

Employees' Communication Skills and Courtesy on Client Satisfaction in Local Governance:
Basis for Training and Development Plan

Maria Nelva Palmares Jarrell

Iloilo State University of Fisheries Science Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo 5007 Philippines

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Abstract: This descriptive-correlational study aimed to determine the impact of employees' communication skills and courtesy on client satisfaction in Passi City, Iloilo, to serve as a basis for a training and development plan. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilized stratified random sampling to ensure that the unique service experiences of approximately 36 distinct offices at the Passi City Hall were proportionally represented. A target sample size of 393 clients was determined using Cochran's formula. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to target individuals with direct, front-line service experience, ensuring valid evaluations of employee performance. Data were analyzed using frequency count and percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r test of relationship. The results demonstrate a generally high level of satisfaction among the public regarding the government's services in Passi City for all groups. Factors that primarily influenced the customer experience included employee professionalism, empathy, and responsiveness. While senior citizens and individuals with elementary school education reported the highest levels of satisfaction, the LGU continues to provide a consistent level of service to all clients regardless of their background or how often they use LGU services. The data show that interpersonal communication and human interaction, as opposed to technical skills alone, are the main contributors to the quality of service received. As a result, this study recommends developing targeted training programs that teach soft skills to improve the LGU's overall reputation and to provide better service.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Employee Courtesy, Client Satisfaction, Training And Development Plan, Descriptive-Correlational Research, Passi City, Iloilo

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Citizen's Charter and Report Card Surveys (RA 6673 and RA 11032) impose high ethical standards and provide effective service; however, there continues to be some disconnect between law and practice. These laws require that staff of local government units behave respectfully and communicate effectively according to applicable law, but little research has been done to determine whether or not the CSC's (CSC MC 15) system of incentives and sanctions is effective at changing entrenched bureaucratic behavior. Although RA 6713 and 11032 also intend to reduce red tape in government departments, there is not much understanding of how to comply with the "use of simple and clear language" requirement, because there are many different types of local government units with varying levels of linguistic and technical capability.

A significant knowledge gap remains concerning how existing laws, such as the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160) and CSC standards, will manifest as interpersonal competencies within Philippine local governments—despite the many legal frameworks in place for implementing those requirements. In contrast to the literature on structural compliance—e.g., digitalization, reducing red tape, and broader compliance with legal standards—the literature is lacking in research that addresses the behavioral aspects of communication, "justness," and "sincerity" (Romero & Sisno, 2025; Civil Service Commission, 2025). Moreover, little empirical research exists that links the compliance with these various laws and regulations to client satisfaction—the evidence through which one can substantiate the ability of training interventions specifically to link the broad ethical obligations

placed on employees under various laws or regulations to actual employee performance (Coronado, Reyes, & Britanico, 2025; Askali, 2025). Therefore, there is a pressing need for evidence-based training models that convert abstract legal responsibilities into tangible, high-quality service behaviors that vary by socio-demographic characteristics (Romero & Sisno, 2025).

Although mandates like RA 6713 exist to establish "justness and sincerity," there is still a gap between service delivery by LGU employees and their professional conduct (Romero & Sisno, 2025). Localised research conducted in Iloilo does not provide an adequate understanding of the relationship between communication variables and the Ease of Doing Business Act (RA 11032) or has a number of "systemic gaps" that can negatively affect citizens' trust in agency representatives on random occasions (Angeles, 2025). In addition, with governance moving to an online platform via RA 10844, there is limited evidence regarding "digital courtesy" in hybrid settings. Methodologically, the majority of studies have been conducted using generic SERVQUAL models instead of the more nuanced SGLG criteria (RA 11292), suggesting that researchers should examine how legal accountability can develop the "soft skills" necessary for providing services to traditionally marginalized groups.

Although reforms in the government sector generally involve digitizing infrastructure and implementing new policies, the "human aspect" continues to be the main point of contact for citizens. Citizens perceive that there is a disconnect between the quality of service provided by technical services and their feelings about that service. Although the technical work performed by the government may be of a high standard, if the government employees are not courteous and provide little communication to the citizens, they will likely not solve the problem that the citizen is experiencing and consequently will not satisfy the citizen's needs. In many cases, the training programs developed for employees of the government are often too generic and therefore waste money. The research, conducted utilizing the Ease of Doing Business Act, provides the empirical data for developing solutions beyond generic solutions. The research provides insight into the specific deficiencies existing between employees and citizens during their interaction and serves as a tool for assisting local government units (LGUs) in becoming citizen-centered organizations thereby increasing the legitimacy of the institutions and social contract between citizens and governments (Skálén et al., 2025; Barangai & Barangai, 2024).

