

Frontline Services of Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office-Laguna (DARPO-LAGUNA): towards to an enhanced client-oriented frontline services

Maryjane D. Fuentes, DPA, Elizabeth S. Espiritu, MPA

maryjanediazfuentes@gmail.com

*Associate Dean, College of Business Management and Accountancy Laguna State Polytechnic University, Santa Cruz, Laguna, Philippines
Budget Officer II Department of Agrarian Reform Santa Cruz, Laguna, Philippines*

Abstract

Frontline service is one of the most essential factors to determine good public governance in any of its offices. An effective and efficient frontline service requires proficient and knowledgeable staff to be assigned as frontlines. For the reason that they face the clients to assist them according to their needs, frontline jobs really an important factor in the delivery of services. As mentioned, frontline services are assigned to address the clients' needs first hand. They are required to solve clients concern with their utmost skills in services delivery. Frontline also serves as the face of an agency or office. Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) as one of government entity is created under the Executive Branch of the Philippine Government. It is the lead government agency that upholds and implements comprehensive and genuine agrarian reform which actualizes equitable land distribution, ownership, agricultural productivity, and tenurial security for, of, and with the tillers of the land towards the improvement of their quality of life through the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) through Land Tenure Improvement (LTI), Agrarian Justice and Coordinated delivery of essential Support Services to client beneficiaries (dar.gov.ph). Among the abovementioned programs, these all require a good and impressive frontline service. This study is focused on the assessment of the frontline services of the Department of Agrarian Reform Office – Laguna (DARPO-Laguna). There were three main categories or divisions that have been assessed: 1. Legal Services Division, 2. Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) Division, and 3. General Frontline Services of DARPO-Laguna. Using the self-constructed questionnaire formulated from the DAR Employee Handbook and Service Performance Model (ServPerf Model), the researcher was able to gather data. These data gathered were tabulated and computed using weighted mean, frequency and percentage, and F-Value and p-value computations. There were three hundred seventy-seven (377) respondents in this study randomly selected from the group of farmers, landowners, Non-Government Organizations, Employees, and Researchers. It reveals from this study that, all the division in DARPO-Laguna that has frontline services including the General Frontline Services was with a great extend when assessed by the respondents. All dimensions and aspects included in this study are acceptable, it means that, in general, DARPO-Laguna Frontline Services is doing a good practice however, still necessitates improvement. In addition, the study found out that there are significant differences in respondents' assessment when grouped according to their types. Based on the results and findings of the study, it is generally recommended that the management of DARPO-Laguna needs to continue its good practices and may opt to further enhance delivery of services to achieve the best clients' satisfaction.

Keywords: Frontline Services; Legal Division; Land Tenure Services Program Division; Counseling on Tenancy Relationship; General Services.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Section 1. Rule VIII, of the Civil Service Law and Rules, Book V of the Executive Order 292 and the Omnibus Rules state, "Every official and employee of the government is an asset to be valued, developed, and utilized in the delivery of services to the public. Hence, the development and retention of a high competent and professional workforce in the public service shall be the main concern of every department or agency in

the civil service”. (Civil Service Commission). Also, in Civil Service Laws and Rules (1995); service delivery as a management concept refers to activities of an organization towards the provision of labor to meet the needs and demands of customers.

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) created under the Executive Branch of the Philippine Government. It is the lead government agency that upholds and implements comprehensive and genuine agrarian reform which actualizes equitable land distribution, ownership, agricultural productivity, and tenurial security for, of, and with the tillers of the land towards the improvement of their quality of life through the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) through Land Tenure Improvement (LTI), Agrarian Justice and Coordinated delivery of essential Support Services to client beneficiaries (dar.gov.ph).

On August 01, 2013, the Rationalization Plan (E.O. No.366) issued by the former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was implemented to the Department of Agrarian Reform. Prior to the nationwide rationalization program, the Department of Agrarian Reform-Laguna consists of Municipal Agrarian Reform Office (MARO- that caters the needs of beneficiaries by municipality. However, as one of the effects of the rationalization, the MAROs were abolished and all its services transferred to DAR Provincial Office-Laguna (DARPO-Laguna).

As of 3rd quarter of 2019, there were (545) number of clients and beneficiaries per month that has been assisted by DARPO-Laguna. These number of clients did not even change although the number of employees were reduced because of rationalization program. This situation brought the researcher to pursue this study of frontline’s services of Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office – Laguna (DARPO-Laguna).

The Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office – Laguna (DARPO-Laguna) is created by decentralization. Meaning, DARPO-Laguna is the main office responsible to implement any DAR related projects and programs within the Province of Laguna. Same with all the provincial office of the department, DARPO-Laguna is mandated to perform the following; (1) to provide Land Tenure security to landless farmers through land acquisition and distribution; leasehold arrangements’ implementation and other LTI services; (2) to provide legal intervention to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBS) through adjudication of agrarian cases and agrarian legal assistance; and (3) to implement, facilitate and coordinate the delivery of support services to ARBs through Social Infrastructure and Local Capability Building (SILCAB); Sustainable Agribusiness and Rural Enterprise Development (SARED); and Access Facilitation and Enhancement Services.

