
Comparative Study of Police Desks Officers' Performance in the Delivery Of Quality Service***Cirilo B. Dalinog***

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Abstract - In accordance with the provisions outlined in the Republic Act 6975, also known as the "Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990," Section 24 defines the powers and functions of the Philippine National Police (PNP), which encompass the enforcement of laws and ordinances related to the safeguarding of lives and properties, as well as the maintenance of peace and order to ensure public safety. These responsibilities inherently involve the provision of front desk services. However, the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) has received reports of unsatisfactory performance from male desk officers, prompting the decision to reassign them from front desk duties. They are to be replaced by female officers designated as "customer relations officers" due to the perceived qualities of patience and empathy commonly associated with women. This move signifies the NCRPO's ongoing commitment to cultivate a more gender-sensitive approach within the male contingent of the police force. The replacement of male police officers with their female counterparts for front desk responsibilities may give rise to several concerns and factors that require careful consideration. It is crucial to emphasize that these concerns are not uniform and can differ based on specific circumstances and the existing policies within a particular police department. In light of the aforementioned issues concerning the delivery of service by front desk officers, the researcher intends to undertake this study to assess the quality of services provided by the police front desk officers, thereby contributing to promote desk officers' delivery of quality service.

Keywords - desk officers, quality service, delivery

Introduction

In accordance with the provisions outlined in the Republic Act 6975, also known as the "Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990," Section 24 defines the powers and functions of the Philippine National Police (PNP), which encompass the enforcement of laws and ordinances related to the safeguarding of lives and properties, as well as the maintenance of peace and order to ensure public safety. These responsibilities inherently involve the provision of front desk services. However, the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) has received reports of unsatisfactory performance from male desk officers, prompting the decision to reassign them from front desk duties. They are to be replaced by female officers designated as "customer relations officers" due to the perceived qualities of patience and empathy commonly associated with women. This move signifies the NCRPO's ongoing commitment to cultivate a more gender-sensitive approach within the male contingent of the police force.

Within the PNP Police office/unit/station, the Front Service Desk or QSD operates as the central hub for coordinating all client/complainant matters at the police station/precinct/unit. Its primary objective is to ensure that all client concerns are appropriately addressed and resolved. A specific example of the services provided can be found in the Philippine National Police Manual (PNPM), Revised PNP Operational Procedures 2021, Chapter 3 (Police Operations), Rule 6 (Investigation Operations). Section 6.2 pertains to the upkeep of the Police blotter, where a daily log of all crime incident reports, official summaries of arrests, reports related to Violence Against Women and Children, Trafficking in Persons, and other forms of Gender-Based Violence as outlined in PNP policies and Philippine laws are meticulously documented. The Front Service Desk personnel oversee the maintenance of the daily register in the blotter book.

During March 2023, the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) disclosed intentions to substitute male police officers with their female counterparts at the front desk, citing the latter's perceived qualities of patience and empathy. This initiative was undertaken with the objective of addressing the issues of unreported and inaccurately recorded incidents related to gender-based violence. The female officers assigned to the front desk were to be designated as "customer relations officers" (Abasola 2023).

Materials and Methods

Utilizing the descriptive research design, the study was conducted at the National Capital Region (NCR), in the different districts of Manila. Two (2) districts with the highest number of clientele/complainants will be chosen. The respondents of the study are of two (2) groups: 1) the residents/complainants of the community of the chosen two (2) districts; 2) the PNP front desk officers. Three (3) different data gathering tools were used in this study: To describe the different services delivered by the front desk officers, document analysis was used. To determine the quality of the services delivered by the front desk officers as per the PNP standard operating office procedure, a researcher-made questionnaire was utilized. The items of the questionnaire were taken from the items of the questionnaire will be taken from the Department of Local Government (DILG) National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Resolution No. 2011-033. To identify the difficulties experienced by the desk officers in the delivery of quality service, an interview method was used.

Results and Discussion

1. Services Delivered by The PNP Front Desk Officers

As per the Department of Local Government (DILG) National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Resolution No. 2011-033, the following are the identified services rendered by the PNP Front Desk Officers:

Act as a Central Point for Coordination. The role of acting as a central point for coordination is pivotal in ensuring that all concerns of clients and complainants at the police station or precinct are efficiently addressed. This involves serving as a hub for information dissemination, managing inquiries, and facilitating communication between clients and relevant personnel within the police unit. This central coordination point plays a crucial role in streamlining the overall service delivery process and fostering a client-friendly environment.

