

# Client Satisfaction Survey at Romblon State University, Philippines: Basis for Improved Public Service Delivery

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## ABSTRACT

The Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS) conducted at Romblon State University was anchored on the objective of the Administrative Order (AO) No. 25 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the Harmonization of National Government Performance Monitoring, Information and Reporting Systems, which promotes continuous improvement in public service delivery across government institutions. This study examined client experience and satisfaction with the university's public services during Fiscal Year 2022. A total of 2,850 respondents, composed of internal and external stakeholders, participated in the survey. The study employed a quantitative-descriptive design using convenience sampling. Statistical analyses included the computation of sample means and a 95% confidence interval to determine satisfaction levels across frontline and non-frontline services. Data were gathered through a self-structured questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.989. Results indicated that clients were generally "Very Satisfied" across all service quality dimensions. However, recurring concerns included slow turnaround time, overcrowding during peak transactions, limited ventilation, and insufficient personnel. To address these issues, the study recommends personnel augmentation, improved queue and workflow management systems, and facility enhancements. Continuous monitoring and data-driven service improvement strategies are essential to sustaining quality public service delivery in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *client satisfaction survey, performance-based bonus, public service delivery*

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## INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions increasingly operate within a service-oriented framework where students, parents, faculty, government entities, and community partners are key stakeholders. In both public management research and higher education quality assurance literature, service quality and client satisfaction are recognized as essential performance indicators that shape institutional effectiveness, public accountability, and stakeholder trust (Parasuraman et al., 1994). Global frameworks like the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and Quality Management Systems (QMS) emphasize customer

focus and continuous improvement as foundational principles, which have been empirically linked to service excellence outcomes in educational contexts (ISO, 2018; Sallis, 2022).

Recent studies confirm that service quality in higher education comprises both tangible dimensions (e.g., facilities, ease of access, delivery efficiency) and intangible dimensions (e.g., responsiveness, assurance, communication). In the public sector specifically, client satisfaction is increasingly used as a governance tool to improve transparency, responsiveness, and service legitimacy (OECD, 2020; World Bank Group, 2018).

Romblon State University (RSU), as the sole public higher education institution in the province of Romblon, delivers instruction, research, extension, and production services across multiple campuses. Although monitoring mechanisms such as Administrative Order (AO) No. 25 and the Performance-Based Bonus (PBB) require client satisfaction assessment, there is limited empirical research documenting service quality perceptions in provincial state universities. Most

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literature has focused on urban or internationally ranked institutions, leaving a contextual gap for geographically distributed public universities in developing regions.

This study addresses that gap by systematically examining client satisfaction with frontline services at RSU. Beyond administrative compliance, the findings contribute to the academic discourse on public sector service quality in Philippine higher education and provide evidence to support policy refinement, quality assurance strategies, and continuous organizational improvement.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This study is anchored on Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) originally developed by Oliver (1980), which remains one of the most widely applied models in satisfaction research. EDT posits that satisfaction is determined by the comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance. When perceived performance exceeds expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, resulting in higher satisfaction; when performance falls short, negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction.

Recent public administration research continues to apply and validate EDT in explaining citizen satisfaction with public services. For example, Van Ryzin (2013) empirically tested expectancy-disconfirmation mechanisms in public service evaluation and confirmed that citizen satisfaction is strongly influenced by expectation-performance comparisons.

In higher education and public service contexts, expectations are often categorized into predictive (what individuals expect will happen), normative (what should happen), and ideal (what they desire to happen), which influence how services are evaluated (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Differences in expectation levels explain why clients receiving similar services may report varying satisfaction outcomes.

Applied to the present study, EDT suggests that high satisfaction ratings in most service quality dimensions indicate positive disconfirmation, where perceived performance met or exceeded expectations. Conversely, relatively lower ratings in responsiveness may reflect expectation gaps related to turnaround time and service accessibility. Thus, EDT provides a robust theoretical lens for interpreting client satisfaction with frontline services at Romblon State University.