To fulfill the mandated services of DAR, and as a response to general mandate of the government in providing quality services, DAR must showcase quality frontline service. In Raysida, Ulkhaq, Setiowati, & Setyorini (2017) mentioned that the quality of the service which the DAR has to deliver to its clients and beneficiaries is a critical factor for the success of the service providers by a reason of its close connection to customer satisfaction. Moreover, the quality of service is considered as a strategic tool for positioning and means of attaining operational efficiency, improving business performance, as well as a key factor for the success of service providers. Mohd, A.Mohammad, O, & Albkour, A (2013) defines service quality as a way of focusing on meeting the needs and requirements, and how well the service

Currently, the office is situated in the Capital Town of Laguna, which is the Municipality of Santa Cruz. It has fifty-six (56) employees. DARPO- Laguna consist of three (3) office divisions, the Administration and Finance Division, Legal Division, and Operations (LTS) Division. Aside from the Administration and Finance Division, the two others are client facing division meaning, they are directly working with the clients and

beneficiaries.

There are functions that are seems to be problematic and need attention for improvement. The researcher is one of the employees in DARPO-Laguna since 1995, from that she was able to witness how the office improve a lot. However, while she is very thankful for being part of this organization for more than two decades now, she was able to observe and find out what are some areas that need improvement. The researcher identifies that the frontline services of the office is one of the factors to be subject for enhancement.

OBJECTIVES

To provide an assessment on the frontline services of DARPO-Laguna to come up with enhance client-oriented frontline services. To determine and identify the general services of the employees providing frontline services and the issues and challenges encountered by the client to the employees providing frontline services in DARPO-Laguna.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Public Service is a term usually used to mean services provided by government to its citizens, either directly through the public sector or by financing private provision services. The term is associated with the social consensus (usually expressed through democratic election) that certain services are either publicly provided or publicly financed, for social and political reasons they are usually subject to regulations going beyond that applying most economic sectors. Public services are also a course that can be studied at college and/or university. It is also an alternative term to civil service. A public service may sometimes have the characteristics of public good being non-executable, but most merits the good side that is services maybe according to prevailing social norms be under-provided by the market.

In most cases, public service is kind of service i.e. they do not involve manufacturing of goods such as nuts and bolts. They may be provided by local and national monopolies. They maybe involve outputs that are hard to attribute to specific individual effort and /or hard to measure in terms of characteristics such as quality. They often require high levels of training and education. They may attract people with public service ethnicity who wish to give something to the wider public or commodity through their work and are prepared to work harder for less pay as a result. (John Kenneth, Gavbraith has looked at the rule of such “public virtue” in economic growth.

Chanco (2016 mentions that the President of the Philippines, President Duterte had a very good order to his cabinet members that would differentiate his administration very early in his term. It is said, that the president doesn't wants to see queuing in government offices, and also wants bureaucrats to handle the people's business with them expeditiously at no extra cost because their taxes already paid for the service. To me, that was the best thing to come out of Davao in the past weeks since the election. It somehow got lost in the controversies about his attitude towards media and women. I had been calling the Aquino administration's attention to the dismal way ordinary citizens are handled by frontline government agencies. Treating people right when they need to transact some business with government is an obligation of the President. But P-Noy the haciendero could not feel it. The prseient called the people his” bosses” and stopped there. In real corporate life, P-Noy is likely to be fired if he treated his bosses the way his bureaucrats treated us. Implementing the 72-hour limit for bureaucrats to act on papers and requests presented to them. It wants bureaucrats to receive the requests, give the person a piece of paper indicating when he can come back for approval or whatever action requested. It does not want people to line up even before dawn to assure being

served. The president said that there is no more excuse for long lines and bureaucratic delays in this computer age. Indeed, there had been big improvements in getting Census documents (birth and marriage certificates, etc) and NBI clearances. Department of Foreign Affairs has been able to get rid some of the long lines for passport issuance by establishing more offices including at malls. But the president wants them to do more—shorter time needed to get a passport and put up more offices in the provinces. This makes sense for an OFW nation. The worse frontline agencies are under DOTC. The LTO offices are still infested with fixers and their computer system is often offline. It is difficult to renew car registrations and driver's licenses in LTO offices because of corruption and inefficiency. Worse, the LTO closed down their mall satellite offices had been very convenient for people. Of course, it is known that are unable to deliver car plates, car stickers and driver's licenses long after you have paid the necessary fees. Indeed, the car stickers for 2014/15 were not delivered at all and they are not refunding what had been paid to LTO. The new Transportation Secretary change the way LTO and LTFRB operates. For starters, it is said to be inclined to let the car dealers deliver the car plates to their customers. Likewise the dealers are accountable for the plates other frontline agency under the transportation department is NAIA. Secretary-designate ART Tugade must get a competent General Manager unlike the cousin of P-Noy who had been a total embarrassment for the country. Instead of a retired Air Force general, choose a mall or property manager instead. It is also read in a comment to a post of Christine Cunanan, the daughter of columnist Bel Cunanan, that there is no running water at NAIA now...for about a month already. If this is true, it's no longer a surprise. They had power blackouts due to incompetence and a foreign tourist fell in a hole in the floor at NAIA 2 some months ago. Mr. Tugade insist on a complete change of frontline people in the airports, particularly at NAIA. Everyone should be changed, from the PNP Aviation Security contingent to the Office of Airport Security and their screeners and the blue guards. Keeping even one of them will risk infecting new staff with the virus of corruption, inefficiency and incompetence. These reports and articles are apparently related to the current study since the contents are dealing with public service delivery, its functions and sanctions to the employees.

