below expectations. Serious deficiencies exist that need immediate attention.

III. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Citizen’s Awareness on LGU Services

Every organized community needs a reliable, dynamic, and resilient institutional structure that could be able to deliver public goods responsively. The government, or local government as used in this context, is an institution that holds the exclusive and legitimate power to administer certain rules of social conduct and order in a community (Nag, 2018).

The respondents’ level of awareness of LGU’s basic services is presented below. Awareness is defined in the survey as the respondent’s knowledge of the presence of health services being offered by the local government unit. All selected respondents were asked if they were aware or not of the eight services.

Among the eight services, however, citizens or respondents are highly aware of Health Programs and Services (77.14). This is followed by Public Works and Infrastructure Services (56.40). On the other hand, respondents have low awareness of the presence and/or availability of Agricultural Support Services (9.33) and Tourism Promotion Services (-10.86).

The assessment reveals that Santiago City got an awareness overall index of 40.05 in its eight (8) service delivery areas which indicates that the City exhibits desired/satisfactory performance.

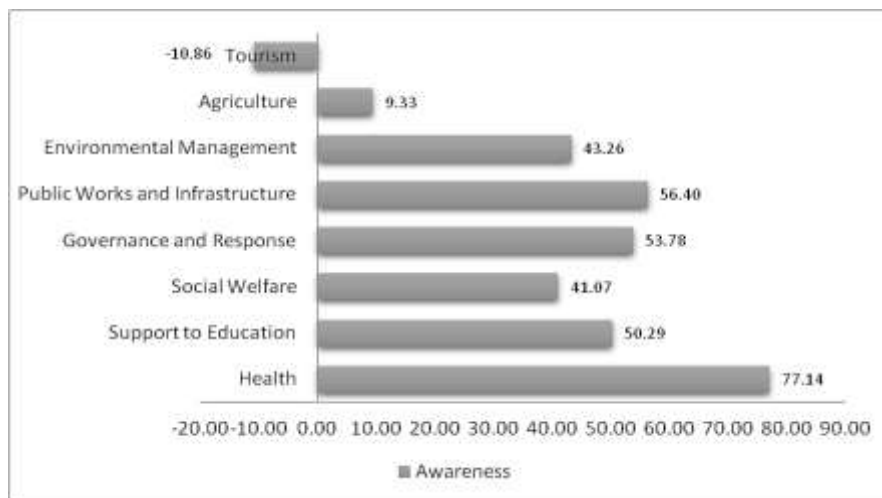


Fig. 1. Citizens' Awareness on LGU Services

3.2 Citizen’s Availment on LGU Services

This part provides the citizen’s availment on the services of the LGU.

Santiago City’s overall availment net score for the eight service delivery areas is 48.33. Generally, this means that citizens’ availment in the eight service delivery areas is fair. The City exhibits desired/satisfactory performance in terms of availment of the citizens with existing services in health, basic education, social welfare, governance and response, public works and infrastructure, environmental management, agricultural support, and tourism promotions. However, while some respondents are already availing of these services offered by the City government, an additional effort toward improvement is necessary. On-going interventions are essential to maximizing the services offered by the City Government.

It is important to note, however, that of the eight service areas, the respondents scored very high in the average availment net score on Public Works and Infrastructure (69.24). This is followed by a score of high in the availment net score on Tourism Promotion Services (60.98). The least availed is Agricultural Support (28.21).