Research environment is provided by Passi City in relation to the transition from urban to rural and as it continues to move towards e-Governance. The development of client centered services and the provision of trust and development through client centered services is vital for the development of both. Front-line staff often do not possess the necessary skills for developing high quality interpersonal interactions. In addition, the overall standard of service quality may also be hidden by local cultural norms, such as the value placed on non-confrontational polite communication by Ilonggos. A better understanding of how the interpersonal dynamic and cultural influences impact the overall quality of service delivery provided by Local Government units (LGUs) is needed by way of systematic evaluation. Therefore, by investigating the link between employee politeness and communication and the impact of employee politeness and communication on client satisfaction through perceived service quality in LGU–Passi city, this study sought to close a gap in the literature.

Based on the SERVQUAL Model, Interactionism Theory developed by George Herbert Mead (Mead, 1934; Blumer 1969), and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, this study aimed to determine the impact of employees' communication skills and courtesy on client satisfaction in Passi City, Iloilo to serve as a basis for a training and development plan. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions (1) What is the level of employees' communication skills as perceived by the clients in terms of physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and approachability when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction? (2) What is the level of employees' courtesy as perceived by the clients in terms of politeness and respect, professional conduct, willingness to serve, empathy and consideration, and approachability when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction? (3) What is the level of client satisfaction regarding the services provided by the local government unit in Passi City in terms of responsiveness, reliability, accessibility, process, time, courtesy, cost, outcome, and overall satisfaction when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction? (4) Are there significant differences in the level of employees' communication skills as perceived by the clients in terms of physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and approachability when grouped as to age, sex, highest educational

attainment, and frequency of transaction? (5) Is there a significant relationship between employees' communication skills and client satisfaction? (6) Is there a significant relationship between employees' courtesy and client satisfaction? (7) Based on the findings, what training and development plan can be developed to enhance service delivery?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive-correlational approach. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to describe the current status of variables and determine the extent to which they relate to one another without manipulating the environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By employing a correlational method, the study can statistically measure the degree of association between the independent variables — communication skills and courtesy — and the dependent variable — client satisfaction (Fraenkel et al., 2019).

The research used stratified random sampling to provide representative, quality data regarding the relationship between employee communication skills, courtesy, and client satisfaction for the Passi City Hall in Iloilo. Since there were 36 different offices, each served as a different stratum, so the unique experiences of each individual office were represented in the final data. The target sample size of 393 clients was obtained using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This gave the study sufficient statistical power for making high-stakes local government decisions. Within each office, purposive sampling was used to select only those clients who have used front-line services; so all of the people responding to the survey had direct experience with these two areas of employee performance (courtesy and communication). Several different statistical tools were used in the study, including frequency count and percentage; mean; and standard deviation; and Pearson's r correlation coefficient between the two variables.

The integrity of the instrument was verified through several validation procedures, one of which was assessing the content validity. Four experts, two in the subject matter of the study and two in research, conducted the assessment. The purpose of this assessment was to verify if the items are clear, relevant, and consistent with the purpose of the research. A pilot test was performed on a small subset of the target population to evaluate any possible barriers to implementing the questionnaire (e.g., ambiguous wording or items that were too long). The pilot study served as a dry run or practice for researchers to determine the methods for collecting data as well as confirmed that the instrument yielded reliable, culturally applicable data that can be used to support the development of training and development plans.

The Employee Communication Skills Questionnaire was administered to 30 people (empirical study) in a location not associated with the study for evaluated reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficients of .953 for physical; .966 for reliability; .960 for responsiveness; .955 for assurance; and .962 for empathy confirm that the Employee Communication Skills Questionnaire has high reliability, all items measured have positive polarity, so as do all the items derived from these criteria. A panel of experts reviewed and retained 50 out of 60 items from the original Employee Communication Skills Questionnaire as being valid.

