# GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SURVEY REPORT 2017

**Improving the Quality of Public Service Delivery**

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## Executive Summary

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of the Government Service Delivery Survey, that was rolled out by the Public Administration Sector Division from the 06th March – 19th May 2017. The survey questionnaire targeted members of the public who had used or had accessed a government service over the past twelve months. The main purpose was to gauge the level of customer satisfaction, customer service standards and the performance of government agencies in delivering their services, from the viewpoint of the customer.

An online link as well as electronic copies of the survey questionnaire was circulated to all Government Ministries, State Owned Enterprises, Constitutional Bodies, the Chamber of Commerce and the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organizations.

Key findings from the survey highlights the need for government agencies to enhance and strengthen their standards of customer service and service delivery. Overall, more than fifty percent (50%) of responses indicated that they were discontented or dissatisfied with the performance of government agencies in delivering their services. The four main areas of concern that were identified during the survey include;

- Front desk customer service;
- Phone receptionist;
- Length of waiting time for service;
- Availability of staff and employees;

Survey respondents also provided suggestions on how government agencies can improve their performance, service delivery and customer service. Some of these key recommendations include continuous customer service training for all staff, placing stronger emphasis on the importance of customer service and strengthening enforcement and compliance with Public Service values and Code of Conduct.

## Introduction

The Public Administration Sector Coordination (PASC) Division rolled out the 2nd Government Service Delivery Survey, from the 6th March – 19th May 2017.

The Survey is a key activity under the Public Administration Sector Plan 2013/14 – 2017/18. Its main purpose is to provide a platform that allows the public to voice their opinions, regarding the performance and delivery of services by government agencies. Feedback from the public will help identify gaps and weak areas that require strengthening in order to improve government's service delivery.

The results of this survey will be compared against the results of the Client Satisfaction Survey that was commissioned in 2014. The assessment will form part of a Comparative Report for Cabinet on the overall quality of service delivery and improvements required, to improve the client/customer experience. The findings will also contribute to the Government's Service Improvement Program 2017/2018 to improve the quality of public service delivery.

## Methodology

The initial aim was to outsource the survey to the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS). As such, a proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Finance for monetary support to help fund the survey according to the costs provided by the SBS. However, the proposal was declined and so assistance was then sought from the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSD), particularly with communicating and distributing the survey out to the public and the communities. Unfortunately, due to competing priorities, the MWCSD were unable to provide assistance. Given the encountered challenges especially the financial constraints, the Coordination Division then opted to roll out the survey via online. This provided a more cost effective method while at the same time encouraging ownership and coordination from government agencies. An online link was circulated to all government Ministries, SOE's as well as SUNGO and the Chamber of Commerce to make accessible on their organization webpages. Additionally, they were encouraged to ensure that hardcopies were also available for anyone who may wish to complete and fill in the survey manually.

To raise awareness and encourage participation, weekly reminders were emailed to all stakeholders. In addition, posters were distributed to various government buildings around the town area along with newspaper advertisements on the Sunday Observer edition.

The survey questionnaire consisted of fourteen (14) questions. The main objective of the questionnaire was to gauge feedback and opinions on the following areas; overall level of customer satisfaction, staff/employee performance in delivering services and/or product, visual appeal of the office and suggestions or recommendations to improve customer experience and satisfaction. The survey was structured in a multiple choice format with responses categorized in the following order; 1 – Very satisfied, 2 – Satisfied, 3 – Neutral, 4 – dissatisfied, 5 – Very dissatisfied or Not applicable. For classification purposes, the survey also required other details regarding which government agency and what type of service that was used, age group, gender, highest level of education attained, marital status and how well aware/knowledgeable are they regarding the services they are using.

## Challenges

The following challenges were encountered during the planning, implementation and analysis stage of this survey;

1. Financial limitations;
2. Competing priorities;
3. Lack of support from government offices;
4. The public has limited resources for online access;
5. Lack of interest/participation from the public;
6. Low number of survey questionnaires received;
7. Reliability and integrity of received data;
8. Incomplete survey questionnaires;
9. Limited knowledge/understanding of government services.

# Findings and Analysis

It would be ideal for the collected data to provide a detailed and unbiased representation of customer satisfaction and performance standards for government agencies, by identifying, comparing and contrasting the number of satisfied vs. dissatisfied customers for each organization. However, given the low number of received surveys with various organizations only having one survey respondent each, plus the lop-sided distribution of responses,[1] it would be unfair to judge or draw conclusions on performance of each agency based on this available data. This would certainly lead to a biased conclusion that would incorrectly paint one agency as more effective or more ineffective than the other. Henceforth the bulk of this report is a combined analysis of questionnaire response choices[2], based on the specific mode or type of service used and the level of customer satisfaction indicated for that service.

In other words, although this report will to some extent provide an analysis of customer satisfaction per agency, the overall objective is to analyze the customer experience, with regards to the particular mode of service that was used. This will help identify existing gaps and weaknesses per service delivery mode, with the aim of informing the development of relevant policies and strategies, that will strengthen and improve customer service standards for government agencies.

## (I). Age, Gender, Education and Marital Status

According to the results of the survey, 68% of the respondents were females and 32% were males. The results also showed that 72% or the majority of the respondents were in the 26 – 49 age group with 17% at the age group of 18-25 and 11% at the 50 – 64 years old age group.

In terms of marital status, 56% indicated they were married, 36% were single, 3% were separated or divorced, 3% were widowers and 2% were in a de-facto relationship. In addition, 96% indicated that they had attained tertiary level of education with the other 4% completing secondary level education.