According to NEDA (www.neda.gov.ph) government agencies to consciously put people—clients and workers alike—at the center of their frontline services to further improve the ease of doing business and government service delivery. “Citizens and businesses appreciate it when frontline service providers care about providing what their clients came for as fast as they can, and by all ways and means,” Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said in a statement. According to NEDA's impact evaluation study on the implementation of Republic Act 9485 or the Anti-Red Tape Act (ARTA) of 2007, individuals and businesses availing of government frontline services have become more satisfied with how they are served.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, descriptive type of research was implied. Since this research involve data gathering, identifying, and interpreting the data, descriptive method is the most appropriate to use. In addition, since the research questions that included in this study aimed to provide an assessment on the frontline services of DARPO-Laguna, the researcher finds the quantitative research design as the most appropriate to use to achieve the aim of this study. Calmorin and Calmorin (1996) support this decision to use qualitative research design because the study is focused on the present that will provide value of facts, focusing the attention to the most important things to be reported. Descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exists.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. It reveals the highlights of the findings obtained from the randomly-selected individuals that have transaction to DARPO-Laguna. This study assesses frontline services

of Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office-Laguna (DARPO-Laguna) towards to an enhanced client-oriented frontline services.

Table 1. Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Services of the Legal Division in terms of Mediation-Legal Service to Walk-In-Client, Representation of Client to the (DARAB) Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board and DAR Clearance

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Clients were properly advised about legal matters when issues are raised (walk-in client) | 3.17 | 0.56 | Agree |
| Compromise agreement was prepared by the legal division. | 2.90 | 0.50 | Agree |
| Clients were properly represented to Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) when there are pleading. | 2.83 | 0.61 | Agree |
| The concerned DAR employee attends hearing and provides necessary services to the client in resolving issues. | 3.09 | 0.44 | Agree |
| Documents needed by the client were processed and evaluated immediately unless there are circumstances beyond the control of the concerned division. | 2.63 | 0.55 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 2.92 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 - 1.75)

The table 1 illustrates the respondents' assessment on the level of service of the Legal Division in terms of Mediation –Legal Service to Walk-in client, Representation of Client to DARAB, and DAR Clearance. All parameters included in table 1 received “agree” remarks with 2.92 overall weighted mean. Among the statements in table 1, parameter number 1 that states that, the clients were properly advised about legal matters when issues are raised (walk-in client) got the highest mean (M=3.17, SD=0.56). Meanwhile, the statement number 5 reveals that “documents needed by the client were processed and evaluated immediately unless there are circumstances beyond the control of the concerned division” obtained the lowest mean among the parameters in table 1, it has a remark of “agree” with 2.63 weighted mean and 0.55 standard deviation. Further, statement numbers 4, 3, and 2 all of these also got “agree” remarks from the respondents with 3.09, 2.90, and 2.83 weighted means respectively and 0.44, 0.50, and 0.61 standard deviations in that order. This means that statement that reveals “the concerned DAR Employee attends hearing and provides necessary services to the client in resolving issues”, “compromise agreement was prepared by the legal division”, and “clients were properly represented to DARAB when pleading” are all statements that perhaps has positive implications to the respondents as well as the other two statements. To sum it up, all statements in table 1 got acceptable response result as in fact, all statements got an “agree” as the verbal interpretation

Table 2. Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Services of the Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) Division

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. Lands were distributed through awarding of Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs). | 3.26 | 0.44 | Agree |
| 2. Fix lease rentals of tenants were executed through Leasehold Contracts. | 3.17 | 0.39 | Agree |
| 3. Counselling were provided with regards to the tenancy relationship. | 2.88 | 0.70 | Agree |
| 4. LTSP served as a mediating party when disputes between landowners and tenants are raised. | 2.69 | 0.51 | Agree |
| 5. DAR Clearance were issued on land transaction. | 3.19 | 0.46 | Agree |
| 6. LTSP conducted ocular inspection on coverable lands area. | 3.13 | 0.49 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 3.01 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 - 1.75)

Table 2 reveals the respondents' assessment on the level of services of the Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) Division. Among the six indicators, the statement number 1 turns out to have the highest weighted mean of 3.36 with 0.44 standard deviation and translates to an interpretation of “agree”. This indicator divulges that the “land were distributed through awarding of Certificate of Ownership Awards (CLOAs)”. It means that the respondents agree that lands were distributed in respective owners thru legal documents or the