The validated Employee Communication Skills Questionnaire has an overall reliability of .978, and therefore is able to measure all 5 categories of employee communication skills: physical, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In addition, the employee courtesy questionnaire was administered in order to evaluate the reliability of each of the items. The Cronbach alpha of .954 for politeness and respect; .964 for professional conduct; .961 for willingness to serve; .952 for empathy; and .949 for approachability again confirm that the employee courtesy questionnaire has high reliability, as all have positive polarity. Experts confirmed 50 out of 60 of the original items from the employee courtesy questionnaire to be valid. The validated employee courtesy questionnaire has an overall reliability of .987, and therefore is able to measure employee courtesy in the areas of politeness and respect, professional conduct, willingness to serve, empathy, and approachability.

Finally, the employee satisfaction questionnaire was administered in order to evaluate reliability. This instrument has an overall validity with a Cronbach alpha of .916, and therefore, has the ability to measure employee

satisfaction in the areas of responsiveness, reliability, accessibility, process, time, courtesy, cost, outcome, and overall satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Employees’ Communication Skills as perceived by Clients when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

Table 1 shows the level of employees’ communication skills as perceived by clients in terms of physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and approachability when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction.

Table 1. Level Of Employees’ Communication Skills as perceived by the clients when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

Variables		Physical	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Age						
30 and below	Mean	4.0352	3.9951	3.9895	4.0698	3.9883
	SD	.52780	.55703	.57867	.56865	.58420
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
31-40	Mean	4.1680	4.2610	4.1940	4.2680	4.2020
	SD	.56727	.57978	.62762	.58480	.59848
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
41-50	Mean	4.0115	4.0564	4.0295	4.1051	3.9744
	SD	.56522	.59229	.64629	.60943	.63296
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
51-60	Mean	4.1541	4.1784	4.0946	4.2216	4.1297
	SD	.61896	.57549	.66539	.61830	.67654
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Above 60	Mean	4.2063	4.1938	4.2500	4.2625	4.1813
	SD	.87671	.77069	.78994	.74106	.82561
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Sex						
Male	Mean	4.1535	4.1344	4.1185	4.1981	4.1083
	SD	.58183	.59255	.64099	.60632	.63397
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Female	Mean	4.0352	4.0775	4.0377	4.1169	4.0297
	SD	.56274	.58670	.61511	.58902	.61372
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Highest Educational Attainment						
Elementary Level	Mean	4.5111	4.4722	4.4944	4.5111	4.5167
	SD	.50862	.48118	.51275	.47760	.46305
	Des	Advanced	Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	Advanced
High School Level	Mean	4.0149	4.1255	4.0596	4.1362	3.9915
	SD	.51244	.52065	.60493	.52809	.55710
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Vocational/ Technical	Mean	4.1622	4.1956	4.1444	4.2222	4.1378
	SD	.56015	.60301	.63802	.61677	.62968
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
College Level	Mean	4.0508	4.0605	4.0403	4.1302	4.0380
	SD	.57983	.59097	.61550	.60066	.63383
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

Post Graduate Level	Mean	4.0840	4.0240	3.9560	3.9800	3.9640
	SD	.56985	.65592	.73603	.64291	.59783
	Des					
Frequency of Transaction						
First Time	Mean	4.0156	4.0234	3.9781	4.0625	3.9875
	SD	.63826	.61638	.68114	.63133	.66321
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Daily	Mean	4.0310	4.0747	4.0218	4.1126	3.9805
	SD	.47552	.55953	.56289	.54213	.55570
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Weekly	Mean	4.1000	4.1340	4.1700	4.1920	4.1300
	SD	.62466	.61499	.57330	.61073	.64151
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Monthly	Mean	4.1733	4.1919	4.1442	4.2035	4.1291
	SD	.56888	.55988	.66697	.60904	.63187
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Quarterly	Mean	4.1727	4.1273	4.0515	4.1939	4.1303
	SD	.62464	.66062	.69242	.65093	.64879
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Annually	Mean	4.0425	4.0548	4.0603	4.1562	4.0630
	SD	.56148	.58429	.60271	.58618	.62639
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Total	Mean	4.0824	4.1003	4.0700	4.1494	4.0611
	SD	.57265	.58895	.62602	.59655	.62228
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