The Service Quality Theory is introduced by Oliver (as cited by Anjalika and Priyanath, 2018) argues that when a service provider fails to deliver based on the clients' standards, clients will rate the provider as 'low quality', and if the provider delivers the service as expected or beyond the expectation, clients will rate it as 'high quality'. Parasuraman et al. (1985) explained that customer satisfaction is basically based on what the clients have gone through during the transaction that is

why service quality is a strong element of satisfaction because the quality or state of the service determines the kind of output the provider was able to deliver to the clients.

This study investigated the total client experience and satisfaction in the public services delivered by RSU during the fiscal year 2022. Specifically, it sought to determine the respondents' profile, assess their level of satisfaction across various service quality dimensions and frontline offices, identify problems encountered in the service delivery process, and gather recommendations for improvement.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative-descriptive survey design. The design was appropriate as it aimed to determine the level of client satisfaction with the services delivered by Romblon State University (RSU) during Fiscal Year 2022. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to quantify respondents' perceptions of service quality. The open-ended comment sections for feedback were used to supplement quantitative findings.

### **Respondents**

The respondents were categorized as: (a) teaching and non-teaching personnel (permanent, temporary, project-based, casual, job order, and contract of service); (b) students; and (c) external stakeholders who availed of university services during Fiscal Year 2022.

### **Sampling Procedure**

A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, was employed. Due to restrictions and limited physical access during the pandemic period, participation depended on the availability and willingness of clients who accessed university services. While practical under the circumstances, this sampling approach limits the generalizability of the findings and is acknowledged as a methodological limitation of the study.

The survey was conducted across the main campus and satellite campuses offering frontline and non-frontline services within the province of Romblon.

### **Sample Size Estimation**

Sample size estimation was performed to determine the number of respondents needed to estimate the level of client satisfaction at a 95% confidence level ( $z = 1.96$ ). Using a margin of error of 4.1828% and a sample variance derived from the 2021 survey results ( $s^2$

Table 1. Frequency distribution of clients

|                    | Variable                 | Frequency    | Percent      | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>      | Male                     | 916          | 32.1         | 33.9          | 33.9               |
|                    | Female                   | 1,784        | 62.6         | 66.0          | 99.9               |
|                    | LGBTQ+                   | 3            | .1           | .1            | 100.0              |
|                    | Missing                  | 147          | 5.2          |               |                    |
|                    | Total                    | 2,850        | 100.0        | 100.0         |                    |
| <b>Client Type</b> | Student                  | 2,602        | 91.3%        | 95.7%         | 95.7               |
|                    | Administrative Personnel | 19           | .7%          | .7%           | 96.4               |
|                    | External Stakeholders    | 69           | 2.4%         | 2.5%          | 98.9               |
|                    | Teaching Personnel       | 20           | .7%          | .7%           | 99.7               |
|                    | Designated Official      | 9            | .3%          | .3%           |                    |
|                    | Missing                  | 131          | 4.6          |               |                    |
|                    | <b>Total</b>             | <b>2,850</b> | <b>100.0</b> |               |                    |

= 1.2980), the computed required sample size was 2,850 respondents.

The sample size was calculated using the formula:  

$$n = (z^2 s^2) / e^2$$

Where:

n = sample size

z = z-value at 95% confidence level

s<sup>2</sup> = sample variance

e = margin of error

The computation yielded a required sample size of 2,850, which was achieved in this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 2,850 respondents participated in the survey, the majority of whom were students within the 15–25 age bracket. This demographic concentration explains why student-centered frontline services recorded higher transaction volumes and likely influenced overall satisfaction ratings. Since students constitute the primary client base, service efficiency and responsiveness toward student concerns significantly shape institutional satisfaction outcomes.

Overall satisfaction across the eight service quality dimensions yielded a composite mean of 4.84 (Very Satisfied), indicating consistently high perceived service performance. Among the dimensions, costs (M = 4.89) received the highest rating. This suggests that clients perceive university services as affordable, transparent, and aligned with public institution mandates. In public higher education settings, cost fairness strongly influences trust and legitimacy, particularly in

provincial institutions where economic sensitivity is high.

Access and facilities (M = 4.87), assurance, integrity, and outcome (M = 4.86) also received high ratings, reflecting clients' confidence in staff competence and ethical service delivery. These findings may be attributed to ongoing institutional compliance with ISO-based quality management standards and process standardization initiatives implemented in recent years.