Attend Promptly to Inquiries and Complaints. One of the fundamental responsibilities is to attend promptly, with utmost courtesy, to all forms of inquiries and complaints filed by any person. This underscores the importance of responsiveness in providing efficient and effective services. Front Desk Officers are expected to demonstrate a high level of attentiveness and courtesy, ensuring that individuals seeking assistance or information feel heard and respected.

Uphold the Rights of Clients/Complainants. Ensuring that the rights of clients and complainants are upheld is a critical aspect of the Front Desk Officer's role. This involves a commitment to fairness, impartiality, and respect for the rights of individuals interacting with the police station. Front Desk Officers must be knowledgeable about legal rights, procedures, and protocols to guide clients appropriately and ensure that their rights are protected throughout the service encounter.

Assist Clients to Proper Officers in Quality Service Lane. Front Desk Officers are tasked with assisting clients and complainants to the proper officers involved in the Quality Service Lane. This includes directing individuals to specialized units such as the Police Clearance Section, Women and Children Protection Desk, Human Rights Desk, Investigation Section, Tourist Assistance Centers, and more. The objective is to ensure that clients receive tailored and expert assistance based on the nature of their concerns.

Ensure Appropriate Actions/Resolution. The responsibility of ensuring appropriate actions and resolutions on all concerns of clients is integral to maintaining the quality of service. Front Desk Officers play a key role in initiating the necessary steps to address client concerns, liaising with relevant departments or officers, and overseeing the resolution process. This contributes to overall client satisfaction and trust in the police service.

Responsible for Availability of Client-Feedback Forms. Front Desk Officers are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the availability of client-feedback forms within the vicinity of the Quality Service Lane. This emphasizes the importance of soliciting feedback from clients to gauge their satisfaction levels and identify areas for improvement. Availability of feedback forms enhances transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in the delivery of police services.

2. Quality of The Services Delivered by The PNP Front Desk Officers

To determine the quality of the services delivered by the front desk officers, the twenty-two (22) SERVQUAL questions related to the five dimensions of service quality was used.

The SERVQUAL model, developed by A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard Berry in the 1980s, is a widely used framework for assessing and measuring service quality in various industries. SERVQUAL stands for Service Quality and focuses on evaluating the perceived quality of services by customers. It is based on the premise that customers' expectations of service and their perceptions of the actual service received are critical factors in determining overall service quality.

The model identifies five key dimensions of service quality, often referred to as the RATER model:

1. Reliability. The ability of the service provider to deliver accurate, consistent, and dependable services.
2. Assurance. The competence, courtesy, credibility, and ability to instill confidence exhibited by the service providers.
3. Tangibles. The physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials that contribute to the service experience.
4. Empathy. The extent to which the service provider demonstrates care, consideration, and an understanding of customers' needs.
5. Responsiveness. The willingness and ability of the service provider to help customers and provide prompt service.

To assess service quality using SERVQUAL, customers are asked to rate their expectations and perceptions of a service on each of these dimensions. The perceived service quality is then measured by the gaps between expectations and perceptions.

The SERVQUAL model is widely applied in various industries, including healthcare, hospitality, finance, and more, to identify areas for improvement in service delivery, enhance customer satisfaction, and maintain a competitive advantage. It provides a systematic way to understand and measure the complex and subjective nature of service quality.

2.1. Tangible Service Quality

Tangible service quality refers to the physical and observable aspects of a service that clients can perceive and evaluate. It encompasses the tangible elements that contribute to a client's overall impression of a Front Desk Officer. These elements include the physical facilities, equipment, personnel appearance, communication materials, and any other visible cues that clients encounter during their service experience. In essence, tangible service quality provides tangible evidence of the Front Desk Officer's commitment to delivering a high-quality service.

The overall weighted mean response of 3.45 of the complainants revealed that they assessed the services of the PNP Front Desk Officers as satisfactory. On the other hand, the Desk Officers assessed themselves WM=4.00 as excellent.

Both the complainants and the Desk Officers strongly agreed that "the appearance of the PNP Front Desk Office is consistent with the type of service they provide."