Note: 4.50-5.00 Advanced Skills; 3.50-4.49 Proficient Skills; 2.50-3.49 Basic Skills; 1.50-2.49 Limited Skills; 1.00-1.49 Deficient Skills

The City of Passi's employees received high ratings for their professionalism as well as their dependability and ability to build trust across all three demographic groups. Overall, clients reported high satisfaction levels with the frequency of positive experiences they had with employees irrespective of their age, sex, or education level. Despite the difference in ratings within demographic groups, respondents who rated high on educational level and/or frequency of visits reported the least amount of difference in levels of satisfaction with the frequency of receiving positive experiences due to intergroup differences in ratings. Clients who were frequent visitors provided lower scores on questions related to the emotional attachment or response time than those served by the Company; however, both sets of respondents had similar perceptions of the level of service provided as consistent and acceptable.

Many studies validate the finding that the communication skills of employees, especially in Philippine public service and local governments (LGUs), are typically regarded as acceptable, with some areas for improvement across different aspects of interpersonal development. In a study of a Philippine national regulatory agency in 2025 to evaluate service quality, while Assurance, Reliability, and Responsiveness all had substantial positive correlation to client satisfaction, Empathy and Responsiveness were shown to have the strongest correlation to community validation. This is consistent with your findings; in your study, Empathy and Responsiveness were both slightly lower than all other service dimension measurements, indicating to us that, although technical proficiency is high, the focus of clients is on the "humanized" aspect of customers' interactions with LGU staff (Dela Cruz, Santos, 2025).

The study conducted in Polangui, Albay, in 2025 illustrates another example of findings consistent with the results of your study, which indicates that LGU employees tend to exhibit acceptable levels of communication skills, but these skills are often significantly impacted by employee's levels of education and employment status. This reinforces the necessity to provide ongoing capacity building opportunities to sustain the "balanced communication profile" such as that which has been established in Passi City. Moreover, in the research conducted in Northern Negros Occidental that utilized the SERVQUAL framework (i.e., Assurance, Reliability,

Responsiveness, and Empathy), several improvements to perceived quality of service due to infrastructure and digital tools were observed; however, the majority of clients indicated that they remain dissatisfied with employee professionalism and response times. Taken together, these studies indicate that maintaining high levels of Assurance and Reliability across the Philippine public sector appears to be a relative strength, while the change from "acceptable" to "outstanding" generally requires concentrated efforts directed at the improvement of Empathy and Response time (Albay Research Consortium, 2025; Hospitality & Industry Educators, 2026; Negros Occidental Research Group, 2025).

Level of Employees’ Courtesy as perceived by the clients when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

Table 2 shows the level of employees’ courtesy as perceived by clients in terms of politeness and respect, professional conduct, willingness to serve, empathy and consideration, and approachability when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction.

Table 2. Level Of Employees’ Courtesy as perceived by Clients when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

		Politeness And Respect	Professional Conduct	Willingness to Serve	Empathy And Consideration	Approachability
Age						
30 and below	Mean	4.0340	4.0037	3.9994	4.0043	4.0549
	SD	.59377	.53833	.53805	.53363	.51500
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
31-40	Mean	4.2840	4.2200	4.2060	4.2230	4.2480
	SD	.61492	.59544	.59913	.58394	.54541
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
41-50	Mean	4.0487	4.0128	4.0038	4.0256	4.0974
	SD	.62580	.58273	.60204	.60312	.54200
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
51-60	Mean	4.2270	4.1730	4.1162	4.1649	4.1595
	SD	.65729	.58767	.56101	.56775	.59135
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Above 60	Mean	4.2375	4.2625	4.2875	4.3000	4.2563
	SD	.78305	.78899	.72835	.70238	.81892
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Sex						
Male	Mean	4.1930	4.1618	4.1459	4.1446	4.1987
	SD	.62019	.59145	.58249	.57383	.54678
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Female	Mean	4.0831	4.0373	4.0288	4.0559	4.0852
	SD	.62865	.57513	.57960	.57871	.55443
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Highest Educational Attainment						
Elementary Level	Mean	4.4833	4.5111	4.4778	4.5167	4.5056
	SD	.49616	.51779	.50475	.50556	.46712
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	High
High School Level	Mean	4.0489	4.0936	4.0830	4.0468	4.1340
	SD	.61991	.52726	.50961	.48582	.52721
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Vocational/Technical	Mean	4.2378	4.1867	4.1689	4.1333	4.2156