Respondents were also required to indicate how well aware they were of the services provided by Government Ministries and agencies. Interestingly, 46% identified that they were somewhat aware, 45% were well aware, 7% responded that they were slightly aware and 2% identified that they were not at all aware. This goes to show that the majority of the public are aware of the services provided by all Government Ministries and agencies.

When asked of how they had learned or found out about the particular government service that they used, word of mouth was on the top with 37 %, followed by television with 18%, website with 15%, radio with 14%, newspaper accounted for 11% and community centers had 6%. From the collated data above, word of mouth seems to be the most effective medium of communication to raise public awareness regarding the different services offered by government ministries.

## (II). Type of service used

Two hundred and forty-one (241) questionnaires were received by the PASC Division when the survey officially closed on the 19th May 2017. Out of this total, 93% or 224 indicated that they had used a

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[1] 7 out of the 34 organizations account for more than 50% of survey responses: NHS, SNPF, SWA, MJCA, MOF, MPMC, MOH while the other 40%+ is divided among the other 27 organizations
[2] Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, N/A, not complete

government service over the past twelve months, while the other 7% or 17 respondents indicated 'No'. In the following section of the questionnaire however, only 87% or 210 respondents identified which type of service that they had used, while the other 13% or 31 respondents did not complete this section. The National Health Service (NHS) ranked as the overall highest utilized service with 53 survey respondents. This is followed by the Samoa National Provident Fund with 22, Samoa Water Authority at 14, the Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration with 11, Ministry of Health, Electric power Corporation and Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet with 10 each. The below table presents the number of responses received for each government agency.

Table 1: Number of survey questionnaires received per Ministry/Organization

| Government Agency | Number of survey respondents |
|---|---|
| National Health Services (NHS) | 53 |
| Not completed | 31 |
| Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF) | 22 |
| Samoa Water Authority (SWA) | 14 |
| Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA) | 11 |
| Ministry of Health | 10 |
| Electric Power Corporation | 10 |
| Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MPMC) | 10 |
| Public Service Commission (PSC) | 8 |
| Ministry of Finance (MOF) | 7 |
| Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) | 7 |
| Land Transport Authority (LTA) | 7 |
| Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) | 6 |
| Samoa Life Assurance Corporation (SLAC) | 5 |
| Ministry for Revenue (MfR) | 5 |
| Ministry of Police (MOP) | 4 |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) | 4 |
| Central Bank of Samoa (CBS) | 4 |
| Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) | 3 |
| Samoa Shipping Services (SSS) | 2 |
| Samoa Airport Authority (SAA) | 2 |
| Ministry of Commerce Industry and Labor (MCIL) | 2 |
| Legislative Assembly (LA) | 2 |
| Development Bank of Samoa (DBS) | 2 |
| Sports Facility Authority (SFA) | 1 |
| Samoa Tourism Authority (STA) | 1 |
| Samoa Post Limited (SPL) | 1 |
| Samoa Ports Authority (SPA) | 1 |
| Samoa Law Reform Commission (SLRC) | 1 |
| Samoa International Finance Authority (SIFA) | 1 |
| Public Trust Office (PTO) | 1 |
| National University of Samoa (NUS) | 1 |
| Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) | 1 |
| Attorney General (AG) | 1 |
| | **Total** = 241 |

In addition, as presented in Figure 1 below, the collected data shows that in terms of the specific mode of service used, phone and in person services make up a combined total of 64% and were utilized much more than website, mail and email services, which only make a combined total of 36%. This is understandable because with the exception of mail delivery services, the latter demands higher financial costs in terms of resource needs for example; computer/laptop or smartphone requirement, online connectivity/online data, electricity or continuous power supply etc. It also requires survey respondents to be knowledgeable with online applications and online browsing – a skill that may not necessarily be available for everyone. Another contributing factor is that as presented in table 1 above, the top seven government agencies that account for more than 50% of survey responses, are dominantly technical or service oriented in nature. For instance, the NHS, EPC, SWA, MOH, MJCA and the Immigration division of the MPMC, mainly render in person or telephone services with regards to arranging doctor appointments, payment of water and electricity bills, installation or repairs of electrical lines or water pipes, facilitation of court case schedules or processing passport renewal requests.