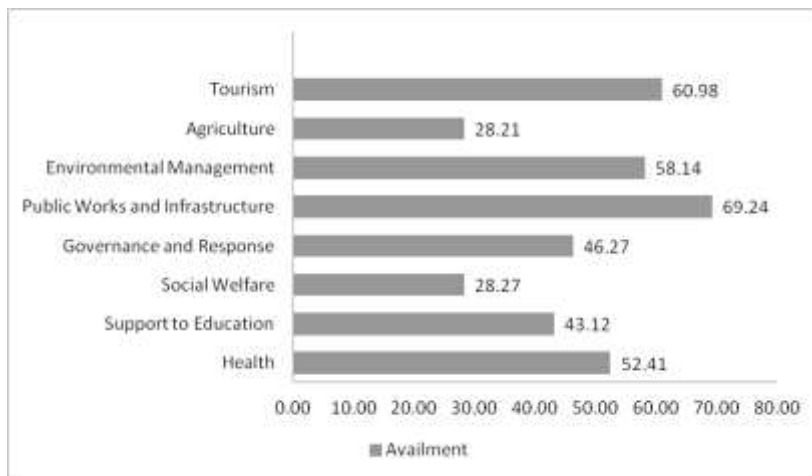


Fig. 2. Citizens’ Availment on LGU Services

3.3 Citizen’s Satisfaction on LGU Services

According to Helliwell, Huang, Grover, & Wang (2018), people’s appraisal of the quality of their lives matters because it provides accurate and reasonable new or modern way to prove the significance of quality government. However this depends on citizens’ expectations and their discernments of performance. Satisfaction is expected if performance exceeds expectations while if performance falls short, then dissatisfaction is likely perceived. (Petrovsky, Mok, & León-Cázares, 2016).

Santiago City’s overall satisfaction index score is 59.49, which means the City’s average rating in terms of citizen satisfaction is fair. Therefore, the City exhibits satisfactory performance in its eight service areas which meet citizens’ expectations. Of the eight service areas though, the highest satisfaction net score is on Support to Education (68.44), while the other seven (7) areas got a fair score, Health Services (63.93), Environmental Management Support (63.01), Social Welfare Services (62.88), Agricultural Support (60.50), Tourism Promotion Services (57.11), Governance and Response (51.85) and Public Works and Infrastructure Services emerged with lowest fair satisfaction net score (48.21).

However, while citizens’ assessment of the eight service areas is fair, further efforts and supplementary interventions are still needed to improve citizens’ feedback on services/programs offered by the City. Interventions should aim to address the local governments’ reach and quality of service from the perspective of the people as clients/customers, and as citizens.

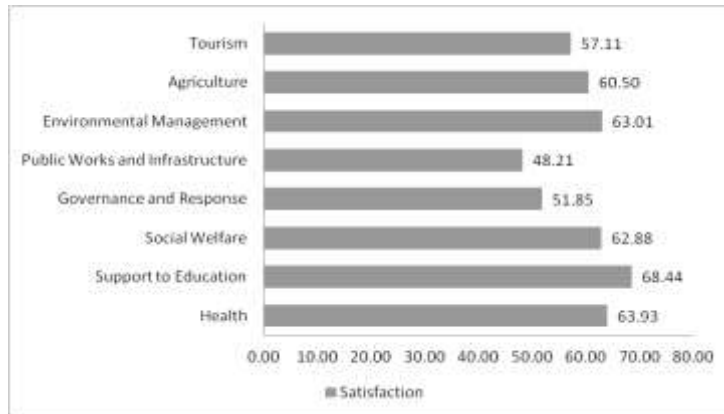


Fig. 3. Citizens' Satisfaction on LGU Services

3.4 Citizen's Perceived Importance on LGU Services

Santiago City's average needs assessment net score is 68.32. Generally, this means that citizens view all eight services with high importance. It is also notable though that all the eight services are rated with high importance by the respondents. However, Health Services (74.90) got the highest score of high importance, while agricultural Support Services (62.30) is considered with low importance among all the eight services.