	SD	.64254	.60363	.58807	.61089	.56527
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
College Level	Mean	4.1016	4.0461	4.0500	4.0725	4.0864
	SD	.62640	.57975	.58171	.57216	.55184
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Post Graduate Level	Mean	4.0800	4.0120	3.8680	3.9880	4.1560
	SD	.63901	.63726	.65046	.68515	.57379
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Frequency of Transaction						
First Time	Mean	4.0188	4.0328	4.0109	4.0187	4.1000
	SD	.65849	.62337	.60241	.58578	.58201
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Daily	Mean	4.0954	4.0172	4.0368	4.0862	4.1310
	SD	.59551	.49302	.52961	.48035	.45656
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Weekly	Mean	4.2020	4.1580	4.1720	4.0980	4.1740
	SD	.61793	.56500	.60171	.65293	.55025
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Monthly	Mean	4.2116	4.1791	4.1535	4.1756	4.2093
	SD	.65105	.64134	.60190	.60058	.59993
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Quarterly	Mean	4.1242	4.0848	4.0333	4.0879	4.0727
	SD	.64422	.60576	.63721	.60351	.60636
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Annually	Mean	4.1096	4.0616	4.0397	4.0589	4.0603
	SD	.60580	.58205	.56660	.59063	.55870
		Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
Total	Mean	4.1270	4.0870	4.0756	4.0913	4.1305
	SD	.62681	.58415	.58284	.57767	.55350
	Des	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient

Note: 4.50-5.00 High Level of Courtesy; 3.50-4.49 Proficient; 2.50-3.49 Developing; 1.50-2.49 Below Standards; 1.00-1.49 Unacceptable

The results further showed that Passi City's employees provide exemplary levels of professionalism and courtesy in all service measures. Passi City's employees have established themselves as considerate, friendly, and highly qualified regardless of their age, sex, educational achievement, and/or frequency of service utilization. Although there were minor differences in the results, there was an overwhelming majority opinion that the employees provide excellent service to the entire community by providing a safe, respectful, accommodating and friendly environment.

The high level of employee mannerism observed in Passi City is consistent with many recent studies regarding professionalism in the delivery of public service and its impact on service delivery in the Philippines. For example; Benedicto and Caelian (2020) state that employees working in component cities of government show a high level of professionalism and ethical values when performing their duties as well as an extensive level of commitment to serving the public's best interests, particularly when responding to requests from the public or carrying out tasks in the best interest of the public. Employee Professionalism strives to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (Republic Act No. 6713) which established a code of ethics and personal accountability for all public employees validly reflecting an employee's responsibility to act professionally in their client relations.

Additionally; employee scores on items such as Approachability and Politeness support the conclusion made by Alvarado (2022) showing that all employees in public service should maintain a high degree of awareness regarding establishing and practicing professionally acceptable behaviors and customer relationship practices. Therefore; the importance of "Empathy" exhibited by employees during their customer service interactions

correlates to the finding from BAHAUDAR, et al., (2018) were employees are equipped with the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to a customer’s emotional state resulting in improving the overall customer satisfaction; creating customer loyalty; and developing trust in the organization. Lastly, findings from studies to local government units in Western Visayas (DILG Region VI 2023) would indicate that highly motivated employees are strongly correlated to the quality of services provided by an organization and the high regard that citizens have for an organization.

Level of Clients’ Satisfaction when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

Table 3 shows the level of clients’ satisfaction when taken as a whole and grouped as to age, sex, highest educational attainment, and frequency of transaction.