In the context of a Front Desk Office, tangible service quality would encompass the cleanliness and ambiance of the lobby, the appearance of the Front Desk Officers, the comfort and aesthetics of the room, and the overall physical infrastructure. In a retail setting, it might involve the store's layout, the appearance of the products, and the cleanliness of the premises.

Tangible service quality is crucial because these observable cues are often the first points of contact that client have with a service. They shape initial impressions and influence perceptions of service reliability and professionalism. A positive evaluation of tangible service quality can enhance client confidence and trust, contributing to overall satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of attention to tangible elements may create doubts about the Front Desk Officer's competence and commitment to quality. Therefore, the PNP must carefully manage and invest in the tangible aspects of service delivery to positively impact the overall perception of service quality.

2.2. Reliability Service Quality

Reliability in the context of service quality refers to the consistency and dependability of a Front Desk Office in delivering accurate, promised, and error-free services. It is a fundamental dimension of service quality, emphasizing the ability of the Front Desk Office to consistently meet or exceed client expectations. Reliability is essential because clients seek assurance that the service will be delivered accurately and consistently every time they engage with the Front Desk Office.

The complainant strongly disagreed (WM=1.26) on the items “The PNP Front Desk Office met the promised timeframe” and “The PNP Front Desk Office offers services at the time promised”.

The overall weighted mean response of 2.66 of the complainants revealed that they assessed the services of the PNP Front Desk Officers as satisfactory. On the other hand, the Desk Officers assessed themselves WM=3.80 as excellent.

For instance, in the telecommunications industry, reliability would involve consistent network connectivity and minimal service interruptions. In the context of a financial institution, it would encompass the accuracy of transactions, timely processing of requests, and the dependability of online banking systems. In healthcare, reliability would relate to consistent and accurate medical diagnoses, treatment procedures, and appointment scheduling.

Reliability is critical for building client trust and satisfaction. A reliable service creates a sense of confidence and security among clients, leading to long-term relationships and positive word-of-mouth. On the contrary, service failures, delays, or inconsistencies can erode trust and lead to dissatisfaction. Therefore, Front Desk Office must prioritize and consistently monitor the reliability of their services to uphold high-quality standards and meet customer expectations.

2.3. Responsiveness Service Quality

Responsiveness is a key dimension of service quality that focuses on the promptness and willingness of a Front Desk Office to help clients and provide timely solutions to their needs. It involves the PNP's ability to be agile, attentive, and proactive in addressing client inquiries, concerns, or requests. Responsiveness is crucial because clients often value quick and effective assistance, and it contributes significantly to overall customer satisfaction.

The overall weighted mean response of 3.80 of the complainants and the Desk Officers assessed themselves WM=4.00 as excellent. Both the complainants and the Desk Officers strongly agreed (WM=4.00) on the items “The PNP Front Desk Officers are willing to help the clients” and “The PNP Front Desk Officers knows when and how to respond to client request”.

In the realm of responsiveness, the Front Desk Office should demonstrate a sense of urgency, attentiveness, and a genuine willingness to assist clients. For example, in the hospitality industry, responsiveness would entail prompt room service, quick check-ins, and a rapid resolution of guest issues. In an e-commerce setting, responsiveness is reflected in efficient client support, timely order processing, and effective communication regarding order status. Clients appreciate a responsive service provider because it signifies a commitment to their needs and a recognition of the value of their time. In contrast, delays, unresponsiveness, or a lack of attentiveness can lead to customer frustration and dissatisfaction. To enhance responsiveness, the PNP should invest in training their staff, implementing efficient communication systems, and adopting technologies that enable quick response times. Overall, responsiveness plays a crucial role in creating positive client experiences.

2.4. Assurance Service Quality

Assurance, as a dimension of service quality, pertains to the competence, courtesy, credibility, and the ability to instill confidence in clients. It involves creating an environment where customers feel secure, informed, and assured that they will receive quality service. Assurance is particularly relevant in-service industries where clients may have concerns about the expertise or reliability of the Front Desk Office. The overall weighted mean response of 3.94 of the complainants and the Desk Officers assessed themselves WM=4.00 as excellent. Both the complainants and the Desk Officers strongly agreed (WM=4.00) on the items “The clients are safe with the PNP Front Desk Officers”, “The

PNP Front Desk Officers are polite”, and “The PNP Front Desk Officer’s job is mandated by the Department of Local Government (DILG) National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) Resolution No. 2011-033”.