CLOA. This is followed by statement number 5 that says “DAR Clearance were issued on land transaction” with 3.19 weighted mean and SD = 0.46. Meanwhile, statement number 2 got the third highest weighted mean (M=3.17, SD = 0.39), this indicator also received an “agree” as the verbal interpretation. More so, statement numbers 6, 3, and 4 with (M=3.13, SD=0.49), (M =2.88, SD = 0.70), and (M= 2.69, SD = 0.46) results respectively. These statements focused on conduct of ocular inspection on land areas of LTSP, provision of counselling with regards to tenancy relationship, and LTSP as a mediating party when disputes between landowner and tenants are raised. It can also be observed that the means are not much impressive and all falls under “agree” as remarks. To sum up, all statements, as mentioned, respondents assessed the level of service of the Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) in terms of Lands were distributed through awarding of Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs), Fix lease rentals of tenants were executed through Leasehold Contracts, Counselling were provided with regards to the tenancy relationship, LTSP served as a mediating party when disputes between landowners and tenants are raised, DAR Clearance were issued on land transaction, and LTSP conducted ocular inspection on coverable lands area. with translation of “agree” or “to a great extent” with 3.01 as the overall weighted mean.

Table 3. Respondents' Assessment on the Level of General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Physical Attributes as to Office

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| 1. It has comfortable space to receive and accommodate clients. | 2.71 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 2. The physical facilities are visually appealing. | 2.79 | 0.50 | Agree |
| 3. The appearance of the facilities is appropriate according to the type of service offered. | 2.76 | 0.66 | Agree |
| 4. Records and documents are properly maintained | 2.78 | 0.58 | Agree |
| 5. It uses modern equipment to help ease the processing of transactions and better keeping of information. | 2.52 | 0.55 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 2.71 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 - 1.75)

Table 3 shows the respondents assessment on the level of the General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Office Provincial Office – Laguna (DARPO – Laguna) in terms of Physical Attributes as to Office. This table has five indicators wherein, indicator number 5 has the lowest weighted mean of 2.52 and with standard deviation at 0.55 and translation of “agree” as for the interpretation.

This parameter reveals that DARPO-Laguna Frontline Services “uses modern equipment to help ease the processing of transactions and better keeping of information. This is in connection with what Bajapai (2014) mentions, that deficiency in infrastructure of physical office considered as one of the factors for delivering the public service. The non-availability of these facilities will affect employees to perform functions. In addition, the tangible elements of physical/visible aspects of the office leads to a positive and healthy working environment, according to Panda and Das (2014), define that these visual aspects of service that can be observed in the office improves clients’ satisfaction. Added that the presence of theses visual elements may vary depends on the services of that a certain industry is offering.

Meanwhile, statement numbers 2, 4, 3, and 1 are at first to fourth rank respectively in terms of weighted mean. Statement number 2, says that “the physical facilities are visually appealing” and turn out to be the highest weighted mean, with translation of “agree” as remark. Further, all the other remaining statements, “records and documents are properly maintained”, “the appearance of the facilities is appropriate according to the type of service offered”, and “it has comfortable space to receive and accommodate clients”, got “agree” as verbal interpretation from the respondents. To sum up, it can be seen that the level of the General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the DARPO – Laguna in terms of Physical Attributes as to Office was assessed by the respondents positively. In fact, the table illustrates that it has 2.71 average weighted mean still falls under “agree” as the verbal interpretation. Currently, DARPO-Laguna is located in a barangay at Sta. Cruz, Laguna, occupying the second floor of the building along the high way. Though for some, physical

facilities of an office is the least priority, however on the discussion of Cuaresma (2018), mentions that some institution wanted to enhance their tangible elements by providing not only efficient service but also comfortable and clean area, since she also mentioned that tangible elements can affect or even destroy a good strategy on delivering service performance.

Table 4. Respondents' Assessment on the Level of General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Physical Attributes as to Employees

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|---|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are well-dressed. | 2.96 | 0.41 | Agree |
| 2. Frontlines of DARPO-Laguna show interest in solving issues and concerns of the client. | 2.73 | 0.58 | Agree |
| 3. Clients are acknowledged with respect and appreciation. | 2.73 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 4. Frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are hospitable and polite. | 2.92 | 0.37 | Agree |
| 5. Clients' interests are highly considered | 2.73 | 0.57 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 2.81 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 – 1.75)

This table 4 reveals the respondents' assessment on the level of General Services of the Frontline Service Providers of DARPO – Laguna in terms of Physical Attributes as to Employees. Among the five statements given as indicators, statement number 1, which states that, “frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are well dressed” meaning to say, employees who are in the frontline is presentable enough to the clients in terms of their appearance of looks with 2.96 weighted mean and with standard deviation at 0.41 giving “agree” as the verbal interpretation.