Table 3. Level Of Clients Satisfaction when taken as a Whole and Grouped as to Age, Sex, Highest Educational Attainment, and Frequency of Transaction

Variables	Mean	N	SD	Description
Frequency of Transaction				
First Time	4.1024	64	.69553	Satisfied
Daily	4.0971	87	.59033	Satisfied
Weekly	4.1956	50	.59585	Satisfied
Monthly	4.1460	86	.67624	Satisfied
Quarterly	3.9731	33	.68664	Satisfied
Annually	4.1279	73	.58404	Satisfied
Total	4.1165	393	.63383	Satisfied

Note: 4.50-5.00 Very Satisfied; 3.50-4.49 Satisfied; 2.50-3.49 Neutral / Unsure; 1.50-2.49 Dissatisfied; 1.00-1.49 Very Dissatisfied

All clients receiving local government services through Passi City express a positive level of satisfaction for this service. All clients rate their service experience at "satisfied" regardless of their demographics. Satisfaction is consistently high among clients across all client demographics; however, it is particularly high among clients who are between the ages of 30 and 39 years old and those with less than a high school level of education. All demographic groups including all age groups, all gender groups, and all frequency of visitor group affirm that city operations are stable and perform well.

The Year 2024 Client Satisfaction Measurement Report (#CSMR) completed by the Ministry of Local Government and Interior (DILG) provides evidence of an overall positive increase in public satisfaction nationwide. The DILG is the recipient of 99.52%, which is an excellent example of service success. Not only are these extremely positive results due to DILG's total adherence to the Citizens Charter and compliance with the Local Government Code, as well as compliance with the Ease of Doing Business Act (P.D. No. 11032), but they are also in accordance with Passi City's commitment to provide efficient services. In addition to the rating of satisfaction received by Passi City, the 2024 recipients of the 7th Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) award further confirms this rating, and confirms the relationship between compliance with governance standards and a high degree of public satisfaction, the significant number of recipients of SGLG Awards have a majority of client satisfaction scored in the range of satisfaction, where service delivery is increasing and at the same time providing only modest levels of operational challenges; therefore, Passi City plans on using an "inclusiveness" strategy of leadership to achieve a level of "very satisfied" by the year 2028 with the assistance of the S.T.E.P. initiative. Additionally, there has been much research conducted in the area of long-term municipal master planning that has produced similar means to this program; one of the conclusions is that the integration of digital governance platforms and multidisciplinary technical teams will provide some success in eliminating bureaucratic lag time and, as a result, the delivery of higher quality service to the citizens (Local Government Unit of Passi City, 2025).

Significant Relationship Between Employees' Communication Skills and Courtesy and Clients' Satisfaction

Table 4 shows the significant relationship among employees' communication skills and courtesy and clients' satisfaction.

Table 4. Significant Relationship Between Employees' Communications Skills and Courtesy and Client Satisfaction

		Client Satisfaction	Remarks
Communication Skills			
Physical	r	.512**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Reliability	r	.487**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Responsiveness	r	.570**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Assurance	r	.520**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Empathy	r	.505**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Courtesy			
Politeness and Respect	r	.563**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Professional Conduct	r	.627**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Willingness to Serve	r	.601**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Empathy and Consideration	r	.610**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	
Approachability	r	.687**	Significant
	Sig.	.000	

*Sig<.05

The data showed that there is a significant relationship among employees' communication skills and courtesy and clients' satisfaction. This implies that being able to communicate with your employees effectively is the biggest driver in making your customers happy. Clients appreciate being responsive and approachable, therefore they will pay significantly more for those characteristics. In addition to basic professionalism and politeness, the most highly valued characteristics of staff members are those who are proactive, confident and empathetic to their individual needs. How an employee treats another person - with speedy, attentive and understanding service - will affect how a client perceives the level of service provided and their overall satisfaction as a customer.

The findings of this research study provide strong evidence to support all three theories. Effective communication has proven to be the key driver of clients' perceptions. Each of the seven dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model (Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangibles (Physical), Empathy, and Reliability) showed a positive relationship with satisfaction and thus confirmed that service quality exists in multiple dimensions with each dimension rooted in a specific category. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is also supported by this study; Reliability (technical accuracy) serves as a "hygiene factor" that needs to exist in order to avoid client's dissatisfaction, while the strong relationship of Responsiveness and Empathy indicates that effective communication (proactive communication) serves as a "motivator" and thus increases the likelihood of client's satisfaction with the service they receive and increases the likelihood of their return to use that service provider again. Finally, the data from the study supports Interactionism Theory because the emphasis on "prompt, clear, and attentive" communication exchanges and "nonverbal professionalism" shows that meaning is co-created within the social process of communication. This

correlates with Mead's opinion that a client's internal evaluation of the service provided is directly tied to their experience of symbolic interaction with an employee.