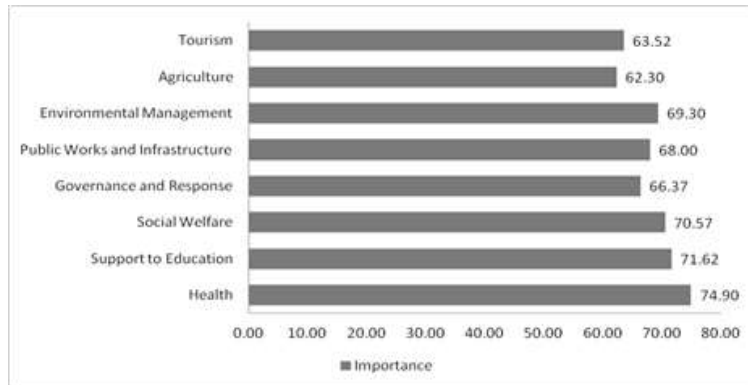


Fig. 4. Citizen's Perceived Importance on LGU Services

3.5 Importance vs. Satisfaction Grid

The result shows that Santiago City's average importance assessment on eight programs and services is very satisfactory. While the overall satisfaction index score shows a fair score. Among the eight services offered by the City, Health Services got the highest score of 74.90 which implies that it is of high importance as perceived by the respondents. However, on satisfaction scores, the said service is ranked second (63.93).



Fig. 3. Importance vs Satisfaction Grid

Respondents perceived Social Welfare Programs and Services with high importance among the eight services with a 70.57 importance index score. However, it ranked 4th in terms of satisfaction with 62.88.

Environmental Management got 69.30 importance assessment net score, thus of the eight services it is perceived by the respondents as least among the four service areas which are perceived as high in importance, and in terms of satisfaction, it got a satisfaction net score of 63.01 thus of the eight services it is 3rd in rank.

The satisfaction versus importance grid of Support to Education shows a satisfaction rate of 68.44, thus it is perceived by the respondents with satisfactory performance. While it got an importance score of 71.62, thus it is perceived by the respondents with high importance.

Governance and Response got a satisfactory performance of 66.37, however in comparison with a net satisfaction score of the eight services is ranked 6th. In terms of importance, it has a score of 51.85 and in comparison with the other seven services, it ranked 7th.

Agriculture Services got a satisfaction score of 60.50 and in comparison with the other seven services; it is 5th in satisfactory ranking as perceived by the respondents. But in terms of importance, it got the lowest (8th) importance assessment score of 62.30.

Tourism got 57.11 satisfaction score and when compared with the other eight services it comes 6th. However, in terms of importance when compared with the other eight services it is regarded as 7th in importance.

Public Works and Infrastructure got the lowest satisfaction score of 48.21 among the eight services. While in terms of importance this service got 68 importance assessment scores, however in comparison with the other seven services it is perceived as 5th in importance.

3.6 Citizens Over-all Rating on Satisfaction

Good governance may directly indicate improvement in life assessments because people are more contented living in a setting of good government (Frey and Stutzer, and Ott in Helliwell, Huang, Grover, & Wang, 2018). This is reflected in the citizens’ evaluation of the services of the LGU. Findings revealed that the citizens’ overall rating on LGU’s programs and services is Satisfactory (57.33%).

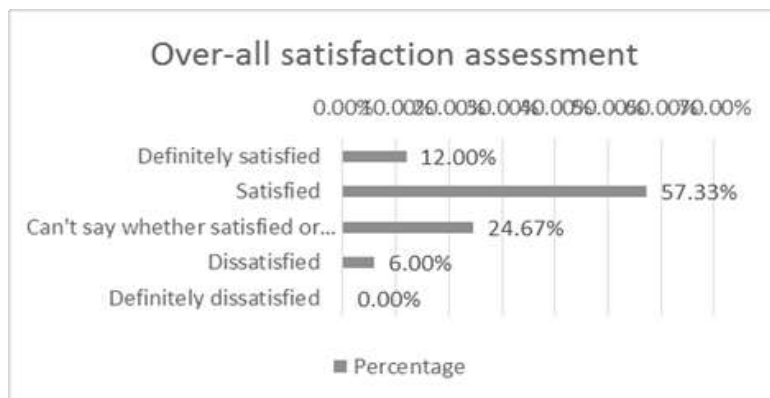


Fig. 4. Citizen’s Overall Satisfaction Assessment

3.7 Comparison of 2017 and 2014 Survey Results

This part provides comparative research and analysis of the 2017 and 2014 surveys. It provides analysis if there have been changes in the insights and thoughts of the citizen-respondents for the past three years and shows significant improvements in the programs and services through the interventions done by the local government unit.

