

# INTO THE LENS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS: EXPLORING SERVICE QUALITY POLICY OF SDO BATAAN

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**INTO THE LENS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS: EXPLORING SERVICE  
QUALITY POLICY OF SDO BATAAN**

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## Table of Content

Title Page .....	2
Table of Contents .....	3
Abstract.....	4
Introduction .....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Research Questions .....	15
Significance of the Study .....	16
Scope and Delimitations .....	16
Method .....	
Research Design .....	17
Participants and Sampling Method .....	18
Instrument .....	19
Data Collection Procedure .....	19
Ethical Considerations.....	20
Data Analysis .....	20
Results and Discussion.....	21
Conclusion.....	45
Recommendations.....	45
References.....	47
Appendix A (Instrument).....	49

### **Abstract**

This study seeks to discover if the Schools Division Office of Bataan is giving quality customer service and satisfies the stakeholders through the provisions they offer. It also seeks to investigate how they can improve the services given to schools and the stakeholders in order to uphold the mandate of giving accessible, quality relevant, and inclusive education for all.

Through this study, it may identify the weaknesses that can still be refined in order to assure the holistic service that the schools division office of Bataan could offer that could be a basis in crafting a service quality framework that institutionalizes their standards of gratifying the needs of their stakeholders. In order to collect data, one-on-one interview was conducted, and the results were analyzed utilizing case study analysis among the responses of ten (10) study participants who were involved in the study. The findings of the study were formulated analytically, and themes were analyzed using QUIRKOS software analysis and generated the four service quality dimensions namely (1) empathy, (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, and (4) assurance. The practices and characteristics of the employees must revolve with these four which serve as a guide for them to be aware on how they perform their duties and responsibilities. Putting themselves in the shoes of others can be a simple way of showing empathy in order to understand how their clients feel; earn clients' trust so they will have a positive feeling that the service that they are looking forward to will be given to them; give assurance so clients have something to hold on to; and being responsive to the queries of the clients.

*Key words: Customer Service, Customer Satisfaction, Quality Service, SDO Bataan*

### **Introduction**

In today's era where volatility, uncertainty, complexity, adversity, and diversity exist be it in business, organization, and even in educational institution providing efficient and effective services to the public is upheld at hand thus, strategizing is one of the major considerations. In order to assure that you are giving quality service, it was always believed that it will be proved through the feedbacks coming from the people you are serving. This is not an isolated case when it comes to the Department of Education in particular Schools Division Offices because SDOs also experience the same thing. Since they are one of the major stakeholders who are accountable of improving basic education, provider of many services the like of processing of Authority to Travel, Certification, Authentication and Verification (CAV), Special Orders, and approval of Training Designs and Proposals on the part of curriculum not to underscore the rate of customers' satisfaction becomes a crucial contemplation on the part of people who work in SDOs.

Chambers (2019) believes that customer satisfaction doesn't just impact the business' bottom line, it also impacts team morale and retention rate. Teams that measure customer satisfaction can easily calculate the expected risk of unhappy customers. If customer satisfaction is the goal, then constant feedback is the best way to improve over time. Through the comments, feedbacks, suggestions and observations of the stakeholders, the service could improve greatly because SDO hears what they need to focus on because if they will not be hearing feedbacks, there will be no chance they would improve.

The accountabilities of SDOs are almost the same with the specific functions of schools, but on a larger scale. It includes the development and implementation of division's education development plans (DEDP) to assure that basic education is continuously improving. Part of the

functions is the management of human, physical and financial resources of the school's division. The plans, policies, provisions and rules and regulations coming from the SDO are reflected through the implementation of the schools under it that is why there are times that SDO is either blamed or praised with their decisions and management.

Their main customers are principals, teachers and parents and most of the times, feedbacks are coming from the abovementioned stakeholders. It is a business-like transaction wherein SDO always look for something new to maintain quality service through pedagogical breakthroughs, offering new strategies and methods in teaching based on the trends in education, updating or eradicating outdated practices and encouraging stakeholders to avail what they offer because those can actually make their institutions better.

In relation to this, Davis (2017) suggested that one of the ways to improve customer service quality is to open up more channels for customer feedback. Customers need many and varied means of communicating with your business. Perhaps it is something as obvious as a client satisfaction survey, but it could also be a feedback box on the counter, a social media competition or an evening focus group. It is one way to practice listening to the responses and even criticisms from those who avail SDO services.

Customer service quality has a great bearing because it signifies how the division office is performing and the customer satisfaction reflects the efficiency and effectivity of their provisions. Satisfaction of the customers determines how the management of the office is going that is why the feedbacks play a significant role. Feedbacks open a lot of opportunities for improvement because these can figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the division office.

Golkar (2016) stated that when brands seek to refine their customer engagement strategy, a critical aspect is ensuring that contact center customer service operations are running smoothly. To achieve this, it is necessary to assess not only individual agent performance but also the quality management practices in place. It is also applicable to educational services that the government is giving. It was usually believed that customers' feedbacks are important but it also has to be realized that the people in the workplace could also be the source of feedback in order to point out the areas where the SDO needs improvement. Golkar (2016) mentioned that peer feedback can also encourage team building and allow agents to learn from peer experiences.

As one of the governing bodies that is responsible in giving primary support structure in schools and exercising direct administrative supervision over schools, it is essential for them to know if they are performing well, and this is the primary aim of the study. Further, this study seeks to discover if the school division office of Bataan is giving quality customer service and satisfies the stakeholders through the provisions they offer. Lastly, it also seeks to investigate how they can improve the services given to schools and the stakeholders in order to uphold the mandate of giving accessible, quality relevant, and inclusive education for all. Through this study, it may identify the weaknesses that can still be refined in order to assure the holistic service that the schools division office of Bataan could offer that could be a basis in crafting a service quality framework that institutionalizes their standards of gratifying the needs of their stakeholders.

**Related Theory**

This study was anchored on the premise of GAPS Model of Service Quality by Parasuraman, et.al (1985) and Hierarchical Service Quality Model by Brady and Cronin (2001). The GAPS Model of Service quality was first developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and it has served as a framework for research in services marketing for over two decades. The Model is based on the expectation- confirmation theory (Oliver, 1980; 1993) and it illustrates how customers assess quality, considering quality offered by firms and the quality perceived by users after the service consumption. The GAPS model aims to identify the possible causes for a gap between expected quality and perceived quality. The model conceptualizes key concepts, strategies and decisions which are essential for the quality offer according to a sequence which starts from the consumer, identifies the necessary actions for the firm to plan and offer a service and goes back to the consumer for the comparison between expectations and perceptions.

The GAPS model outlines five service quality gaps which are. GAP 1: It is first gap in service quality and it occurs when the management of a firm fails to accurately identify customer expectations. It is also referred to as the knowledge gap. GAP 2: It is known as the design gap and it is measured to the management's perception of customer expectations. This gap depends on the management's belief that quality is important as well as the resources available for the provision of that service. GAP 3: It represents the variation in service design and services delivery. It is referred to as the performance gap. Since individuals perform the service, performance will depend on the skill level or the level of training of the individual providing the service. GAP 4: It is known as the communications gap since it is the difference between what is promised to customer explicitly or implicitly and what is actually being



delivered. Over – promising is usually responsible for this gap. GAP 5: It is the total accommodation of variations in gaps to it and it represents the difference between the customer expectations and the perceived service

### **Related Literature and Studies**

This part discussed the framework of the studies and literatures that provided explanations on the concept of the study and steer the researcher to fully understand the research work.