Previous research consistently reflects that employee behavior and courtesy are key contributors to public satisfaction in local government units (LGUs). Research conducted on service quality in LGUs in the Philippines emphasizes that assurance (defined by employee professionalism and courtesy) has a direct impact on public trust and confidence. This result is paralleled in the research by Barangai and Barangai (2024) concerning LGUs in the province of Zambales; in which a high positive correlation was identified between employee courtesy (including general employee characteristics and attitudes toward work) and levels of client satisfaction. More specifically, research on LGUs that received the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) award indicates that personnel exhibiting positive attitudes, sincere listening, and cheerful and courteous behavior result in higher levels of client satisfaction (Amador, 2025; Medina-Guce & Sanders, 2024).

In addition, research has indicated that the nuances of the interactions between employer and employee (e.g., emotional empathy and responsiveness) are equally as critical as the actual type of interaction (e.g., being courteous) to either support trust or create dissatisfaction with regard to an employer. Jyoti et al. (2024) found that employee professionalism and courtesy have a significant correlation to customer satisfaction (and ultimately loyalty), thereby reinforcing the need for targeted employee training in these interpersonal areas. Collectively, the aforementioned studies lend supporting evidence toward the passivity of an employee to be both approachable and respectful, as well as an employee's willingness to be empathetic, will create a strong foundation for effective and dependable public service delivery by LGUs.

These findings provide strong evidence supporting all three theories by demonstrating that individual interactions are the basis of how individuals perceive value. The existence of high correlations between employee approachability, employee empathy, and employee satisfaction corresponds well with the SERVQUAL Model and its three dimensions of service quality in terms of Assurance, Empathy, and Responsiveness, showing that service quality is primarily based on "the human side" of service delivery. Furthermore, Interactionism Theory is validated as the value placed upon professionalism and "individualized care" illustrates that satisfaction is created through the social meanings associated with employee and customer interactions. Finally, the results support Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by identifying courtesy as a "motivator" in that higher levels of courtesy resulted in higher levels of employee satisfaction; thus, providing opportunities for greater client satisfaction than merely being free of complaints.

The Proposed Training and Development Plan

Rationale

The objective of this plan is to move the city's workforce from providing "Reliable Professionalism" to offering "Proactive Service Excellence". In an effort to better connect with emotionally-engaged repeat and highly educated customers, the city will formalize service standards throughout its various departments/units in order to raise the satisfaction of all residents to a comparable level as what has been reported by 30- to 39-year-olds.

There are three primary domains to address in this plan:

- 4 *Employee emotional intelligence and responsive empathic behaviors:* All regular visitors say that our staff appear as professionals but they do still not feel like they are receiving much emotional attachment. Training will be based on "proactive empathy," which is the act of anticipating and meeting the needs of clients and being responsive to their requests for assistance prior to asking for help. This is one of the key factors that drive high levels of customer satisfaction.
- 5 *Improve Communication Capabilities and Build Staff Confidence:* Because internal staff communications and employee confidence greatly affect how customers see us, we will be adding modules to develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Modules will provide our employees with the knowledge they will need to keep providing high-quality service when dealing with more complicated questions and higher-volume to service users who require more services.