This means that DAR employees appearances are one of the factors that is being considered by the clients. In connection with Panda and Das (2014) as they defined tangible elements, mentioned that it also focuses on how the employees presents themselves in terms of grooming and style of clothes that they wear during their official time of work, meaning how does the employee presents him or herself during service is really a factor to measure service performance.

The statement was followed by indicator number 4, (M=2.92, SD=0.37), also translates in to “agree” as verbal interpretation and reveals that “frontlines of DARRPO-Laguna are hospitable and polite. Meanwhile, statement numbers 2, 3, got the same weighted mean of 2.73 at standard deviation at 0.58, 0.63, and 0.57 respectively.

These three indicators divulge that, “frontlines of DARPO-Laguna show interest in solving issues and concerns of the client”, “frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are hospitable and polite”, and “clients' interests are highly considered”. All the statements mentioned or included in this table are assessed by respondents optimistically that gave a translation of “agree” as the verbal interpretation for 2.81 overall weighted mean.

Table 5. Respondents' Assessment on the Level of General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Responsiveness

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Clients receive prompt service or response. | 2.80 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 2. Frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are always available to help clients. | 2.78 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 3. The promised time of service delivery is strictly followed. | 2.47 | 0.58 | Disagree |
| 4. The service hour allotted is reasonable to process the transactions of the clients. | 2.61 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 5. Clients are politely admitted in the office to hear their issues and problems. | 2.94 | 0.54 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 2.72 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 – 1.75)

The table 5 shows the respondents' assessment on the level of General Services of Frontline Services Providers of the DARPO-Laguna in terms of Responsiveness. Generally, indicators under this variable supported in Omar et.al. (2015), define responsiveness as the willingness of the people providing the services to help the clients and adhere promptly.

The table shows that this portion also provides positive responses as it translates the 2.72 overall weighted mean into “agree” or to a great extent as the verbal interpretation.

It means that respondents see the frontline service providers responsive enough to attend a client’s concern. The indicator that says, “Clients are politely admitted in the office to hear their issues and problems” got the highest weighted mean of 2.94 with SD at 0.54. Further, indicator number 1 that says, “clients receive prompt service or response”, placed as the second in terms of highest weighted mean, this indicators also got “agree” as verbal interpretation for 2.80 weighted mean with SD at 0.60 this is supported by Zeithaml and Bitner (2015) when they mentioned that being responsive in service delivery is communicated to the clients by the length of time before the assistance has been provided, answers to their queries, and attend to their issues .

Meanwhile, indicator number 2 (M=2.78, SD=0.60) which states that “frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are always available to help clients”, also got “agree” as verbal interpretation. It was followed by the fourth indicator which measures that, “the service hour allotted is reasonable to process the transactions of the clients”, this portion got M= 2.61, SD=0.63. However, statement number 2, which has weighted mean of 2.47, with SD at 0.58 is the only indicator that falls under “disagree” remarks or verbal interpretation.

This indicator states that, “the promised time of service delivery is strictly followed”. It means, that respondents may have or have experienced delays in any transaction in DARPO-Laguna specifically with the frontline’s services. On the other hand, despite of this “disagree” remark, the table still shows that in terms of responsiveness, the general services of the frontline service providers in DARPO-Laguna still got overall weighted mean of 2.72 which still gives translation of “agree” as verbal interpretation.

It only means that clients or respondents assessed the frontline services of DARPO-Laguna responsive.

Table 6. Respondents’ Assessment on the Level of General Services of the Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Reliability

| Indicative Statement | M | SD | Remark |
|---|------|-------------------|--------|
| The frontlines are equipped with knowledge necessary to provide the information needed by the client. | 2.80 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 2. Frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are well -oriented to give assistance to the clients. | 2.79 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 3. The information given by the assigned employee is objectively provided | 2.83 | 0.61 | Agree |
| 4. The skills of the frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are fit to the work assigned. | 2.62 | 0.68 | Agree |
| 5. The data and information needed is constructively provided to the client. | 2.77 | 0.59 | Agree |
| Overall Mean | 2.76 | To a great extent | |

(Legend: Strongly Agree = 3.28 – 4.00, Agree = 2.52 – 3.27, Disagree = 1.76 – 2.51, Strongly Disagree = 1.00 - 1.75)

Table 6 reveals of the respondents’ assessment on the level of general services of the frontline services providers of DARPO-Laguna in terms of Reliability.

The table shows that reliability as one of the variables of this study receives acceptable response from the respondents. As shown, this variable received 2.76 overall weighted mean and with an “agree” as verbal interpretation in line with what Dalton (2015) mentioned, that public expectations are key to their trust in the government, when the expectation of the public according to goes up over the actual performance of the government, trust and satisfaction will goes down. In details, statement number 1 that says, “the frontlines are equipped with knowledge necessary to provide the information needed by the client” (M=2.80, SD=0.63), number 2, “frontlines of DARPO-Laguna are well -oriented to give assistance to the clients” (M=2.79, SD =0.63), the third statement which says that, “the information given by the assigned employee is objectively provided”, (M=2.83, SD=0.61), forth statement that mentioned, “the skills of the frontlines of DARPO-

Laguna are fit to the work assigned”, ($M=2.62$, $SD=0.68$), and the last indicator which reveals, “the data and information needed is constructively provided to the client”, ($M=2.77$, $SD=0.59$), all these parameters have acceptable responses from the respondents as it receives “agree” as verbal interpretation.