According to Parasuraman et al (1985) consumers evaluate perceived service along five quality dimensions namely: 1. Reliability – The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately 2. Responsiveness - The willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service. 3. Assurance - The employee knowledge and courtesy and the ability of the firm and its employees to inspire trust and confidence in its customers. 4. Empathy - The caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers. 5. Tangibles – The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. Each time they experience a service, consumers evaluate the service quality by judging the experience based on the five dimensions. (Parasuraman et al, 1985).

On the other hand, the Hierarchical Service Quality Model was proposed by Brady and Cronin (2001) and it is a comprehensive, multi-level construct that consists of three primary elements known as interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality. According to Brady and Cronin (2001), Interaction quality deals with the experience that customers have with employees who provide the services and it is one of the factors that influence customer satisfaction. Attitude, Behaviors and expertise of the employee are sub-dimensions of the interaction quality.

Physical environment quality includes the physical and social setting in which the institution operates such as buildings, cleanliness and availability of customer's personal space. Ambient conditions, design and social factors as the sub- dimensions of the physical environment quality, Walter et al (2010) argues that the physical environment is crucial to customers because service delivery occurs in the physical environment where the design, production and delivery of the services are of value to customers. The interior and exterior of the physical environment can also create positive or negative experiences to customer (Walter et al; 2010). Outcome quality refers to the outcome of the services performance and represents what the consumer achieves from the service. The sub dimensions that contribute to outcome quality are waiting time, tangibles and valence which contribute to customer satisfaction.

Hensley and Sulek (2010) argue that customers become dissatisfied with a service if they have to wait for a long time to be served. Many service firms also worry about customer queues as it may elicit negative perceptions on the quality of customer service (Bielen & Demoulin, 2007). Valence is the post consumption of the overall outcome regardless of evaluation of specific aspects of service quality. Customers form service quality perceptions by evaluating services performance at multiple lends and ultimately combine these evaluations to arrive at an overall service quality perception (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

Providing excellent customer satisfaction and high service quality is the significant matter and challenge meeting the current service industry (Hung 2003). Customer satisfaction and service quality have been for this latest year's important topic both for the researches in the field of marketing and for the academic world (Ueno, 2010). The notice directed to these two theories, customer satisfaction and service quality is mainly due to the harsh competition among private businesses on the market, in addition to the pressure of biased factors and of the

population, over organizations in the field of public administration (Ghasemi, Kazemi and Esfahani, 2012). The measurement of customer satisfaction has emerged within the field of Total Quality Management (TQM) although it has been explored by several researchers and theorists from other scientific areas. The TQM School formalizes customer satisfaction as a quality component, as appearing in the major quality awards, emphasizing on the exploitation of customer satisfaction data within a business organization (Grigoroudis&Siskos 2010).

At present, the increasing interest in customer satisfaction is closely related to the quality revolution that started in the early 1980s. The TQM researchers recognized that the quality improvement of products and services could not only rely on the internal metrics and standards of the business organizations, but it had also to be combined with customer information and feedback. Moreover, the quality should be manifested in ways relevant and perceptible to the total set of customers. (Grigoroudis&Siskos 2010).

Chambers (2019) believes that customer satisfaction doesn't just impact the business' bottom line, it also impacts team morale and retention rate. Teams that measure customer satisfaction can easily calculate the expected risk of unhappy customers. If customer satisfaction is the goal, then constant feedback is the best way to improve over time. Kotler has further defined satisfaction as a feeling of pleasure or disappointment of a person, resulting from comparing a product or service noticed performance (or result) towards his or her expectations (Kotler, 2000, p.36).

Anderson (1995) measured the quality of service provided by a public university health clinic. Using 15 statements representing the five-dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), she assessed the quality of service provided by the clinic at the University of Houston Health Center. Patients were found to be generally dissatisfied with the five dimensions of

SERVQUAL. The highest dissatisfaction was felt with assurance. On the other hand, tangibles and empathy exhibited the lowest levels of dissatisfaction. Using the SERVQUAL approach, Wisniewski (2001) carried out a study to assess customer satisfaction within the public sector across a range of Scottish Councils services. In the library service, the analysis of gap scores revealed that tangibles and reliability had negative gaps which indicate that customer expectations were not met. On the other hand, responsiveness and assurance were positive implying that customer expectations were actually exceeded by the service provided.

Furthermore, Donnelly et al. (2006) carried out a study to explore the application of SERVQUAL approach to assess the quality of service of Strathclyde Police in Scotland. The survey captures customers' expectations of an excellent police service and compares these with their perceptions of the service delivered by Strathclyde Police. The paper also reports on a parallel SERVQUAL survey of police officers in Strathclyde to examine how well the force understands its customers' expectations and how well its internal processes support the delivery of quality services in the police department. It was found that Strathclyde Police appears to have a good understanding of the service quality expectations of their customers as represented by the responses of elected councilors in the area covered by the force. There is room for improvement in service quality performance both from the viewpoint of the customer and through police force attention to the definition of, and compliance with, service quality standards.

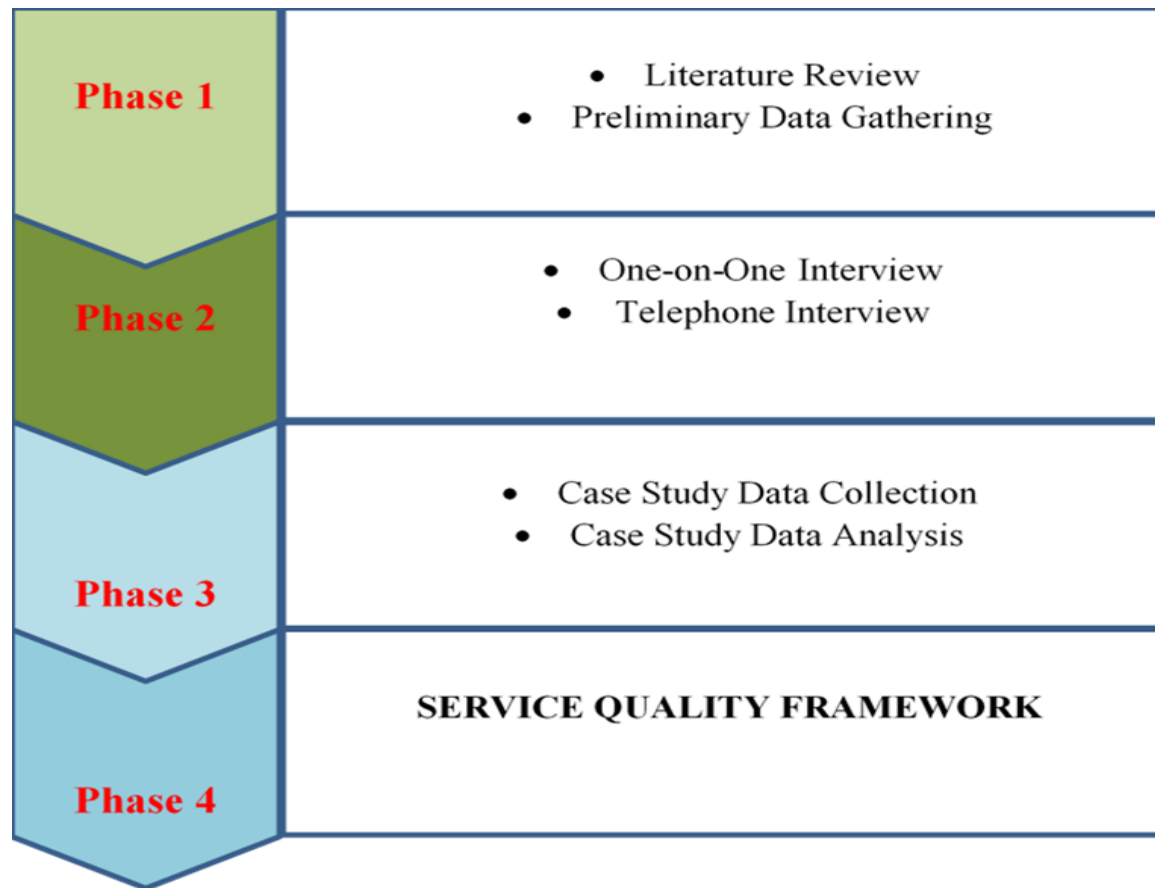
Agus et al. (2007) carried out a research to identify management and customer perceptions of service quality practices in the Malaysian Public sector. It is important to note that whereas the SERVQUAL model focused on identifying "gaps" between expectations and actual delivery, their dimensions identified by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Their study looked at

the perceptions of management and customers, thereby excluding the views of Frontline Employees (FLE).