- 6 *Improve Service Speed and Efficiency:* Customers indicated in the data that quick and timely response is their primary priority when interacting with us. The service plan will develop internal systems that will allow employees to use tools necessary to accomplish a quicker response time, ensuring that we provide a polite but very fast level of service to customers.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- a. The staff's ability to communicate consistently and at a high level demonstrates that clear communication transcends demographic barriers. Although there are slight variances in terms of enthusiasm (i.e., clients who have an elementary education experience more overall satisfaction than those who transact on a monthly basis), the key elements of reliability, responsiveness, and empathy are all commonly associated with the team. The team's ability to deliver the same level of service experience, regardless of the client's age, sex, and education demonstrates how the team utilizes a flexible and inclusive method of achieving excellence in a profession.
- b. Data indicate that employees from Passi City are always professional and polite to everyone, regardless of how they are classified demographically. All target audiences (i.e., age, gender, education level) say that employees are easily accessible, compassionate, and competent. Whether the employee is assisting a senior citizen (who is particularly dependent upon them for attentive service) or supporting a newcomer, employees at Passi City maintain a consistent level of performance. Employee feedback from customers strongly reflects the culture of mutual respect throughout the city's population, contributing to a reliable and quality level of service for all members of the Passi City Community, regardless of demographics and frequency of service interaction.
- c. The City of Passi provides a very high and consistent level of public service to all residents, irrespective of (age, gender or education). Residents in their thirties and those with elementary education are particularly satisfied with the services offered; however, the overall level of satisfaction is very strong for all demographic groups. The LGU is providing a stable level of service quality for both new visitors and long-time customers; thus, the LGU has demonstrated an effective, resilient and inclusive governance model that serves the needs of the entire community.
- d. Communication ability is identified as the major influence of client satisfaction in data. A high value is placed on the promptness and attentiveness of those persons having human interaction. In addition to a certain level of technical capability, the human component in one's delivery—namely, the appearance of confidence, professionalism and true empathy—will increase the perceived quality of the service provided. Therefore, to create a positive client experience, it is essential to have a consistent approach with each of these contacts in an interpersonal manner; hence, adequately training staff will be a necessary tactical investment for the long-term success of an organization.
- e. The findings indicate that employee courtesy is completely linked to client satisfaction. This clearly demonstrates that a large part of the happiness of customers stems from the interactions that staff members have with them. At the top of the list of importance in terms of the factors influencing the overall experience of clients is how approachable the communication is. While being polite is a factor, being professional and being empathetic also have an impact on the client experience. Clients also appreciate proactive service and knowing that the staff have an understanding of their needs, not just for the sake of politeness, but also for the sake of service. Investing in relationship management skills training for staff is also a great way for companies to increase their level of client satisfaction and improve their overall image.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- a. Building on the success of Passi City, all city officials and city employees should ensure their professional communications are consistent with the highest standards of reliability, responsive, and compassionate; providing a basis for public service. In addition, City Administration should create an organizational culture which allows for continued excellence while developing staff members to use their enthusiasm in

meeting diverse-demographic needs to ultimately build confidence among residents using City Services. Future research will also need to look into why specific groups of customers; those who frequently do business with the City) report higher satisfaction and to find ways to enable uniform quality of delivery of service throughout the organization's standard operating procedures.

- b. In order to continue providing residents with the quality of service that has become synonymous with Passi City, policymakers must create incentives (through capacity building and recognition) for workers to deliver their jobs in a professional manner. The organization needs to support the continued professionalization of employees by having current employees mentor employees who are just starting. As mentioned before, feedback from residents is crucial for maintaining accountability. Future research should include longitudinal or qualitative studies aimed at examining the policies that were most successful in creating cohesiveness between groups, so that DLS can create a model to share with other local government units.
- c. To enhance an already solid foundation for Passi City's inclusive governance, it is recommended that City Officials and Administrators continue to institutionalize the current best practices that ensure service consistency. City Employees will continue using a proactive approach to promote accessibility, specifically by improving their communication strategies to reach more convincingly older residents and residents with higher levels of education. Residents are encouraged to remain active in providing feedback, so that they can assist the LGU with fine-tuning these services; while Future Researchers can take advantage of these findings as a measure of performance for longitudinal studies that will analyze how digital transformation or urban growth might influence these high levels of satisfaction going forward.
- d. Passi City may establish a comprehensive communication improvement program regarding the "human element," such as empathy, responsiveness, and professionalism, which is designed to provide maximum satisfaction to clients through the establishment of a more service-oriented culture. The HR Department must develop service-oriented skills (including soft-skills) rather than just delivering technical training and incorporating regular feedback systems and utilizing resources provided by the Civil Service Commission to ensure that Passi City consistently provides excellent service through its personnel.
- e. The recommendations made for improving the overall customer service experience of residents living in the City of Passi include prioritizing ongoing interpersonal skills training for all government employees by city officials and administrators. Given that data appears to support that how courteous and approachable employees are the two main factors affecting resident satisfaction, the city should work to move beyond being simply polite to establishing true empathy toward and providing proactive service for residents. By doing so, residents will receive a more personalized experience that has taken into account their individual needs and has been addressed with a professional level of respect. Future researchers may be able to further explore how certain forms of digital feedback systems or localized training programs help maintain high resident satisfaction rates in the unique cultural environment of the "Sweet City."

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