Table 3 Comparative Results of 2017 & 2014 Survey Results

	2014 Results		2017 Results	
	SCORE	ADJECTIVAL RATING	SCORE	ADJECTIVAL RATING
AWARENESS	33.81	Low	40.05	Fair
AVAILMENT	47.74	Fair	48.33	Fair
SATISFACTION	54.29	Fair	59.49	Fair
IMPORTANCE	63.89	High	68.32	High

The respondents' level of awareness in eight (8) service areas offered by the city government of Santiago had dramatically improved when compared to the previous result. The awareness level of 33.81% or an adjectival rating of low had changed to fair or an awareness level of 40.05%. The significant figure of forty point five percent (40.05%) goes to show that the city government exhibits desired satisfactory performance as perceived by the respondents. Moreover, the governments' effort of continuously improving the deliverance of all service areas to the program recipients contributed much to increase the level of awareness of its constituents.

The respondents' level of availment to all service areas from 2014 result of 47.74% or an adjectival rating of fair had not changed that much when compared to the 2017 result. The availment rating of forty-eight point thirty-three percent (48.33%) is an indication that the city government of Santiago exhibits satisfactory performance in terms of delivering its various services. However, it is significant to consider that on-going intervention and supplementary exertion toward improvement is still necessary.

From among the respondents' who availed the services offered by the government of Santiago City, 59.49% gives an adjectival rating of fair which is likewise the same from the 2014 result of 54.29% which has the same adjectival rating.

The majority of the respondents perceived that the programs of the city government of Santiago are of high importance. Though the increase is very minimal, from 63.89% (high) to 68.32% (high), it is important to note that the city government demonstrates outstanding performance or outcome thus slight or no improvement is needed.

The noteworthy improvements taken by the local government's program interventions are the following:

On Tourism

Improvement of parks and recreational facilities was initiated by the City Government. A project proposal is already approved by the Department of Tourism in partnership with the Department on Public Works and Highways for the said intervention.

On Public Works and Infrastructure

The construction and improvement of reading centers are already implemented.

On Governance and Response

Timely response to peace and order and public safety-related incidents is already established. This is evident by the presence of PNP/DPOS complaint desk and quick response team in places where people usually converge.

As an intervention on relatively low awareness on Disaster Risk and Reduction Management programs and services, the city government intensified its seminar and training on design, reproduction, and distribution of flier as well as on module and manual writing. Furthermore, enlistment, training, and deployment of BDRRM are intensified.

To improve the relatively low satisfaction on governance and response, the city of Santiago pursued the training of LDRRMO personnel and the acquisition of emergency preparedness vehicles.

On Agriculture

As an intervention to very low awareness, the city government mobilized the different agricultural sector organizations and conducted an updating of members to help the LGU in the information campaign. Furthermore, the prevention and control of plants and pest's diseases, and the distribution of planting materials and equipment, distribution of seedlings are continuing programs of the city government.

The presence of post-harvest facilities is an indication of the city government intervention on agricultural services.

On Health Programs and Services

The City Government deployed one midwife per barangay and the establishment of birthing centers. Partnership with a public hospital is initiated to improve the availment of health services. Awareness campaign on the prevention and management of communicable diseases is intensified. The city government also pursued its celebration/observance of DOH events to inform and encourage the citizens' participation in the prevention of diseases.

IV. CONCLUSION

The citizen satisfaction survey re-round generally aimed to gather citizens' viewpoints on the range and quality of basic public services in Santiago City after three years since its first implementation. Just as the first implementation in 2014, this study aimed to provide first-hand information for citizens and the civil society to permit an up-to-date engagement in the workings of the LGU.

The results disclosed that the Santiago City government generally met satisfactorily the citizens' expectations. But there is a need to achieve higher performance through the identification of necessary interventions, innovations, and additional efforts to increase citizens' satisfaction rating at all times in all the eight services areas of the City government.

A remarkably Fair increase is evident in the overall assessment of programs and services in the 2017 CSIS engagement as compared with the 2014 engagement with an adjectival rating of Low. Thus, the need to further intensify information dissemination about the LGU services. The citizens still perceived that all programs and services are important, thus the need for the LGU to continue with the needed interventions and improvement.

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