In the context of assurance, competence implies the knowledge and skills of the Front Desk Office in delivering the promised service. This could include well-trained Front Desk Officers, qualified professionals, or a track record of successful service delivery. Courtesy involves the behavior of the Front Desk Office, emphasizing politeness, respect, and friendliness. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of the service provider, often built through transparent communication, honesty, and ethical conduct. Organizations that excel in assurance often invest in staff training, uphold ethical standards, and communicate effectively with customers. Demonstrating assurance builds trust, reduces uncertainty, and enhances the overall perceived quality of the service. It plays a vital role in customer retention and loyalty, as customers are more likely to return to service providers they trust and perceive as competent and reliable.

2.5. Empathy Service Quality

Empathy, as a crucial dimension of service quality, refers to the ability of Front Desk Office to understand and share the feelings and needs of their clients. It involves a genuine concern for clients' well-being, effective communication, and a personalized approach to meet individual needs. In essence, empathy is about recognizing, acknowledging, and responding to the emotions and circumstances of clients.

The complainant strongly disagreed (WM=1.26) on the items “The PNP Front Desk Office operates at hours convenient to the clients”. The overall weighted mean response of 3.35 of the complainant revealed that they assessed the services of the PNP Front Desk Officers as satisfactory. On the other hand, the Desk Officers assessed themselves WM=3.88 as excellent.

In industries where personal interactions play a significant role, such as healthcare, hospitality, or customer support, empathy becomes paramount. It is reflected in the way employees actively listen to customers, show understanding of their concerns, and strive to provide solutions that consider the customer's perspective. Empathy is not just a scripted response but a genuine effort to connect with customers on a human level. In healthcare, empathetic care involves healthcare professionals not only addressing the physical symptoms but also understanding the emotional and psychological impact of an illness on the patient. In customer service, empathy means acknowledging and resolving issues with a human touch, considering the customer's emotions and experiences.

Organizations that prioritize empathy often invest in training programs that help employees develop active listening skills, emotional intelligence, and a customer-centric mindset. Empathy contributes significantly to customer satisfaction and loyalty, as customers appreciate and remember the positive emotional connection established during service interactions. It goes beyond meeting functional needs and creates a memorable, positive experience that sets the foundation for lasting customer relationships.

3. Significant Difference in The Assessed Quality Of Services Delivered By The PNP Front Desk Officers

The two groups of respondents revealed their assessment on the quality of services delivered by the PNP Front Desk Officers. Comparing their assessments, Table 6 displays the result of the test of hypothesis. T-test was used to test the null hypothesis on significant differences in the assessment on the quality of services delivered by the PNP Front Desk Officers. Findings show that the mean assessment of 3.44 of the complainant and 3.89 of the PNP Front Desk Officers gave a computed p-value of 0.12. This means that the difference of 0.45 is significant and the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance had to be rejected. The mean difference obtained led the researcher to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is significant difference between the assessed quality of services delivered by the PNP Front Desk Officers.

4. Difficulties Experienced By The PNP Front Desk Officers In The Delivery Of Quality Service

These verbatim responses highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by PNP Front Desk Officers, ranging from training deficiencies and resource limitations to the strain of high workloads and communication hurdles. Identifying these themes can inform targeted interventions and improvements to enhance the overall quality of service delivery at the front desk. Categorizing the themes helps in understanding the broad areas of difficulties experienced by PNP Front Desk Officers, providing a structured approach for addressing each category of challenges.

1. **Training and Resources Challenges.** PNP Front Desk Officers reported difficulties related to insufficient training and resources. Many expressed concerns about not receiving adequate training to handle diverse situations effectively. Additionally, limited resources, both in terms of personnel and materials, were cited as hindrances. This theme underscores the importance of investing in comprehensive training programs and providing ample resources to empower officers in their roles.
2. **Workload and Stress Management.** Front Desk Officers often conveyed their struggles with a high workload and the resulting stress. The nature of their responsibilities, which involves managing a constant flow of inquiries and tasks, contributes to a demanding work environment. Addressing this theme involves exploring strategies for workload distribution, introducing stress management programs, and fostering a supportive work culture.
3. **Communication Difficulties.** A prevalent theme was the communication challenges faced by Front Desk Officers. Respondents highlighted instances where unclear communication led to misunderstandings, delays, or even escalated situations. This theme emphasizes the need for improved communication strategies, possibly through additional training on effective communication techniques and protocols.
4. **Technological Limitations.** Several officers expressed difficulties arising from the lack of technological support. Outdated or inadequate technology hindered their ability to perform tasks efficiently. This theme underscores the importance of investing in updated technology and providing relevant training to ensure officers can leverage technological tools effectively in their daily operations.