In another study, Mohamad Niza Nor et al (2009) assessed service quality and client satisfaction in a public sector department in Malaysia. They adopted the three components model of Rust and Oliver (service product, service delivery and service environment). They found that all three dimensions were positively related to customer satisfaction. However, service environment and service delivery were not significantly related to customer satisfaction. Service product on the other hand was significantly related, and as such a significant predictor of customer satisfaction. Hsiao, Chih - Tung and Jie - Shin Lin (2008), from their results of the study, states that the public sector organizations conducted the identification, not only external factors of the customers, but also includes internal employees. It is very important to incorporate customer needs into the procedures design of service. Information of customer complaint will be used by public sector organizations as a strategic development in public sector of service delivery system. Nor et al. (2010) states that public sector organizations, which provide customer service is one of the important factors that gives significant contribution to build good reputation and credibility in the community. Public complaints of long queues, poor service and poor physical facilities are not adequate to affect the image and the quality level of service in the public sector.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Based on the various research studies, the researcher drawn the following conceptual framework (Figure 1) that fitted for this particular study in measuring service quality and customer satisfaction in education sector



In the conduct of the study, it utilized four (4) phases: Phase 1- Review of the Literature same is through with the existing related studies and models of customer satisfaction and service quality, and conducted the preliminary data gathering on which the Interview guide question was developed. In Phase 2- the actual data gathering through one-on-one interview and telephone conversation were employed. In Phase 3- the case study data collection involving the coding and transcribing of the transcripts and case study data analysis were applied. Lastly, on Phase 4- out of the results of the interview the researcher proposed a service quality framework that can be adapted by SDO Bataan for the improvement of their service delivery towards achieving or maintaining quality standards.

### **Research Questions**

This study sought to discover if the Schools Division office of Bataan is giving quality service and satisfies the customers through the provisions they offer.

Specifically, it answers the following problems:

1. What is the profile of the participants?
2. What are the issues and problems of the study participants as regards to customer satisfaction offered by SDO Bataan?
3. How may the insights of the study participants as to customer service quality offered by SDO Bataan be described?
4. How may the case analysis be described on the basis of customer satisfaction and customer service quality of the study participants?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what Service Quality Framework may be designed to strengthen the customer service quality and satisfaction at SDO Bataan?

### **Assumption**

Since the current underpinning utilized qualitative research, it did not test any significant difference nor relationship but it constructed assumptions on which the study anchored.

Assumption 1: The stakeholders of SDO Bataan are not satisfied with the services it offers.

Assumption 2: Customer Service Quality of SDO Bataan are evident as written in their Quality Policy Manual.

## Significance of the Study

The study will be of great benefit to the following:

**Clients of SDO Bataan.** This study will make them appreciate the importance of their feedbacks and suggestions, which are also beneficial for them to receive a quality customer service offered by the SDO Bataan.

**Policy Makers of SDO Bataan.** This study will provide information that will be helpful for them to assess their performance in terms of giving quality customer service and satisfaction. Through this study, it may identify the weaknesses that can still be refined in order to assure the holistic service that the schools division office of Bataan could offer.

**Employees of SDO Bataan.** This study will help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and find ways on how to improve their effectiveness as an employee.

**Future Researchers.** This study will help other researchers in the future. Those who will evaluate on customer service quality and customer satisfaction could make use of the data of this study as their reference.

## Scope and Limitations

The study was conducted at the Schools Division Office of Bataan which was evaluated if the SDO Bataan is giving quality service and satisfies the customers through the provisions they offer and how it can be improved. The respondents of the study were identified in the actual conduct of the study through a process of interviews and their willingness to participate in the conduct of the study. They were selected, asked and interviewed by the researcher at the waiting area for the guests at SDO Bataan in the span of 2 days coming from the group of teachers,



master teachers, private school principals, head teachers, public school principals, district clerks, and some private individuals who will extend their time and efforts for the interview for the completion of the study.

The study will exclude students, parents, teachers, head teachers, administrative aides, bookkeepers, school principals from both public and private, district supervisors, and education supervisors who do not transact any business at SDO Bataan during the 2-day span of whom the researcher will stay at the Office and those who will reject to be interviewed.

## **Method**

### **Type of Research**

A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The researcher used a qualitative method in this study utilizing case analysis as design.

Qualitative Research analyzes, interprets and collects data by studying people's behavior, the way they act and response (Creswell, 1994). It is considered as an inductive approach in which interviews and case study methods are used to collect and analyze data. As Garson (2002) said, "qualitative research design strive for in-depth understanding of subjects, through such techniques participant observation or narrative analysis, or they may strive for in-depth understanding of texts through such methods as exegesis or deconstruction". The qualitative research approach is non-statistical and it is used to understand the motivations and reasons in a qualitative way (Creswell, 1994).

Further, Quantitative Research involved number of respondents, listed questions are raised and response choices are predetermined. According to Svensson (2003) the quantitative research approach is best to investigate the perceptions and problem of the study and to discover

the hidden values, feelings attitudes and motivations. It uses deductive approach; the focus is on testing the theories related to the topic by analyzing and collecting the data (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

On the other hand, according to Stake (2015), Qualitative case study is a “study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.” Defining characteristics: Holistic (considering the interrelationship between the phenomenon and its contexts); Empirical (basing the study on their observations in the field); Interpretive (resting upon their intuition and see research basically as a researcher-subject interaction); Emphatic (reflecting the vicarious experiences of the subjects in an emic perspective).

### **Participants and Sampling Method**

The study participants of this study included ten (10) select teachers, head teachers, school principals from both public and private schools in SDO Bataan, and private individuals who make transactions at SDO Bataan before and after its ISO Certification and permitted the researcher to do one-one-one interview in her day period of selecting the said study participants to be included in the study.

The researcher took time to conduct the said one-on-one interview as she approached the clients of SDO Bataan and asked if they can be subjected for an interview or not. Aside from the willingness of the study participants, the researcher considered if the willing clients already had an experience of having a transaction in the Office before and after the ISO Certification, after many attempts and rejections, the researcher finally identified the study participants that fitted to the criteria set.

### Sources of Data

Different sources of data were considered in treating the research problems. Inputs on the study were lifted from semi-formal interviews, focus group discussions, field notes through documentations, and observations.

### Instruments

The study utilized an open-ended question that elicited individual responses focusing on the narratives of the study participants on their personal experiences in transacting business in SDO Bataan that served as a basis for service policy framework. The researcher believes that it provided the needed qualitative data in the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

### Data Collection Procedure

A letter of request to conduct a survey was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, the researcher personally conducted interviews assuring the anonymity of the study participants.