**Figure 1: Type of Service used**
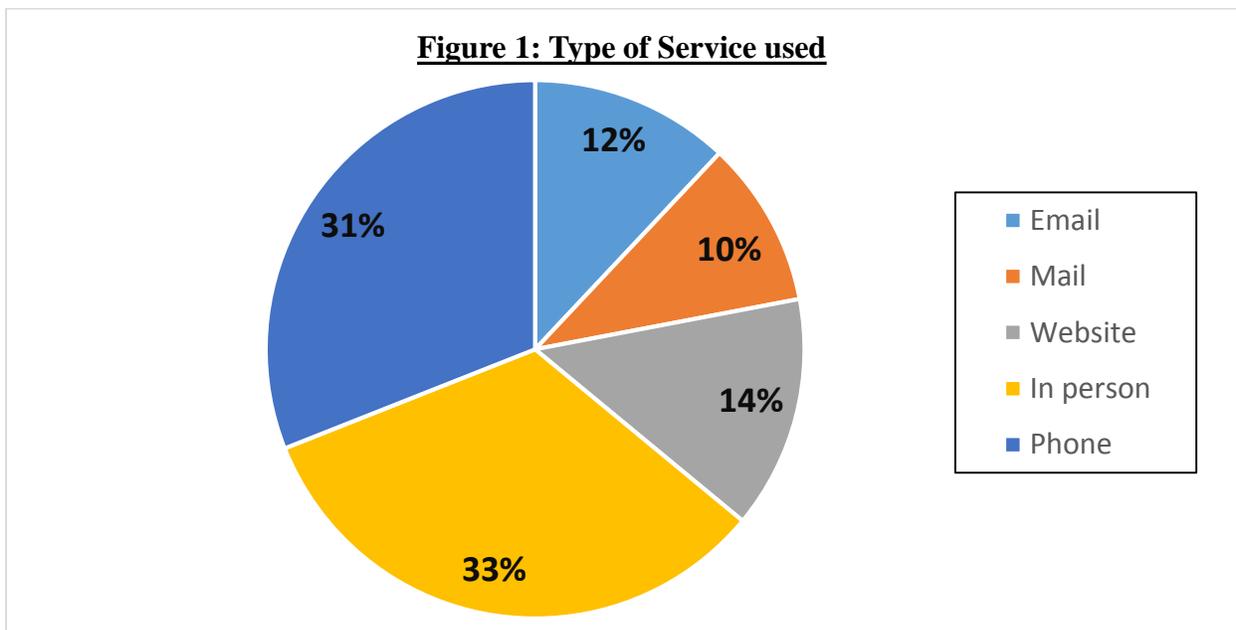


## (III). Customer satisfaction

The customer satisfaction section of the survey is made up of four questions based on the following areas: timeliness, accessibility, cost and overall satisfaction with the quality of service delivery. Each question is further categorized into specific criteria based on the different modes of service delivery; telephone, face to face or in person, mail delivery, organization webpage and email.

The following graphs represent the level of customer satisfaction as identified per question, for each mode of service delivery;
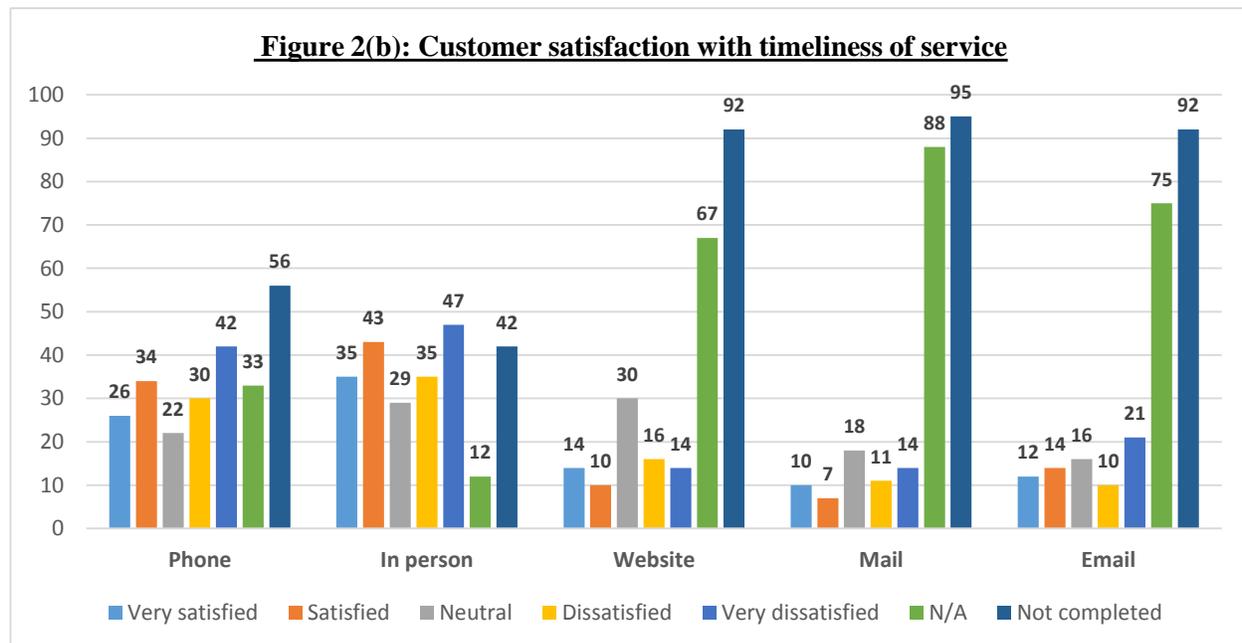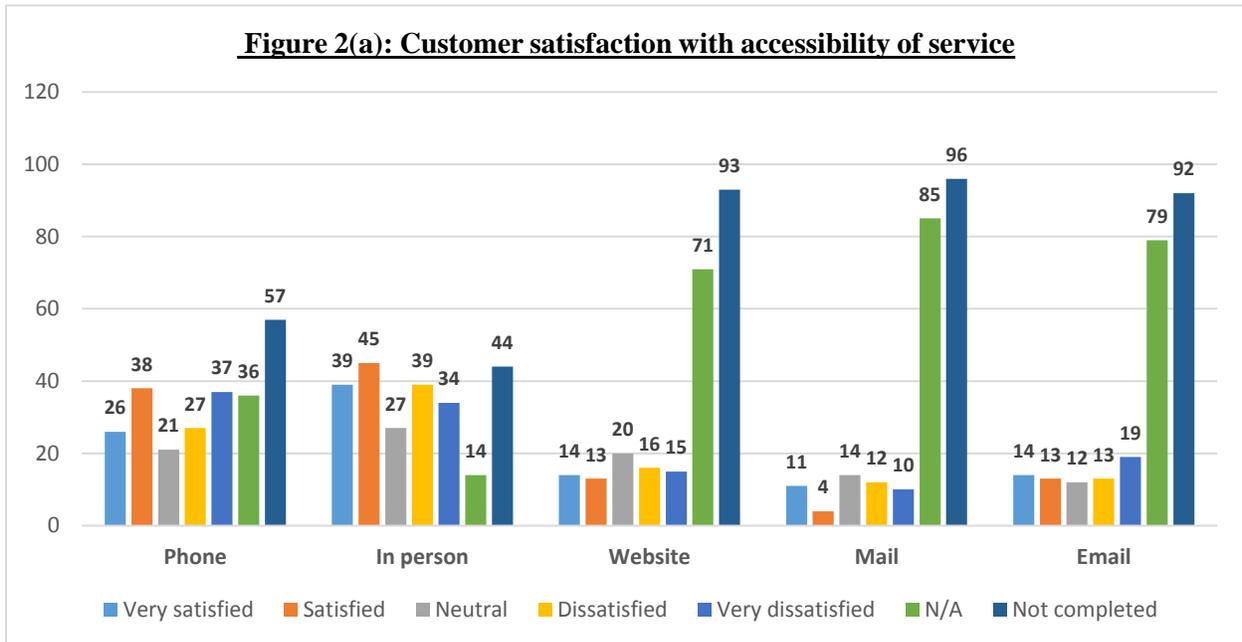
**Figure 2(a): Customer satisfaction with accessibility of service**



| | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | N/A | Not completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phone | 26 | 38 | 21 | 27 | 37 | 36 | 57 |
| In person | 39 | 45 | 27 | 39 | 34 | 14 | 44 |
| Website | 14 | 13 | 20 | 16 | 15 | 71 | 93 |
| Mail | 11 | 4 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 85 | 96 |
| Email | 14 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 19 | 79 | 92 |

**Figure 2(b): Customer satisfaction with timeliness of service**



| | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | N/A | Not completed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phone | 26 | 34 | 22 | 30 | 42 | 33 | 56 |
| In person | 35 | 43 | 29 | 35 | 47 | 12 | 42 |
| Website | 14 | 10 | 30 | 16 | 14 | 67 | 92 |
| Mail | 10 | 7 | 18 | 11 | 14 | 88 | 95 |
| Email | 12 | 14 | 16 | 10 | 21 | 75 | 92 |

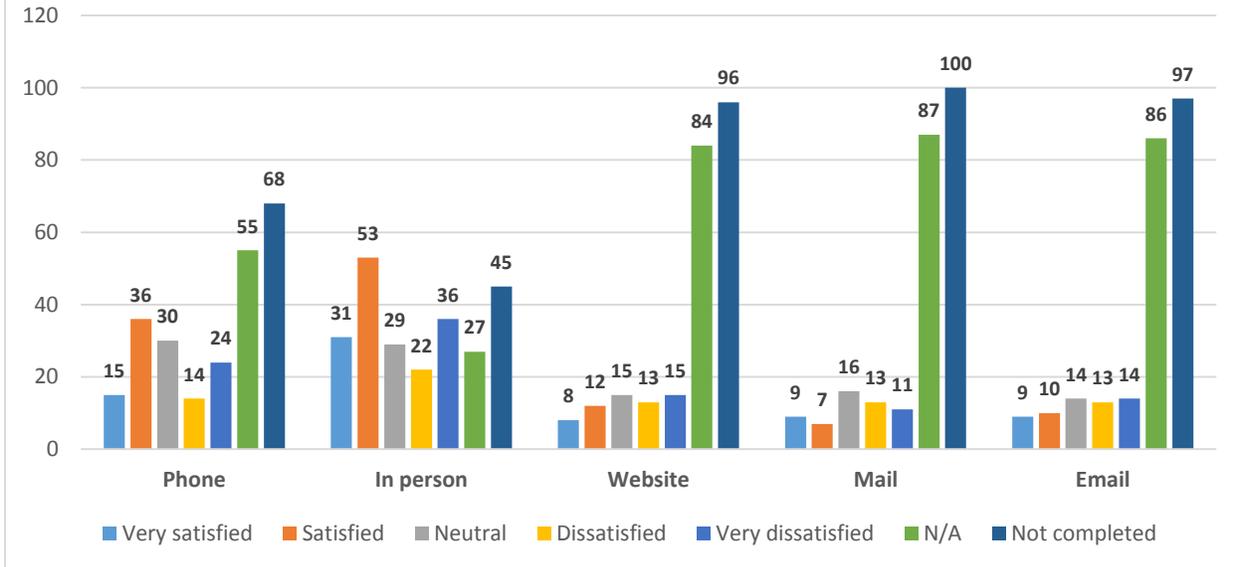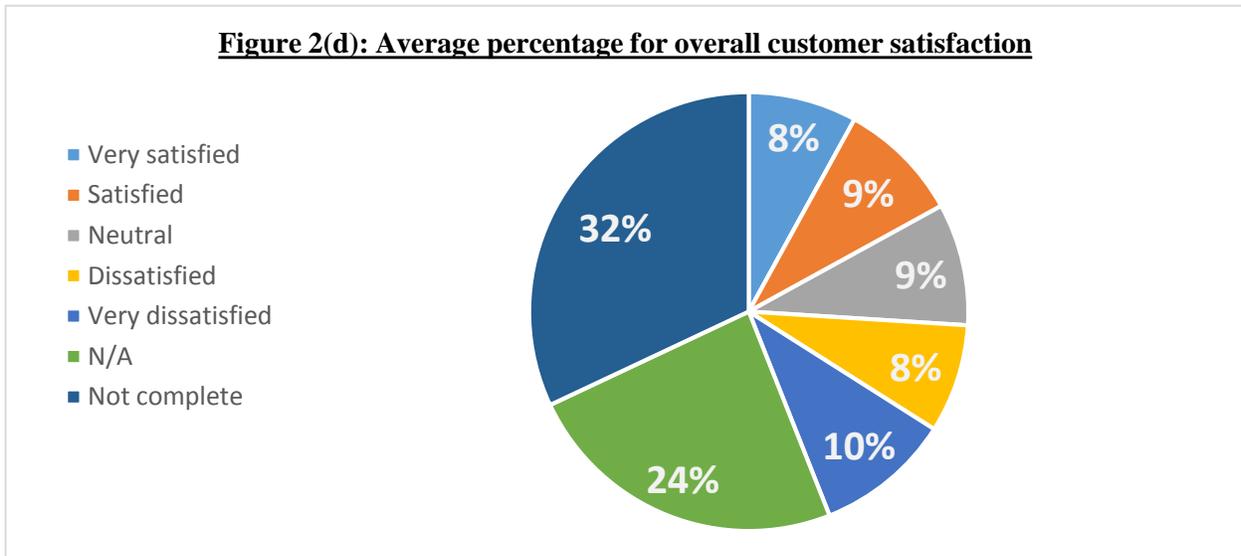**Figure 2(c): Customer satisfaction with cost of service**