On the other hand, statement number 4, turns out to have the lowest weighted mean of 2.62, that reveals that the skills of the frontline service providers of DARPO-Laguna are fit to the work assigned, however, it has still positive verbal interpretation “agree”.

To sum it all up, as mentioned, the reliability variable has acceptable results from the responses of the respondents with overall weighted mean of 2.76 and interpreted as “agree”. It supports Bekker (2015) asserts that government employees should possess the necessary knowledge, ability and commitment to take the responsibilities, understand their purpose on serving the people, value the work towards the attainment.

Table 7 shows the frequency and percentage distribution table on issues and challenges encountered by the respondents on frontline services provided by DARPO-Laguna. The first column shows the specific issues and challenge determined by the researcher, wherein, respondents had the chance to select if they experienced the specific scenario. The second column shows that frequency count of the respondents who answered or selected the issues and challenges, and the last column is the percentage. The table shows that the item number 5 has the highest frequency counts, out of 377 respondents, meaning to say that there were 226 respondents or 63% of the total respondents believed that DARPO Laguna is lacking of equipment to perform given task is the top issue and challenge. Moreover, 61% or 221 frequency count out of 377 respondents selected statement number 2 as one of the issues and challenges that states that, “staff are not available to attend the needs of clients”. Meanwhile, the statement numbers 4, 3, and 1 place as the 3rd, 4th, and 5th and terms of the highest number of frequency count or percentage. Statement number 4, which says that, “employees are not equipped with enough knowledge” covers 51% or 183 out of 377 respondents while statement number 3 explains that, “the instructions in submission of requirements are not clear and confusing” has 177 frequency count out of 377 respondents that covers the 49% of the total respondents. Also, statement number 1 which states that, “there is no comfortable space to accommodate client”, is considered as one of the issues and challenges in the frontline services of DARPO-Laguna, it has 126 frequency counts out of 377 total respondents or the 35% of the respondents. However, the statement number 6, “the frontline employees are rude and impolite” is relatively low in frequency counts among all the issues and challenges identified, this statement also garnered 20 frequency counts out of 377 or it only covers 6% of the total number of respondents.

Table 8. Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Respondents' Recommendations to Improve the Frontline Services of DARPO-Laguna

| Recommendations | f | % |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Separate office space should be provided for the employees of DAR providing frontline services for better accommodation of clients. | 242 | 67 |
| 2. There should be staff assigned to attend the concerns and queries of clients | 257 | 71 |
| 3. Flowcharts or well-defined process in submission of requirements should be provided in the area where clients are received. | 304 | 84 |
| 4. Trainings should be conducted in order to familiarize the process and work of every division | 239 | 66 |
| 5. DAR should have upgraded equipment to help render the service needed by the clients. | 245 | 68 |
| 6. DAR employees should show compassion and hospitality to every client. | 96 | 27 |

Table 8 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution on the respondents' recommendations to improve the frontline services of DARPO-Laguna. It reveals that among the recommendations given, item number 3, mentioning that “flowcharts or well-defined process in submission of requirements should be provided in the area where clients are received”, that obtained the highest number of frequency counts at 304 out of 377 that is equivalent to 84% of the total number of respondents. On the other hand, among the six items given, statement number 6 got the lowest number of frequency counts (96 out of 377) or the 27%, that says, “DAR

Employees should show compassion and hospitality to every client”. Further, recommendation number 1, “separate office space should be provided for the employees of DAR providing frontline services for better accommodation of client” is at 67% of the total number of respondents or the 242 or 377 while recommendation number 2, “there should be staff assigned to attend the concerns and queries of clients” got 257 out of 377 frequency counts of 71%. The recommendation number 4 (Trainings should be conducted in order to familiarize the process and work of every division) and number 5 (DAR should have upgraded equipment to help render the service needed by the clients) covers the 239 or 66% and 253 or 68% of the total number of respondents respectively. It can be observed that the recommendation that has highest number of frequency count reached 304 (84%) and the lowest is at 27% or 94 out of 377 total number of respondents.