The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were designed to obtain the views and opinions of the study participants on certain topics such as customer satisfaction and service quality being offered by SDO Bataan. These interviews provided a complex and holistic picture, painted by the study participants in their own words, seen through their own eyes and experienced by their own feelings. Participants were provided a copy of the study protocol, informed consent, demographic data form and study interview guide questionnaire. Each interview was scheduled for minimum of 20 minutes and maximum of 90 minutes till the saturation points exceeded where the conversation becomes repetitive. The interview took 5 consecutive days following the safety protocol set by Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) and SDO Bataan.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted with all due respect to all the informants and by following the rule of confidentiality of identity. The researcher tends to become more careful and sensitive on disclosing the information provided in the instrument and take full responsibility on safeguarding it. The researcher made it possible to mention all the references that included in the study and properly cited all the proponents/authors from which the primary and secondary data were lifted. Other concerned authorities who took part on the conduct of this study will also be recognized.

**Data Analysis**

The data and information that were gathered and collected were coded and analyzed using QUIRKOS software qualitative data analysis.

The findings relate to the research questions that guided the study. Demographic data were collected during the interview process. Data gathered from individual face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted with 10 study participants to know their personal experiences and perceptions regarding the customer satisfaction and quality customer service of SDO Bataan.

The results of the analyzed data as well as study participants' original comments relevant to the experience were reported. Relevant examples of verbatim comments from the study participants were also provided to support the different quality dimensions that emerged. Along with the verbatim comments are the analyses of the insights of the participants.

The responses of the participants are divided into themes in order to create a more structured and coherent analysis of the responses. Analysis in each theme were generalized to give a summarized structure of the participants' insights.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1.1 Profile of the Study Participants**

The profile of the study participants was described in terms of age, sex, civil status, position and length of service.

Ten (10) study participants comprised of teachers, master teachers, head teachers, assistant principals, school principals both from private and public schools, district liaison officers/clerks, and private stakeholders in SDO Bataan wherein, data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews and some were interviewed through telephone calls for further clarifications with 10 study participants using open-ended questions until data reached saturation.

Participant A is a 42 year-old married female Master Teacher II. She is a graduate of Master of Arts Major in Educational Management with academic requirements leading to Doctor of Education Major in Educational Management. She is already 19 years in the service.

Participant B is a 47-year old Head III, female, married, who has been in teaching for 26 years.

Participant C is a Liason Officer/District Clerk, female, married, 38 years old and 11 years in the service.

Participant D is 46 years old School Principal 1, married, female, and 20 years in service.

Participant E is a male Assistant School Principal, 37 years of age, married, 6 years in the public service with 9 years teaching experience in private institution, completed academic requirements in Masters of Education major in English at Philippine Normal University and currently on his thesis writing at Columban College for the completion of his master's degree in Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management.

Participant F is a Private Individual who is processing Certification Authentication and Verification of documents, 27 years of age, male, and single.

Participant G is a male Private School Principal, 52 years of age, single, 14 years as School Principal in one of the Private Schools in Orani, Bataan, with wide background in school leadership and management through attendance to professional undertakings such as seminars and short courses specifically in line with the operations and management of private schools.

Participant H is a female principal at one of the Private Schools in Dinalupihan, 41 years of age, married, 10 years in the service. She has extensive knowledge in data management and unceasingly working towards realization of her dream in becoming a full pledge Master's Graduate at Bataan Peninsula State University where she is currently on her thesis writing.

Participant I is a School Principal II, 41 years of age, female, married, a Classroom Teacher and Master teacher for a decade before she became an administrator for almost 8 years now. He attained academic requirements leading to Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at Bataan Peninsula State University.

Participant J is School Principal II, 36 years of age, male, married, an administrator for almost 5 years and four months (still counting) now, and attained Doctor of Education major in Educational Management at Bataan Peninsula State University.

## **1.2 On Customer Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction**

Customer feedback plays an important role in order to discern problems, lapses and shortcomings of the employees and the whole organization as well. It is a key element on how to attain customer satisfaction for it is considered as one of the most important factors of a running business or organization, as well as the government offices.

This section conveyed the data on the answers of the respondents from which different service quality dimensions have emerged. The data were gathered from the interviews through semi-structured interview asked to the participants in order to know their insights regarding the service quality at SDO Bataan. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed several times in order to achieve more reliable interpretation.

### ***1.2.1. Empathy***

Giving concern and putting themselves in the shoes of others are two characteristics that employees should have. Having empathy is understanding, being aware of, and being sensitive to the situation of others and how they feel. As pointed out by the participants, most of the SDO Bataan personnel are empathetic because they are compassionate and courteous toward their clients. Participant D expressed her experience as:

“Siguro yung pagiging courteous ng mga staff sa do.  
Yung tipong papasok ka palang, nagtatanong na agad  
kung anong pwede nila maitulong. Tapos bibihira  
yung nakasimangit at iritable ang sumasagot pag  
nagtatanong ka. Isa pa nagbibigay na din silang

feedback form which I think maganda para naririnig din nila ang hinaing naming mga pumupunta dun.”

*(Maybe the courtesy of staff at DO. Once you entered, they will immediately ask you on how they may help you then it is seldom to see employees who are frowning and irritable when they answer your queries. One more thing is that, they are giving feedback forms which I think is good so that they will be able to hear the sentiments of people who visit there.)*

Further, the insights of Participant E jives with the answer of Participant D from which she stated in the interview that:

*“One of the strongest areas of SDO bataan is the being approachable and accommodate inquiries which transpires on a personal note. They are able to supply answers, clarifications and assistance once requested.”*

Another thing is the statement of Participant J which noted that it is not only the front liners or personnel who are accommodating and prompt. Even the SDO Bataan office heads are and approachable. Participant J expressed her experience as:

“Sa strongest area naman, mapapansin mo na ‘yung mga office heads ng SDO ay mababait at accommodating. Dati kasi nakakatakot pumunta sa SDO. Di ko naman sinasabing hindi sila mababait dati pero ngayon kasi mapapansin mong very accommodating sila at welcome ka talaga kung may kailangan ka man. Malaki na pinagbago ng processing and way of communicating nila ngayon. Kapansin pansin talaga.”

*(Regarding the strongest area, you can notice that SDO office heads are kind and accommodating. Before, it is really uncomfortable to go to SDO. I do not imply that they are not kind before but now, you can really see that they are very accommodating and you feel welcome if you need something. Their processing and way of communicating improved a lot. It is very noticeable.)*



In addition, Participant C also applauds the attitude of the office heads based on her experience wherein she stated that:

“When it comes to the strongest area naman, siguro their effort to improve customer satisfaction. The staff are very accommodating and they make sure na maaddress ang concerns ng mga teachers. And we know naman na DepEd is the largest bureaucracy in the country pero sa sdo bataan, ang pansin ko, kapag nakita ka ng mga heads na may tinatanong or pinafollow up, minsan sila na mismo sasagot sayo directly.”

*(When it comes to the strongest area, maybe their effort to improve customer satisfaction. The staff are very accommodating and they make sure that they can address the concerns of the teachers. We know that DepEd is the largest bureaucracy in the country but at SDO Bataan, I have noticed that when they saw you that you are asking or following up something, sometimes, they are directly the ones to answer you.)*

However, the statements of the abovementioned participants were debunked by the experience of Participant B wherein she expressed her sentiments as:

“Ano po, halimbawa po magpapasa kami ng project proposal para sa school activities namin, for example po INSET for teachers, mga 10 days before the conduct of activity, nakakapagpasa na po kami ng project proposal para mas may time pa to prepare kaya lang po, kahit na maaga kaming nagpapasa, nadedelay po sa SDO dahil minsan wala ‘yung ganitong officer para i-approve ‘yung proposal. Tapos po nung minsan nagpunta ako doon, matagal po akong naghintay bago po ako ma-entertain. Tuloy lang po ‘yung mga tao sa ginagawa nila parang hindi naman po kami nakikita. Okay lang naman po na maghintay kami pero ‘wag naman po sana ‘yung sobrang tagal saka ‘yung ganun na matagal kami naghihintay doon tapos po hindi naman po kami pinapansin.”