**Figure 2(d): Average percentage for overall customer satisfaction**

As shown in Figure 2(d) above, the average percentage of the level of customer satisfaction for the different modes of services seem to be fairly evenly distributed; 8% indicated that they were 'very satisfied', 9% were 'satisfied', 9% were 'neutral', 8% were dissatisfied and 10% were very dissatisfied. The not applicable (N/A) and not completed responses on the other hand clearly make up the bulk of the data for this section, accounting for 56% in total. This is mainly due to how the questionnaire was formatted in that five categories based on the five modes of service delivery, were assigned for each question. Most respondents however have shown that in most cases, only one or two categories or mode of service delivery suit their particular situation. Hence, most respondents have either written N/A or have left two to three categories unanswered (not completed) per question. As a result, the number recorded for N/A and 'not completed' responses are extremely high. An example is provided in the following table below;

*Example of questionnaire format:*

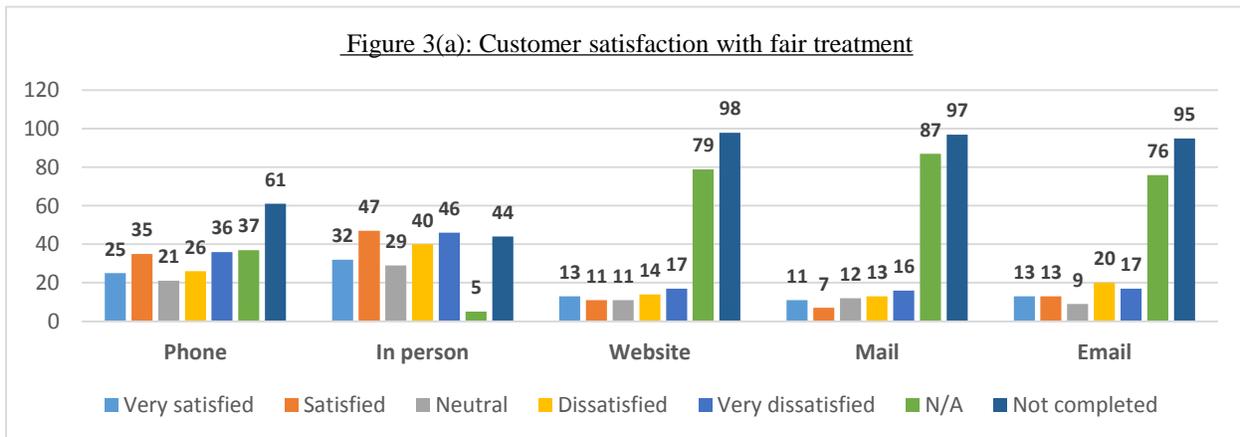| Question: | Phone | In person | Website | Mail | Email |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *How satisfied were you with the cost of service?* | *N/A* | *N/A* | *2 (satisfied)* | *N/A* | *N/A* |
| *Staff were knowledgeable and competent* | *1(very satisfied)* | *3 (Neutral)* | | *N/A* | |
| *Staff went the extra mile to make sure I got what I needed* | *N/A* | *2* | | | |

## (IV). Performance

The Performance section of the survey shifts the focus from assessing customer satisfaction regarding costs, accessibility and timeliness of services, to customer satisfaction regarding employee/staff performance in delivering the service and/or product and the visual appeal of the office. Similarly with the previous section, answers are categorized into the type of service that was used[3] as well as the associated customer satisfaction level for each service.

This section is made up of eight questions relating to the following areas; fairness, staff going the extra mile, staff competency, staff availability, receiving the right information, navigation, visual appeal of the office and waiting time at the service location. For ease of reference and clarity, data for certain areas will be grouped together for a combined analysis. The basis for sorting the data depends on the relevancy and relation of one question to the other. For instance; the results received for customer satisfaction regarding competency of employees, will be grouped together with data for customer satisfaction with receiving the correct information. Understandably if the employees are competent then they are more likely to be providing relevant and correct information to customers.