Table 9. Test of Significant Difference of the Respondents’ Assessment on the Level of Service of Legal Division in Terms of Mediation Legal Service, Representation of Client to the DARAB, and DAR Clearance

| Legal Service | Respondent | | | | | F | P |
|--|--------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|------|
| | Employee (M) | Farmer (M) | Land Owner (M) | Non-Gov't. (M) | Researcher (M) | | |
| Mediation-Legal Service | | | | | | | |
| ▪ Legal advice | 3.59a | 3.12c | 3.00bc | 3.10abc | 3.44ab | 5.79** | <.01 |
| ▪ Compromise agreement | 3.00b | 2.84b | 2.90b | 3.10ab | 3.44a | 9.79** | <.01 |
| Representation of the client to the DARAB | | | | | | | |
| ▪ as a client's attorney | 3.00ab | 2.83b | 2.35c | 2.70abc | 3.20a | 6.38** | <.01 |
| ▪ attend hearings | 3.00a | 3.07b | 3.00b | 3.00ab | 3.44a | 4.68** | .001 |
| DAR Clearance | | | | | | | |
| ▪ Processing and evaluation | 3.59a | 2.49c | 2.90b | 2.80bc | 3.00b | 34.40** | <.01 |

Means that do not share a letter are significantly different
 **p value is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 9 shows the test of significant difference of the Respondents’ Assessment on the Level of Service of the Legal Division in Terms of Mediation Legal Service, Representation of Client to the DARAB, and DAR Clearance. Notably in the table the Legal Advice, under the Mediation-Legal Services, reveals that there is a significant difference in the assessment when grouped according to types of respondents a F value is at 5.79 and P is at <.01. However, responses of Employees and Farmers are significantly different while Land-Owners, Non-Government Organizations, and Researchers responses are not significant. Meanwhile, also under the same service category, the assessment when grouped according to types of respondents, compromise agreement is also significantly different. It shows that in compromise agreement, responses of Non-Government Organizations and Researchers are not significant while employees, farmers, and land-owners’ responses found to be with significant difference. This came out with F value is at 9.79 and P-value is <.01. The decision in these two indicators discussed under Mediation-Legal Service is to reject null hypothesis since both P-values is both < .01.

Further, under Representation of the Clients to the DARAB indicator there are two sub categories, first statement states that “as a client’s attorney” got F-value at 6.38 and P-value of <0.01. The responses in this category are significantly different when grouped according to types of respondents. However, the assessment the responses of farmers, land-owners, and researchers are significantly different while employees and Non-Government-Organizations’ assessment is not significant. The responses in the second category that states that, “attend hearings” is also significantly different with F-value of 4.68 and P-value at .001. However, responses were different. Among the five types of respondents, the Non-Government Organization is the only type of respondent which responses is not significant while all other types of respondents are significantly different. To sum up the second indicator in this table, responses for both categories are significantly different since P-values are <.01 and .001 respectively.

Finally, the table also shows that the “processing and evaluation” category under DAR clearance the assessment is significantly different when grouped according to types of respondents. The responses of

employees, farmers, landowners, and researchers are significantly different while the responses of Non-Government Organization are not significant. This result indicates that the responses is significantly different with F-value of 34.40 and F-value is $<.01$. Hence, it goes to show that null hypothesis must be rejected.

Table 10. Test of Significant Difference of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Service of Land Tenure Services Program (LSTP) Division

Table 10 illustrates the test of significant difference of the Respondents' Assessment on the Level of Service of Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) Division of DARPO-Laguna. There are six categories under this indicator wherein all obtained P-value of $<.01$ which tells that responses from all categories are significantly different.

In the first category where it states that, "awarding of CLOAs" obtained F-value of 5.83, however, the responses of employees, farmers, and land-owners are with significant difference while the responses from Non-Government Organizations and Researchers are not significant. Next category, which is the "execution of leasehold contracts with 36.71 F-value got different responses from the respondents as well. Among the five types of respondents, Researcher is the only type of respondents which responses is not significant in category 2 while all other four are significantly different. Meanwhile, in the third category under LTSP Division, responses of employees and farmers are significantly different while landowners, Non-Government Organizations, and Researchers' responses are not significant in the category that state, "counselling on tenancy relationship".

Furthermore, the responses of land-owners and Non-Government Organization are not significant in the fourth category that implies, "conduct of mediation-disputes" while responses of employees, farmers, and researchers are significantly different that gives this category F-value of 6.87 and P-value at $<.01$. Next is the category that reveals "issuance of DAR Clearance" obtained 15.91 F-Value. All responses from this category are significantly different with P-value at $<.01$. Finally, in terms of "ocular inspection" category, this part got 13.54 F-value at $<.01$ P-value. Among the types of respondents, responses of Non-Government Organization turn out to be not significant while responses employees, farmers, land-owners, and researchers are significantly different.

To sum up, all categories under LTSP Division are significantly different with 5.83, 36.71, 11.53, 6.87, 15.91, and 13.54 F-values respectively and all obtained $<.01$ P-value that recommend to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 11. Test of Significant Difference of the Respondents' Assessment on General Frontline Services Providers of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Physical Attributes, Responsiveness, and Reliability

| Service | Respondent | | | | | F | p |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| | Employee (M) | Farmer (M) | Land Owner (M) | Non-Gov't. (M) | Researcher (M) | | |
| Physical | | | | | | | |
| • Office | 2.96a | 2.63b | 2.88ab | 3.10a | 3.18a | 11.75** | $<.01$ |
| • DAR Employees | 3.07ab | 2.75c | 2.84bc | 3.08ab | 3.14a | 11.40** | $<.01$ |
| Responsiveness | 2.98ab | 2.64c | 2.83bc | 2.90abc | 3.30a | 16.48** | $<.01$ |
| Reliability | 3.00ab | 2.69c | 2.78bc | 3.08abc | 3.22a | 9.58** | $<.01$ |

Means that do not share a letter are significantly different
 **F value is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 11 shows the test of significant difference of the Respondents' Assessment on General Frontline Services Providers of Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office (DARPO-Laguna) in terms of Physical Attributes, Responsiveness, and Reliability. The table clearly shows that all indicators or categories included in this part obtained P-value of $<.01$ that means of having responses with significant difference.