*(For example, when we are submitting project proposal for the school activities, for example INSET for teachers. Ten days before the conduct of activity, we are already submitting it so that we will have a longer time for the preparation. However, even though we submit it early, the approval was delayed because sometimes, the officer who will be approving it is not at the office. Then, one time, when I went there, I waited long before I was entertained. The employees there keep doing what they are doing and it seems that they do not notice us. It is okay for us to wait but what is not is to keep us waiting for too long and they will not entertain us.)*

The statement of Participant B reveals that even though there are a lot of positive feedback regarding the accommodation of the employees at SDO Bataan, there are still instances when some of the clients are being set aside. This also shows that there is still a possibility that some employees are not always adhering with the changes brought by the customers' feedback before.

### **Generalizing Analysis**

Having empathy is one of the qualities that every employee must possess. They must always take into consideration that their clients always look forward to a good service that they deserve. The standards set to government employees are always expected to be reflected by them. This is also one of the reasons why government offices, including SDO Bataan, have their customer feedback form. These feedback forms are one of the ways for the office and its employees to know the sentiments as well as the compliments of the clients. This is also where they base the improvements that they have to do in their service.

Based on the interviews, majority of the respondents expressed their appreciation with regards to the improved service of SDO Bataan when it comes to accommodating their clients. Most of them described the employees as accommodating, welcoming, courteous and prompt.

They narrated how they are being served and how the employees interact with them. There are times when the employees are the first ones who are greeting them when they come, and there are instances when they are being approached from time to time if the processing of their requests or concerns keeps them waiting.

Brown (2014) stated that empathy absorbs emotions and helps customers get a place of negotiation instead of complaints. Employees are also increasing likelihood that they will be creating a vital win-win situation. Aside from this, empathetic customer service greatly enriches the bond between the employee and the client. Empathy can also be characterized by knowing the feelings of the individuals that they are helping, extending help regardless of rules and considering how to make the clients happy and satisfied.

It is also notable that the participants stated that even the office heads of SDO Bataan are accommodating and approachable. It is a common conception that facing bosses can be uncomfortable, but the respondents state otherwise. SDO heads are said to be courteous and congenial despite their positions. There are also times when they are the first ones to approach the clients or they are the ones answering the queries.

The attitude of the SDO heads can be directed to the Goleman's (1996) emotional intelligence. According to the Institute of Health and Human Potential (2019), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions, as well as to recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others. Also, it can matter more than IQ. This intelligence enables exceptional leaders to bring out the best in their people.

Another one is the article published by Harris (2019) wherein he reiterated that emotional intelligence is the way to become a more approachable boss. Eliminating the "boss" title is one

thing that they should do and this is what is being reflected based on the actions of SDO heads. Being first to approach is another one, which is evident based on the interviews. He stated that a good leader engages first, engages frequently, and engages to further progress.

However, despite all these praises and compliments coming from the participants who directly experience the empathy of the employees, there are still some who are not fully satisfied with the service quality of SDO Bataan due to the negative encounters with the employees.

Although the employees were not generalized, there are some whom the participant saw who are not meeting the standards. The participant expressed the sentiments of not being given an approachable attitude by some of the employees.

It can be highlighted from the participants' statement that there are still lapses with regards to the empathy of SDO Bataan employees. This may serve as a basis to re-evaluate the performance of the employees and their attitude toward work and clients in order to assure that there will be no more cases as such, or at least will be experienced seldom, considering that there is no perfect customer service.

On top of that, majority of the participants have positive feedback on the quality of service given by the employees and heads of SDO Bataan. This just shows how improved their communication and interpersonal skills are. Although there are some circumstances that some of the employees are falling short in giving quality service, the SDO Bataan is always open for improvements in order to consistently abide to their quality standards.

### **1.2.2. Reliability**

To earn the trust of the clients, the employees should assure that they are reliable enough in performing their duties because they have to provide what is needed and do it accurately and

consistently. Trust of the clients will be earned if there will be a consistency in giving quality service and not just only in specific situations. Participant B stated the practice of SDO Bataan to maintain the office's reliability in giving quality service:

“Yes the services offered by the SDO Bataan aligned with that of their quality policy since the office is gearing towards quality service wherein every customer can be satisfied by the services offered and providing priority with the needs of the customer in order to reduce or eradicate inefficiency among employees.”

Moreover, in the absence of the officer who is supposed to be attending the tasks needed to comply with the request or concern of the clients, SDO Bataan designate authorities for a continuous service just like what Participant F has observed:

“In the absence of authorities--- OIC has been designated by the authorities for the continuous process and other transactions. This becomes an advantage on the Part of the school to still transact business in SDO. OICs were so accommodating and address concerns of the employees/school. By this, most of the time as head, we always leave SDO with the approval and recommendation of the OIC on behalf of the authorities. Papers were signed and transactions were being processed as per the directives of the OIC to the staff.”

Same observation goes with Participant E wherein he stated that:

“I prefer not to because I'm afraid that if they read this they might take it negatively, but in general, through the technical assistance extended by the supervisor in charge in Private Schools, he makes sure that it was properly coordinated to the department/unit so as to minimize the problems or issue that might arise in the future.”

Another respondent, Participant J, also pointed out several things that prove the reliability of the SDO Bataan from which he stated that:

“I would love to underscore the fact that most of the personnel in the Division office I had dealt with are all approachable and service oriented). In addition, I would like to commend the HRD section for continuously initiating trainings and seminars based on the needs of DepEd Bataan. As we all know empowering people of DepEd Bataan is beneficial to ensure quality work force. Lastly, the innovative way of disseminating information from higher office downwards through the creation of DepEd Bataan website is highly appreciated. Memos and orders issued by the higher office is easily cascaded to the grassroot level of the organization. Strong and clear communication is essential in an organization hence the creation of DepEd Bataan website is a great tool to communicate information easily and directly to their clientele.”

Participant F also believes that SDO Bataan is reliable because they align their services with their quality policy as he stated that:

“In a way that they really follow the ISO certification standards. Actually nakapaskil ‘yun sa office nila ‘yung poster doon. Kapag binasa mo, masasabi mo talagang na-mee-meet nila. Hindi lang sila ‘yung pakitang tao na dahil may mga mag-iinspect sa kanila for them to be ISO certified e doon lang sila kikilos para ma-improve ‘yung services nila. Continuous effort talaga ginagawa nila.”

*(In a way that they really follow the ISO certification standards. Actually, it was posted in their office, the poster there. When you read it, you can really say that they meeting the standard. They do not just do the service for a show off for others to say that they are*

*really ISO certified. They are really doing continuous efforts.)*

On the other hand, other clients still notice that SDO Bataan needs to improve the reliability of their services wherein Participant A expressed that:

“Ito yung nakalagay sa Citizen’s Charter nila na nakapaloob under ng Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) na bawat proseso ay may kaukulang oras para namomonitor nila kung beyond ba sila oh hindi per transaction. Oo naiintindihan naming na may mga urgent reports sila as government officials pero sana they take into consideration din na hindi kami pupunta sa opisina nila kung hindi importante ang lakad at kailangan namin, pero gaya nga ng sabi ko ito ay bahagi ng bawat opisina o orhanisasyon ang mahalaga natuto sila at alam ko they have mechanism on it as part of being ISO certified, meron silang customer feedback just to addressed this kind of issue and I know unti unti nagkakaroon na ng katuparan ang mga feedback namin.”