### *Fair treatment vs. Staff going the extra mile*

- *I was treated fairly*
- *Staff went the extra mile to make sure I got what I needed*



Figure 3(a): Customer satisfaction with fair treatment

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[3] Phone, In person, Website, Mail and Email

**Figure 3(b): Customer satisfaction with staff going the extra mile to meet customer needs**

| Mode | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | N/A | Not completed |
|------|---------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------------------|-----|---------------|
| Phone | 18 | 27 | 25 | 23 | 33 | 51 | 65 |
| In person | 30 | 32 | 39 | 30 | 52 | 17 | 42 |
| Website | 12 | 6 | 20 | 10 | 15 | 81 | 98 |
| Mail | 12 | 3 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 92 | 97 |
| Email | 13 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 20 | 79 | 98 |

It is evident from the above data in Figure 3(a) and Figure 3(b), the level of customer satisfaction for each question and mode of service delivery is very similar. This supports the idea that the two questions are related and that there is a linkage between the customers' opinion on whether they were being treated fairly, and whether they were satisfied with the employees and staff going the extra mile to cater to their needs.

The perception on whether you are being treated fairly and equally will be shaped by several factors. First is the experience that the customer has with that service. If the customer(s) had previously been served within a few minutes but in a later incident waited several hours or longer for the same service, they will obviously feel they were treated unfairly and therefore be very dissatisfied. Second is the customer's knowledge regarding the service. Some customers are extremely aware while others know very little of an agency's services and the internal procedures relating to each service. This plays a key role with how a customer perceives the way they are being treated by employees. For example; if a customer is aware that the process for a passport renewal takes three days, they will expect that three-day waiting period. On the hand, other customers who are not aware of this process will be dissatisfied if they cannot renew their passport within one or two days. Third is the observation that a customer(s) makes for each mode of service delivery. Customers can be quick to realize when a certain employee is being favored or treated better than others. For example; customers in a waiting area are aware of the order in which they are to be served based on the 'first come first serve' policy. So if a customer that had just arrived gets served while others are still waiting, there will definitely be feelings of frustration and anger amongst customers.

In this same connection, experience, knowledge and observation also allows customers to judge whether an employee has gone the extra mile to satisfy their requests. Although going the extra mile receives a lot of positive feedback, it also causes several problems. In fact, it is herein that the connection between the two questions exist. For instance; it is not a requirement for employees to go the 'extra mile.' In most cases, if the employee realizes that the requested service/product is outside of his or her roles and responsibilities, they will inform or direct the customer into the right direction. However, there are times that when a customer is a close friend or relative or when the employee is in a particularly good mood, they will go that extra mile to render assistance. When this happens, other customers will also expect the same treatment and may even begin to expect this sort of treatment every time they access and use a government service. In an

instance where a customer may have seen or heard of employees going the extra mile to help others, but then does not receive the same treatment, they will feel that they are not being treated equally and fairly.

Figure 3(c) below combines the received data presented in Figure 3(a) and Figure 3(b) above with specific focus on the level of customer satisfaction indicated for each mode of service delivery. The very satisfied and satisfied responses are merged together as 'positives', the very dissatisfied and dissatisfied are combined under the 'negative' category while 'neutral' responses are analyzed separately. 'N/A' and 'not completed' responses are excluded to ensure that the focus is on the analysis of customer satisfaction per service mode only.

It is evident from the column graph presented in Figure 3(c) that customer satisfaction is low. All modes of service delivery recorded less than forty percent of positive feedbacks with negative responses topping the chart for the two most utilized modes; telephone and in person services. This clearly indicates that customers are not satisfied with the performance of government agencies with regards to treating customers with fairness and equality as well as going the extra mile to help customers.



Figure 3(c): Average percentage of customer satisfaction per service mode for fair treatment and going the extra mile
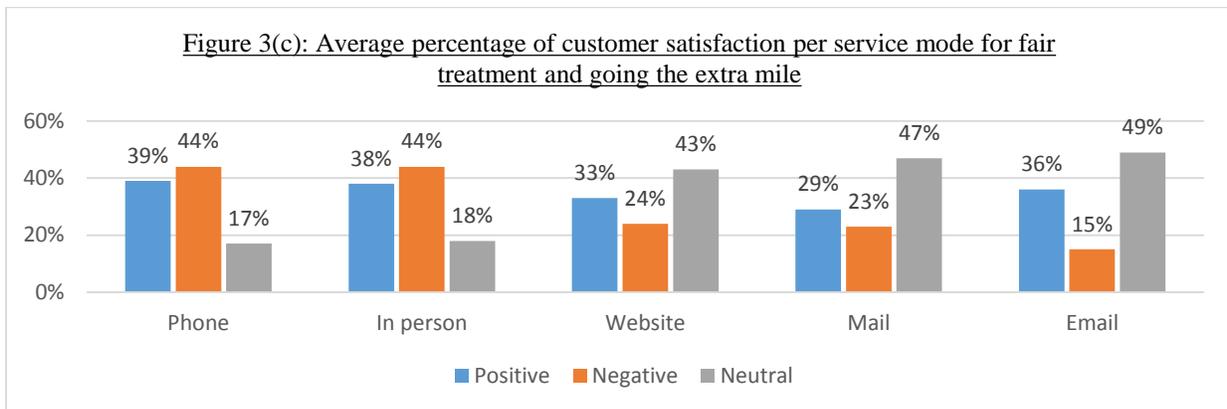
*Competency of staff vs. receiving correct information*