Conversely, responsiveness (M = 4.78) obtained the lowest mean, although still within the “Very Satisfied” range. The relatively lower rating may be associated with operational constraints such as limited personnel, high student transaction volume, and residual pandemic-related adjustments. Responsiveness is typically sensitive to turnaround time and queue management, which were also reflected in the few reported concerns regarding waiting time and staff availability.

Among frontline offices, the Office of Student Affairs and Services (OSAS) obtained the highest mean (M = 4.94), representing a substantial increase from its FY 2021 mean of 3.92. This marked improvement suggests the effectiveness of service enhancement interventions, possibly including streamlined procedures, digital coordination, and strengthened student engagement mechanisms implemented after the previous evaluation cycle. The upward trend indicates institutional responsiveness to prior feedback. Similarly, the Guidance and Counseling Unit (M = 4.90) and Cashiering Office (M = 4.89) demonstrated strong performance, likely reflecting structured service protocols and clearer transaction processes.

Table 2. Level of satisfaction on the frontline services offered based on the eight service quality dimensions

| Dimensions               | Mean        | Std Deviation | Confidence Interval<br>(Lower Limit, Upper Limit) |             | Level of Agreement    | Remarks               |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Access Facilities     | 4.87        | .392          | 4.85                                              | 4.88        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 2. Responsiveness        | 4.78        | .469          | 4.76                                              | 4.80        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 3. Reliability           | 4.79        | .475          | 4.77                                              | 4.80        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 4. Communication         | 4.83        | .444          | 4.81                                              | 4.85        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 5. Costs ( <i>n</i> =53) | 4.89        | 0.33          | 4.79                                              | 4.99        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 6. Assurance             | 4.86        | .406          | 4.84                                              | 4.87        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 7. Integrity             | 4.86        | .398          | 4.84                                              | 4.88        | SA                    | VS                    |
| 8. Outcome               | 4.86        | .420          | 4.84                                              | 4.88        | SA                    | VS                    |
| <b>Overall</b>           | <b>4.84</b> | <b>0.42</b>   | <b>4.81</b>                                       | <b>4.87</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> | <b>Very Satisfied</b> |

Table 3. Level of satisfaction of the citizens/clients to the frontline services

| Frontline Services                      | M           | Std         | Confidence Interval<br>(Lower Limit, Upper Limit) |             | Level of Agreement | Remarks   |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Cashiering Office                       | 4.89        | 0.33        | 4.79                                              | 4.99        | SA                 | VS        |
| Guidance and Counseling Services Unit   | 4.90        | 0.30        | 4.83                                              | 4.98        | SA                 | VS        |
| Office of the Students Affairs Services | 4.94        | 0.24        | 4.89                                              | 4.98        | SA                 | VS        |
| Office of the University Registrar      | 4.83        | 0.42        | 4.81                                              | 4.85        | SA                 | VS        |
| Health Services Unit                    | 4.78        | 0.54        | 4.69                                              | 4.87        | SA                 | VS        |
| Learning Resource Center                | 4.61        | 0.71        | 4.40                                              | 4.82        | SA                 | VS        |
| Security Service Office                 | 4.84        | 0.39        | 4.74                                              | 4.95        | SA                 | VS        |
| <b>Overall</b>                          | <b>4.82</b> | <b>0.42</b> | <b>4.74</b>                                       | <b>4.92</b> | <b>SA</b>          | <b>VS</b> |

**Legend:**

|             |                            |       |                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| 1.00 – 1.80 | Strongly Disagree          | ----- | Very Dissatisfied                  |
| 1.81 – 2.60 | Disagree                   | ----- | Dissatisfied                       |
| 2.61 – 3.40 | Neither agree nor disagree | ----- | Neither satisfied nor Dissatisfied |
| 3.41 – 4.20 | Agree                      | ----- | Satisfied                          |
| 4.21 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree             | ----- | Very Satisfied                     |

In contrast, the Learning Resource Center (*M* = 4.61) registered the lowest mean among offices. Although still rated “Very Satisfied,” the relatively lower score may be attributed to space limitations, ventilation concerns, and increased student utilization following the resumption of in-person services. Infrastructure-related factors often influence satisfaction more directly in learning support units than in administrative offices.