*(This is what was stated in their Citizen’s Chart which is under the Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) that every process has an allocated time in order to monitor if they are already beyond the time or not per transaction. Yes, we understand that they have urgent reports as government officials but they must take into consideration that we will not go to their office if our concern is not that important. But, just like what I have said, it is part of every office or organization the importance of learning from it. I know that they have mechanism on it as part of being ISO certified, they have customer feedback just to address this kind of issue and I know that our feedback will slowly be given attention.)*

The statement of Participant A proves that there are still instances that the SDO Bataan sometimes misses out to adhere to the quality standards. Despite giving out the best service that they can, it is undeniable that the office sometimes falls short just like any government office or

organization. This just shows that in spite of continuous improvement, mistakes or shortcomings are inevitable.

### **Generalizing Analysis**

Growing trust among the clients is one of the difficult tasks to accomplish, knowing that trust is earned and not given. To say that one is reliable, he or she must show commitment, be consistent, and be accountable of their duties and responsibilities. Employees must be dependable enough for their clients to trust them because they are the ones who are supposed to give them quality service and to attend to their needs and concerns. It is a challenge for SDO Bataan to be reliable and dependable most especially today that they are now ISO certified. They have to meet the high expectations of their clients because their office is abiding to the quality standards given to them.

Fortunately, the SDO Bataan are receiving great feedback from their clients because the improvements and developments of their work is observed. Giving comparison from the office's past performance, they are applauded of their job well done to heighten their quality service for their clients. Although it is quite challenging for the employees because they are maintaining international standards, the SDO Bataan always sees to it that they are always addressing their customer's feedback to continuously give their desirable service.

Janowiak (2019) noted that to demonstrate reliability means to show people that one can be depended upon. It is also the best way to establish and grow trust. Another is showing commitment in digging in solutions to address dilemmas or conflicts. This means putting extra time and effort to attend to the concerns of the clients. Also, consistency should be observed



through giving their best efforts to satisfy their clients. Although it is hard to please others, employees must keep in mind the quality policies and standards that they are adhering to.

Moreover, based on the statements of the respondents, they have observed that SDO Bataan is meeting their quality policy because their compliance and commitment to their duties is noticeable. Also, the set of quality standards was posted at their office that is why the clients can freely observe or notice if the employees at SDO Bataan are performing the way how they are supposed to do their job.

Giving the best efforts to provide quality customer service could be quite a normal scenario but maintaining it to achieve regular consistency is what makes it more challenging. Mills (2020) said that customers value consistency from their service providers because they base their expectations on previous positive experiences. This means that employees need to focus on making sure that their interactions with customers are consistent and quality based.

However, on top of several positive feedback by the clients, there are still some respondents who experience dissatisfaction with the service of SDO Bataan wherein he experienced waiting for his concern to be addressed. Based on his sentiments, he stated that SDO Bataan was not able to meet the allocated time of processing documents based on the office's Citizen's Charter. His experience can be seen as an inconsistent act of the office. Although his experience is just a small portion compared to the feedback of other clients, his case should not still be considered as isolated because there is a possibility that other teachers or principals in Bataan experience the same, but were not interviewed.

Obviously, there is no business, organization or office that is perfect. However, SDO Bataan has to assure that having such case should not be disregarded but rather the problem should be

handled quickly and with care. It is tolerable that despite being ISO certified, there are still times that SDO Bataan has downsides, what is intolerable is any kind of negligence or failure to deliver on promises.

### 1.2.3. Responsiveness

Immediate response is one of the desirable actions that is expected from employees. Setting aside busy schedules and tons of work, clients who are visiting SDO Bataan always look forward to a quick respond. Responsiveness is important for the clients because no one would want to be left hanging without receiving updates or response, just like what happened to Participant G wherein he expressed his frustration as:

“Although ISO is a big help in improving the services of the SDO Bataan, still, some of the personnel are lacking of what we called "time management". When I was completing my documents for my out of the country travel, unfortunately people from the division office failed to process my documents on time. I had to process it by my self and follow up which caused me so much trouble and stress. The document tracking form is missing and I don't have any idea to which office that my document stopped.”

Similarly, Participant H shared almost the same sentiment as Participant C from which he stated that:

Actually, with regards to the issues na namimisppalce ‘yung documents, sa nakikita ko parang wala pang masyadong action regarding that e. Siguro this time, ito na ‘yung mga dapat nilang pagtuunan ng pansin. Tapos na tayo doon sa pagiging approachable, accommodating ng mga tao nila sa office pero sana when it come to filing, sana ayun ‘yung maaddress nila agad. Sayang din kasi ‘yung pagod ng pagbyahe e. Nasa mahigit isang oras kang babyahe papunta, kainitan pa, tapos wala silang mabibigay na file di ba. Mahirap ‘yun. Time c onsuming talaga s’ya at pati iba mong gawain na supposedly na matatapos mo within that they e hindi

mo matatapos dahil nga nagpunta ka sa SDO pero wala ka namang bitbit pauwi.

*(Actually, with regards to the issue that documents are being misplaced, it seems that there is no further action regarding that. Maybe this time, this is the one that they should be giving focus. We are done with being approachable and accommodating of staff but I hope when it comes to filing, I hope they will address that immediately because it is a waste of time to travel. You will travel for almost an hour given the hot weather but you will end up not getting the files you need. It's hard. That is really time consuming and the duties that you are supposed to attend to will be compromised.)*

The statements of Participant H and C show an incompetence with the service of SDO Bataan because such incident will be avoided if the office is following appropriate protocols to prevent such dilemma. Despite the negative feedback, SDO Bataan still has positive ones with regards to their responsiveness just like what Participant H has encountered:

“Everything. Specifically with the management and leadership of our EPS, Sir Andy, he ensures that even if we are Private Schools we still get a fair and equal chance to be updated with the Projects, Programs, and Activities of the department and he kept on telling us that we need to keep ourselves abreast with the demands of time so we can be responsive to our students, which is true.”

Participant I also noted the noticeable improvement of SDO Bataan wherein she stated that:

“Yes naman po. It is really manifesting how the SDO improved a lot since they became ISO certified. They really complied with the standards. They really know how to serve their clients in a way that they will be satisfied. Pinapangatawanan talaga nila ‘yung pagiging ISO certified. They are embodying their title. Before nga, ilang talaga kaming magpunta doon kasi nakakatakot humarap sa kanila. Parang hindi sila ngumingiti ganun at meron pang times noon na naghintay talaga ako nang matagal. Kung hindi pa ako

kumibo, hindi ka talaga nila i-e-entertain pero ngayon, ibang iba na. They are very accommodating even the key officials. Minsan nga sila pa ‘yung unang nambabati.”

*(Yes, of course. It is really manifesting how the SDO improved a lot since they became ISO certified. They really complied with the standards. They really know how to serve their clients in a way that they will be satisfied. They really embody how it is like to be ISO certified. They are embodying their title. Before, we really feel uncomfortable facing them. It seems that they are not smiling and there is an instance before when I waited too long. They will not entertain you if you will not approach them first, but now, it is really different. They are very accommodating even the key officials. Sometimes, they are the first ones to greet you.)*

Participant J also noticed the responsiveness of SDO Bataan regarding their feedback before whereas she stated that:

“Manpower and access to information. In the previous years, SDO only have limited staff and personnel, at present, we’ve seen huge change on the number of personnel who can address concerns of the employees and do the process. It is very helpful on the part of our teachers and non teaching personnel in the field. This makes our work, requests and transactions easier this time.” Participants have contradicting statements in terms of responsiveness of SDO Bataan. Given that they have different concerns, the service they are also receiving varies. It is important to note the sentiments of the other participants because there it shows that there is still an existing inconsistency in giving service to the clients.