- *Staff were knowledgeable and competent*
- *I was informed of everything I had to do to get the service/product*



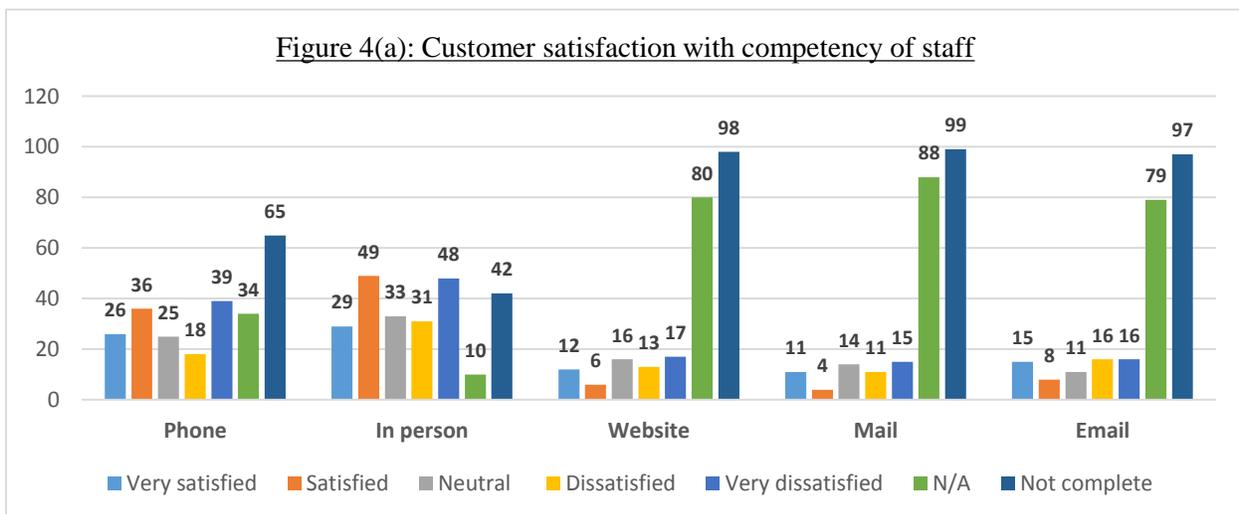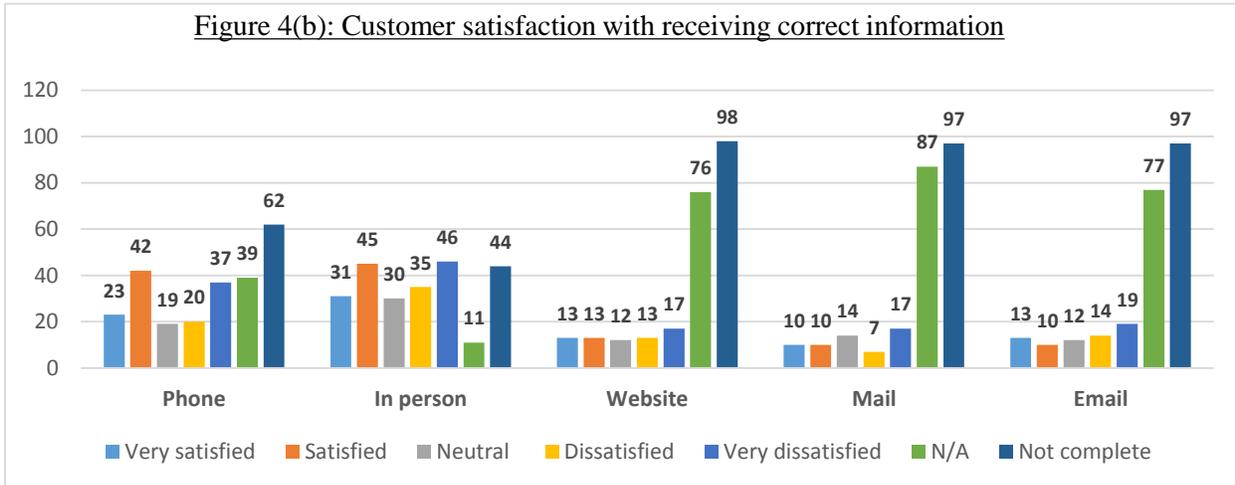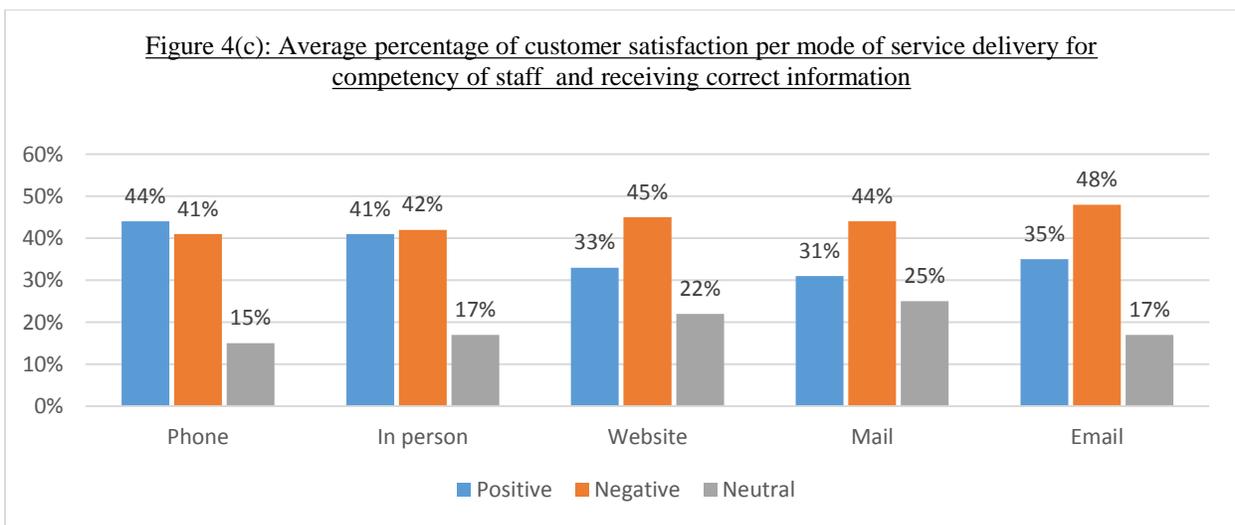Figure 4(a): Customer satisfaction with competency of staff