Overall, the composite mean for frontline services was 4.82 (Very Satisfied), indicating sustained positive service perception across units. While 98.84% of respondents reported no concerns, the few issues raised provide meaningful diagnostic insights. Recurring concerns involved slow turnaround time, overcrowding, limited ventilation, and insufficient personnel. These

concerns correspond with the relatively lower responsiveness rating, reinforcing the need for queue management strategies, personnel augmentation, and facility enhancement.

Recommendations primarily focused on improving work ethics, courtesy, facility expansion, and process organization. Although representing a small proportion of respondents, these suggestions highlight service dimensions that are highly visible to clients and can disproportionately affect perceptions of quality.

The findings indicate that RSU’s frontline services are perceived as highly satisfactory, with notable improvement in previously lower-performing units such as OSAS due to the streamlining of services and additional support staff. However, operational responsiveness and infrastructure capacity remain areas

Table 4. Problems encountered by the clients in the process service/s request

| Statements                                                                   | Frequency   | Percentage  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| No answer                                                                    | 2,807       | 98.84%      |
| Positive Comments (Service delivered on time, service is applied well, etc.) | 12          | 0.42%       |
| No problem encountered                                                       | 7           | 0.25%       |
| Lack of personnel                                                            | 3           | 0.11%       |
| Slow turn-around time                                                        | 11          | 0.38%       |
| Office crowding and queue                                                    | 4           | 0.14%       |
| Ventilation and accommodation                                                | 6           | 0.21%       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                 | <b>2850</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Table 5. Recommendations that could further improve the delivery of the frontline services

| Statements                                                                                    | Frequency   | Percentage  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| No answer                                                                                     | 2,802       | 98.31%      |
| Positive comments and commendations                                                           | 20          | 0.70%       |
| Provide additional office staff and personnel                                                 | 6           | 0.21%       |
| Organize the processing of services requested                                                 | 6           | 0.21%       |
| Provide more facilities as needed                                                             | 7           | 0.25%       |
| Improve the work ethics of the personnel<br>(be punctual, courteous, responsible, respectful) | 9           | 0.32%       |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                                  | <b>2850</b> | <b>100%</b> |

for strategic enhancement. Continuous monitoring, personnel support, and facility upgrading are recommended to sustain gains and further strengthen public service delivery performance.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that frontline services at Romblon State University are perceived positively by the majority of clients, particularly students who comprise the university's primary service beneficiaries. Overall satisfaction across service quality dimensions reflects strong institutional performance in areas such as cost transparency, integrity, assurance, and access. These results suggest that existing quality management mechanisms, including compliance with national performance monitoring frameworks, are functioning effectively in promoting client-centered service delivery.

However, while overall satisfaction levels are high, specific operational concerns such as personnel shortages, slow turnaround time, overcrowding, and ventilation constraints highlight structural and capacity-related challenges. These issues, though raised by a small proportion of respondents, point to systemic

factors that may affect responsiveness and efficiency during peak transaction periods.

From a policy perspective, the results support continued investment in frontline capacity-building, including strategic personnel augmentation, workflow streamlining, and infrastructure improvement. Strengthening queue management systems, expanding service spaces, and reinforcing professional development programs on customer relations and public service ethics are recommended to sustain service excellence. Institutionalizing periodic client satisfaction monitoring as part of the university's Quality Management System (QMS) will further ensure evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

For future research, longitudinal tracking of Client Satisfaction Survey results is recommended to assess trends over time. Comparative studies across state universities and colleges may also provide benchmarking insights. Additionally, incorporating qualitative methods such as focus group discussions could generate deeper understanding of client expectations and service experience dynamics.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of sustained, data-driven service enhancement strategies in strengthening public trust and institutional performance.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Cristina Marie J. Balderama crafted the research proposal, supervised the conduct of the study, and led the writing and revision of the manuscript.

Kim Jemar Falo conducted the statistical analysis and interpretation of quantitative data

Juniel G. Lucidos facilitated the implementation of research activities, data collection, and validation of results.

Emelyn R. Villanueva reviewed the manuscript for content, grammar, clarity, and overall quality.

Merian P. Catajay-Mani facilitated the institutional support, funding, and provided guidance for the successful conduct of the study.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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