Under Physical, there are two categories; in terms of office and in terms of DAR Employees. In terms of Office, responses of landowners are the only that is not significant while employees, farmers, Non-Government Organizations, and Researchers are with significant difference. This obtained F-value of 11.75

and p-value is $<.01$. On the other hand, in terms of DAR Employees, still under Physical, it has 11.40 F-value and $<.01$ p-value as well. Landowners and Non-Government Organizations' responses are not significant while the remaining three types of respondents are significantly different in terms of their responses.

Moreover, in terms of responsiveness, having the F-value of 16.48 and the P-value of $<.01$ means having significant difference, however, the responses of land-owners and Non-Government Organizations are not significant while the employees, farmers, and researchers' responses are significantly different.

Lastly, in terms of reliability, it obtained 9.58 F-value with $<.01$ P-values that means of having significant difference and recommend to reject the null hypothesis. However, responses are different since employees, landowners, and Non-Government Organizations are of no significant difference in contrary to the responses of farmers and researchers that turns out to be significantly different.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

From the findings of this study, the conclusions were listed as follows:

In terms of the level of services of the Legal Division in terms of Mediation-Legal Service to Walk-in Clients, Representation of Client to Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB), and DAR Clearance were agreeable to the respondents. Since the employees were assessed positively in terms of providing advice about legal matters when issues are raised by the walk-in clients, it can be concluded that the employees are all knowledgeable on the matters that corresponds to their tasks. In addition, it can also be concluded that DAR employees are adherent and true to their responsibilities since attending hearing for clients and resolving issues were performed well by the employees as assessed by the respondents. Meanwhile, it can be seen that in providing a compromise agreement and representing a client to DARAB were quite low in terms of weighted mean. It can be drawn from that results that in terms of actions that includes third party or actions that might be beyond DARPO-Laguna's control, might be enough but weak, it can might be the issue in connection outside the office, or it can be in the factor of miscommunication since it involves other people outside the organization or the third party.

Finally, in the Legal Division, it is evident that the documents processing and evaluation go the lowest computed weighted mean, it means that, in terms of handling documents, processing and evaluation as mentioned, though it is still on "agree" remarks, the office seen to be in "needs improvement" on this. It can be concluded from the findings that, there is a glitch on processing the document, this maybe one of the results of bureaucracy, wherein, there are numerous stages that certain documents should go through before it finished a transaction. It can also be a result of government rationalization wherein number of employees in the office was trimmed down so there is no permanent person that is assigned to process and evaluate a document.

With regards with the level of service of Land Tenure Services Program (LTSP) division, it can be concluded that LTSP Division is doing a good job on implementing and performing their mandated duties as the respondents assessed the division positively with overall weighted mean of 3.01 and with "agree" remarks. LTSP Division is functioning well in terms of awarding Certificate of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs), in providing Leasehold Contracts, and Issuing DAR Clearance. It can be concluded that, since LTSP Division can be considered as the major function of DARPO-Laguna, employees are focused on the tasks given to the division since these tasks are the mandated by the National Government, and also this is one of the major basis in measuring the performance of DARPO-Laguna as a whole.

However, among the indicators included in this division, it seems that in providing counselling with regards to tenancy relationship and serving as mediating party when disputes between tenants and landowners, are tasks that the division might be weak on. Though, these indicators still got “agree” as a remark, when weighted means is considered, there still big room for improvement since it only has weighted means that are lower than 3.0. It can be concluded that, like the Legal Division, LTSP also may find it difficult to avoid miscommunication since the tasks that has low weighted means are deals with people or group outside the organization.

Based on the respondents’ assessment on the level of services of the employees providing frontline services of the Department of Agrarian Reform Provincial Office – Laguna (DARPO-Laguna), the recommendations are as follows:

Physical

1. With regards with the physical as to office, it is recommended that the office must invest on purchasing new modern equipment that will be used for processing the transaction of the clients. It is also recommended that the Citizens Charter must be put on the place that is very visible to the public. The office can also add signage that contains information about the different transactions in the office. Further, it is highly recommended to include the above-mentioned factor in their operational budget.

2. In terms of physical as to Employees, the recommendation can be given is that the office must continue to conduct the employee engagement in the form of employee orientation. DAR management must continue to provide seminars and trainings for the employees in terms of having good characteristics of a government employee. Since, this part also got positive assessment from the respondents, the organization must fortify the projects, rules, and probably acknowledging their performing employees.

As findings and conclusion implies in terms of responsiveness

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