### **Generalizing Analysis**

There is a lot of conflicts that may arise if there will be a slow response from the employees. There would be some duties that will be left hanging and there will be inconveniences on the part of the clients. This is the reason why urgency of attending to duties shall be given an utmost importance because delays could cause inconveniences on both parties. It is also possible to

increase client dissatisfaction instead of receiving desirable feedback most especially the office was already ISO certified.

Some of the participants have contradicting statements most especially when it comes to being responsive on updating the pertinent documents of the clients. There are instances when SDO Bataan fail to process the documents on time wherein the clients need to be the one to always update the office. Also, some of the respondents said that there are missing or misplaced documents that take time before being retrieved. These situations cause inconveniences on their part that is why they are calling for a more organized document filing to track the documents easily. This practice would save time and effort for the employees as well.

Linton (2017) believes that customer responsiveness delivers an excellent customer experience because it enables to deliver the highest standards of customer care at a time when the customer most needs it. He also posited that it must ensure that incidents are resolved promptly within agreed timescales and provide customers with quality response and support throughout an incident. Customers who know that their problems are taken care of are fully satisfied and happy.

These statements of Linton (2017) can also be reflected in the actions of employees at SDO Bataan because the participants expressed their satisfaction on how the division office responds to their needs immediately. They also noted that even the office heads are responsive to the queries of the clients despite their busy schedule. They can also get information directly from the supervisors and superintendent, proving that responsiveness does not also settle with the employees but with the office heads as well.

Toister (2013) highlighted the importance of responsive customer service. Customers also expect an immediate resolution via other channels such as chat, phone, and in-person and define service excellence through the response rate. This shows how important the urgency is for the clients. He also reminded that customers do not just want a fast response -- they also want their problem solved as they expect responsive customer care.

However, there are inevitable scenarios when SDO Bataan cannot avoid to have lapses when it comes to being responsive. Just like what happened to other participants wherein their concerns were not easily addressed, they feel dissatisfaction towards the quality of customer service given by SDO Bataan. Although the employees did not mean to give dissatisfaction, such cases cannot be avoided.

Kirk (2014) stated that responsiveness becomes a challenge when it gets in the way of accuracy or thoroughness, because since speed or responsiveness has become such an important of work, it occasionally edges out quality and that is not acceptable. A speedy response that is sloppy or inaccurate does not help anyone, so the challenge with responsiveness comes down to balance. Employees have to balance so they will be able to respond in a timely manner while taking the necessary time to offer a thorough, positive response.

The statement of Kirk (2014) might justify the how the SDO Bataan had responded to other participants. There is a possibility that there are times when the work has to slow down in order to assure a good quality of customer service. Delays could also be a choice in order to scrutinize more the processes needed in attending to the concerns of the participants who experienced dissatisfaction.

Despite all that, SDO Bataan employees must always take into consideration the welfare of their clients. As what were observed by the respondents, even though the division office has shortcomings sometimes, they still always see to it that they will address the problems immediately to avoid worse conflicts.

#### **1.2.4. Assurance**

Not all the times, the division office is able to respond to the needs and concerns of clients. There are times that they need to follow up because the division office is also following protocols for a more organized and formal processing documents. Also, it is unavoidable for the office to be indulged with tons of works in queue, from which some of these are priorities or urgent. These are some of the reasons why SDO Bataan sometimes have delays in responding to the needs of the teachers and principals who are visiting their office or who are trying to reach them whether through chat or e-mail. As a temporary resolver, SDO Bataan is giving them assurance that their needs and concerns will be addressed. Participant C expressed her experience as:

“When we talk about satisfaction in govt services, siguro kasama dito yung, 'how well do your clients know your process?' kasi hindi kami puwedeng masatisfy sa isang bagay na hindi namin alam kung paano ba tumatakbo, kasi pag ganoon, hindi namin alam kung ano ang iexpect namin. So far, kapag nagtanong kami sa aming mga school heads at sdo personnel, regarding sa processing ng mga documents and other services, nasasabi sa amin ng maayos. Ibig sabihin SDO bataan is clear in communicating their process to their clients and based sa sinabi namin, nakikita ko naman nasusunod siya at dahil doon nasasatisfy kami. and another one is that, malalaman mong nasasatisfy kami kung bumabalik kami at hindi kami natatakot pumunta sa SDO. Compared kasi dati, may notion na nakakatakot pumunta sa SDO kasi nandoon lahat ng heads, pero ngayon dahil

accommodating lahat, nawawala yung takot sa clients.”

*(When we talk about the satisfaction in government services, maybe “How well do your clients know your process?” is included because we cannot be satisfied to a particular thing if we do not know the process. If it would be like that, we do not know what to expect. So far, when we ask to our school heads and SDO personnel regarding the processing of documents and other services, they are telling those properly. That means that Bataan SDO is clear in communicating their process to their clients and based on what we said, we can see that it is being addressed and because of that, we are satisfied. Another one is that, we know that we are being satisfied if we are going back and we are not afraid to go to SDO. Compared before, there is a notion that it is uncomfortable to go to SDO because all the heads are there, but now, everyone is accommodating. The fear among the clients vanished.)*

Further, another satisfied customer, Participant D, expressed that:

“Buti nlng kapag pumupunta kami na timing na wala ang hinahanp namin, nagbibigay sila ng number na pwede naming matawagan. Talgang nakikita namin na marami silang pinagtatanungan para lang maaddress concern namin. Yung para bang di ka nila paaalisin na di nakukuha yung kailangan mo. Minsna sila pa tatawag sa hinahanap naming tao.”

*(The good thing is whenever we go there and the person we want to talk to is not there, they are giving numbers that we can contact. We can really see that they are reaching out to address our concerns. They will not let you leave without you getting what you want. Sometimes, they are the ones to call the person we want to talk to.)*

In addition, Participant F expressed her satisfaction as:

“Satisfied in terms of the quality of service, the way



SDO employees respond and accommodate customers. On the part of the school, we have our access to the concerned authorities and staff for each district at SDO. This made our transactions very easy. Since the services offered by SDO are national-based services, still SDO made sure that all concerns regarding teachers, students and the school should be addressed in proper venue and authorities. With this, I am personally satisfied with the actions and decisions made by SDO and with its innovations for the school and its people.”

Similarly, Participant G commended the improvements of SDO Bataan when it comes to assuring its clients to give quality service from which she stated that:

“Yes. They continuously adhere with their policy mandates and that is to give utmost quality service to its clientele. I would like to commend personally SDOB in their journey towards ISO Certification. The mere fact that they submit themselves in the certification ISO that proves to show that the top management are creative and has this mindset of improving their institution in the best possible way they can.”

On the contrary, Participant E had experienced otherwise wherein he stated his experience as:

”Some concerns encountered regarding SDO Bataan transactions are time for processing documents until release and real time updates on progress of submitted document clarifying reasons for rejection, cancellation or return to sender.”

Just like in any other organization, there is always a chance, either slim or not, that there is a dissatisfied customer because even though the employees are strictly observing their quality

standards, shortcomings are unavoidable due to uncontrollable circumstances, same is true with the experience of Participant E.

### **General Analysis**

Every client wants to be ensured of service with quality outcomes. It is normal for them to demand an assurance that they will be given a desirable service that will satisfy their needs, concerns, and even their standards. Although it is known that SDO Bataan complies with their quality standards due to their entitlement of being ISO certified, it is still important to note that their clients have their own standards to set.