Understanding and addressing these themes collectively contribute to a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the overall quality of service delivered by PNP Front Desk Officers. By tailoring interventions to each category, organizations can create targeted programs that address the specific challenges faced by officers in their roles.

5. Proposed Program To Promote PNP Front Desk Officers' Quality Service

By individualizing KRAs for each objective, the program aims to cater to the unique strengths and areas of improvement for each Front Desk Officer, ensuring a more personalized and effective approach to skill development, policy understanding, technology adoption, client feedback management, employee engagement, and public perception. This approach contributes to a holistic enhancement of service delivery by addressing individual needs within the team.

By implementing this comprehensive program, the PNP aims to not only enhance the quality of service provided by Front Desk Officers but also create a positive and efficient environment that fosters trust and satisfaction among the community members they serve.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are formulated:

1. Based on the outlined responsibilities and the pivotal role of PNP Front Desk Officers in enhancing overall service delivery, the following recommendations can be considered:
 - **Continuous Training and Development.** Implement regular training programs to enhance the skills of Front Desk Officers in areas such as communication, conflict resolution, and legal knowledge. This will ensure they are well-equipped to handle diverse inquiries and complaints effectively.
 - **Technology Integration.** Explore the integration of technology tools to streamline information management and response systems. Utilizing modern communication channels and complaint-tracking systems can enhance the efficiency of Front Desk Officers.
 - **Enhanced Collaboration.** Foster collaboration between Front Desk Officers and specialized units within the police station. This can be achieved through regular meetings, joint training sessions, and clear communication channels, ensuring a seamless referral process for clients.
 - **Client Education Initiatives.** Develop programs to educate clients about their rights and the services provided by different units within the police station. This proactive approach can contribute to smoother interactions and empower clients to navigate the system more effectively.

- Regular Quality Assurance Assessments. Implement a system for regular assessments of Front Desk services to ensure adherence to established standards. This can involve feedback mechanisms, mystery shopper programs, or internal audits to maintain and enhance service quality.
- Community Engagement. Actively engage with the community to gather feedback on the services provided by Front Desk Officers. This can be done through community forums, surveys, or focus group discussions to understand community expectations and concerns.
- Streamlined Feedback Mechanisms. Ensure that client-feedback forms are easily accessible and actively promote their use. Streamlining the feedback process will provide valuable insights for continuous improvement and demonstrate a commitment to transparency.
- Recognition and Motivation. Recognize and reward exemplary performance by Front Desk Officers. This can boost morale, motivation, and a sense of pride in delivering high-quality services.
- Regular Policy Review. Periodically review and update policies, including DILG NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2011-033, to ensure relevance and effectiveness in addressing evolving challenges in service delivery.
- Crisis Management Preparedness. Provide Front Desk Officers with training in crisis management and conflict de-escalation to effectively handle challenging situations, ensuring the safety of both officers and clients.

Implementing these recommendations can contribute to the continual improvement of PNP Front Desk Officer services, fostering a more responsive, transparent, and client-friendly environment within police stations.

2. To implement the proposed comprehensive program. The PNP aims to not only enhance the quality of service provided by Front Desk Officers but also create a positive and efficient environment that fosters trust and satisfaction among the community members they serve.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings regarding the role of PNP Front Desk Officers underscore their vital contribution to enhancing service delivery within police stations through a client-focused approach, as mandated by DILG NAPOLCOM Resolution No. 2011-033. Their coordination function, coupled with responsiveness to inquiries and complaints, reflects a commitment to efficiency and courtesy, fostering trust and transparency in police services. While the quality of services rendered by Front Desk Officers is generally satisfactory and excellent according to complainants and officers, respectively, significant disparities exist in their perceptions, with complainants rating services lower. The identified difficulties, including training challenges, workload management, communication issues, and technological limitations, highlight areas for improvement. As a response, a proposed program aims to enhance the quality of service provided by Front Desk Officers, addressing the identified challenges and promoting continuous improvement in police service delivery.

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