Majority of the respondents applauded SDO Bataan for giving them assurance that their concerns will be addressed in the most possible ways that they can do. Even though the division office has its imperfections just like any other organization, they always see to it that they will not leave things unattended because they are doing the best possible ways to cater all the clients.

Markgraf (n.d.) stated that customer service means helping customers solve problems. To carry out this function effectively, customer service has to be easily accessible, knowledgeable, reliable and deliver results. Further, quality assurance includes documenting customer complaints, tracking the actions taken to resolve them and surveying customers on their satisfaction with the result. The system must also check for discrepancies and revises evaluations to make sure that it is functioning cohesively and giving correct results.

These claims by Markgraf reflect upon the actions of SDO Bataan toward their practice of giving assurance to clients that they are doing the best possible ways on how to resolve conflicts, update their concerns, and assess the situation on how they will be giving solutions to the dilemmas of their clients. Also, the office heads always see to it that their clients will be satisfied

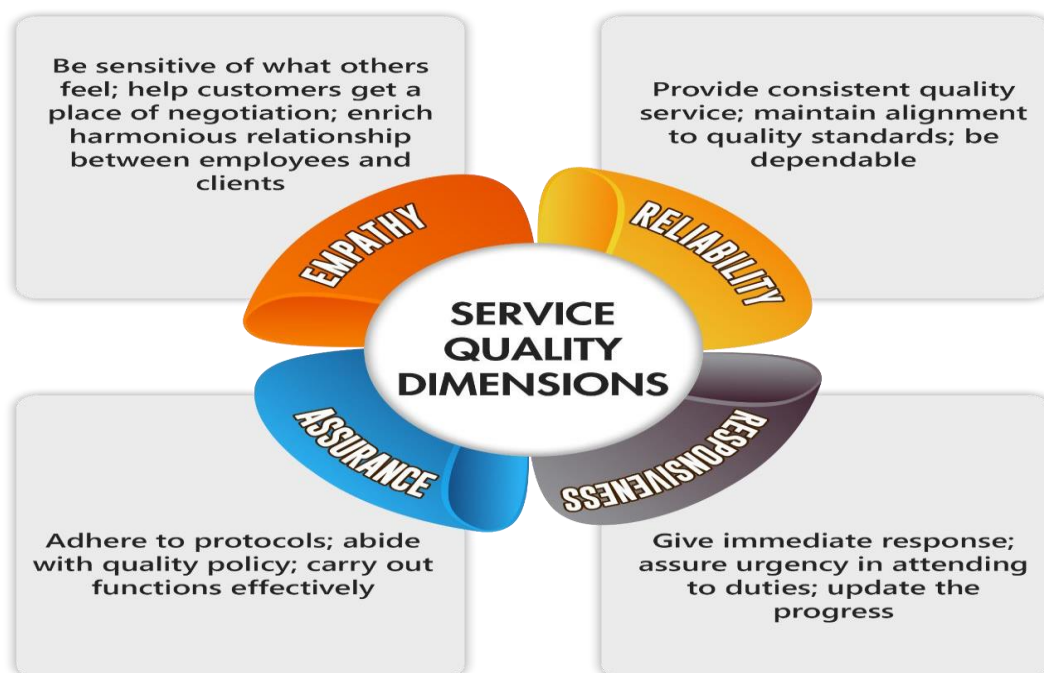
and assured that their problems will be resolved and their concerns will be given focus and attention.

On the other hand, there are still unsatisfied clients who experience shortcomings with regards to the actions of employees at SDO Bataan. While it is a true scenario when the respondents experience problems in processing their documents without being given some clarifications or explanations from the division office, the respondents still give good points about SDO Bataan.

Despite being ISO certified, SDO Bataan is not in denial of having flaws and discrepancies of their processing but that good thing about here is that they are always open to criticisms.

Feedback forms are always available in order to assure that the customer's comments and suggestions will be delivered to them because they base their development and improvements from the feedback of their clients regarding the quality of the service that they are giving.

### 1.3. Quality Service Policy Framework



**Fig 2. The Quality Service Policy Framework**

The formulated framework determined the traits and characteristics that SDO Bataan employees need to embody. Having said to be ISO certified upon meeting the requirements of ISO 9001:2015, the division office must adhere to the four service quality dimensions namely (1) empathy, (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, and (4) assurance. The practices and characteristics of the employees must revolve with these four which serve as a guide for them to be aware on how they perform their duties and responsibilities.

Employees must show empathy through becoming sensitive of what others feel, helping customers get a place of negotiation rather than complaints, and enrich harmonious relationship with the clients. Putting themselves in the shoes of others can be a simple way of showing empathy in order to understand how their clients feel.

Another is being reliable through providing consistent quality service, maintaining alignment to quality standards, and being dependable . this is also a way to earn clients' trust so they will have a positive feeling that the service that they are looking forward to will be given to them.

In addition, adhering to protocols, abiding with quality policy, and carrying out functions effectively are some of the steps in order to assure the clients that employees at SDO Bataan have the capability to give them quality service. Giving assurance is something that clients can hold on to, followed by giving their trust on you that you can give them the service that they deserve.

Lastly is the responsiveness which can be achieved through giving immediate response, assuring urgency in attending to duties, and updating the progress. Being responsive to the queries of the clients can lead to their satisfaction.

## **Conclusions**

1. SDO Bataan employees are said to be approachable, accommodating and prompt, and there are instances when they are being approached from time to time if the processing of their requests or concerns keeps them waiting. SDO heads are also said to be courteous and congenial despite their positions. There are also times when they are the first ones to approach the clients or they are the ones answering the queries. However, some of the participants have contradicting statements most especially when it comes to being responsive on updating the pertinent documents of the clients. As what were observed by the respondents, even though the division office has shortcomings sometimes, they still always see to it that they will address the problems immediately to avoid worse conflicts.

2. The quality service policy framework was devised in order to demonstrate the four dimensions of service quality which are empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. The formulated framework determined the traits and characteristics that SDO Bataan employees need to embody in order to assure quality service that are meeting the international standards.

## **Recommendations**

1. Upon describing the participants' experiences on customer service quality at SDO Bataan, the employees at SDO Bataan must be clear in giving instructions and be transparent with the document processing in order to inform the clients about the progress of their requested documents and for them to better understand how the employees are dealing with their concerns. Further, there should be document tracking in order to have a more organized filing of documents. The division office should also upgrade their online system whereas they can add more documents that could be accessed online in order for the clients and employees to save time and effort.

2.To satisfy the customers continuously and consistently, the division office must have a regular assessment and evaluation with regards to their performance in order to discern where they are falling short and what are the areas that are needed to be improved. These could be done through quarterly assessment of their performance and year-end capacity building. In addition, the employees should attend trainings and seminars to strengthen their interpersonal skills and how to handle works in the office.

3.Further, the division office must consider the quality service policy framework that was formulated in order consistently abide to the requirements of ISO 9001:2015. The framework must also serve as their guide to always remind the employees to possess the characteristics and actions that are stipulated in the framework. SDO Bataan could provide poster of the policy framework and post it at their office.

4.Lastly, future studies could benefit from this topic using mixed method of research. Mixed Method studies may be used to describe the clients' perceptions, sentiments, motivations and experiences regarding customer service quality of SDO Bataan.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Instrument**

#### **Part I. Profile of the Respondents:**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Transaction: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Interview Guided Questions:**

1. What are the common issues and concerns that you encounter when having transaction in SDO Bataan?
2. What is the weakest and strongest area/s of customer satisfaction of SDO Bataan?
3. Does the services offered by SDO Bataan aligned with that of their quality policy?
4. How does customer satisfy with the services being offered by SDO Bataan?
5. How the DepEd Bataan will improve their quality service?