**Figure 4(b): Customer satisfaction with receiving correct information**



The competency of staff directly determines their ability to provide correct information to their customers and the public. For this reason, data received for these two areas from the questionnaire have been grouped together for a combined analysis. As evident in the above graphs in Figure 4(a) and Figure 4(b), the relationship between the two sets of data is very clear. The number of responses received indicating the level of satisfaction for each mode of service delivery are similar for both questions. This is expected because as mentioned earlier, the competency of staff directly determines whether they are able to provide relevant and correct information to their customers. For instance; if customers are receiving correct information, they will deem staff or employees competent. However, if customers are not satisfied due to receiving incorrect and irrelevant information from agency employees, they will automatically consider those staff to be incompetent.

Figure 4(c) below combines the data presented in Figure 4(a) and Figure 4(b) above. The focus is on identifying the level of customer satisfaction by grouping responses into three categories; Positive, Negative and Neutral.

**Figure 4(c): Average percentage of customer satisfaction per mode of service delivery for competency of staff and receiving correct information**

It is clear from Figure 4(c) that customer satisfaction in relation to the competency of staff and receiving correct information is below par. The average recorded for positive feedback in all five areas of service delivery is thirty-seven percent (37%). Forty-four percent (44%) on the other hand is the average recorded for negative feedback while neutral responses make up the other nineteen percent (19%). In addition, in the single area where positive feedback is highest, it is still relatively low recording only forty-four percent. Another worrying observation is that negative feedback tops responses for four out of the five areas of service delivery.

*Waiting time for service vs. availability and accessibility of staff*

- *I waited a reasonable amount of time at the service location*
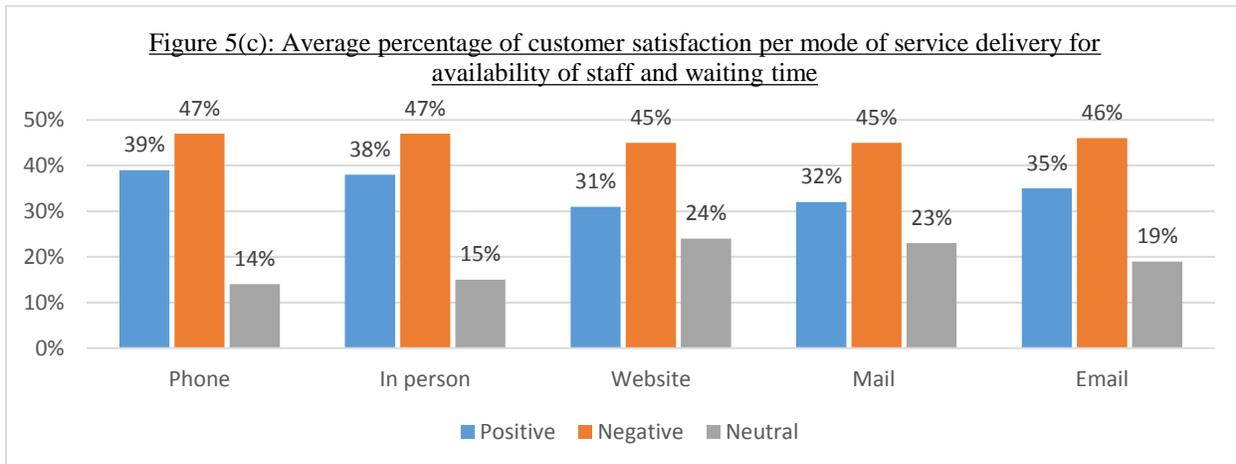- *I was able to get through to a staff member without difficulty*

The rationale for grouping these two sets of data is the apparent relationship between an employee's availability to serve customers, and the customer's level of satisfaction with the amount of time spent waiting for a service. As shown in Figure 5(a) and Figure 5(b) below, the sets of data or the amount of responses received indicating the level of customer satisfaction per mode of service delivery, is very similar for each question.

Also as referred to earlier, the phone and in person services are the most highly used mode of service delivery. This is further supported by the below graphs which clearly show the phone and in person services receiving higher numbers of responses. The other three modes of service delivery on the other hand; Website, mail and email, have very high numbers of 'N/A' and 'not completed' responses.



Figure 5(a): Customer satisfaction with availability and accessibility of staff



Figure 5(b): Customer satisfaction with waiting time for service

In line with previous combined analysis, the graph below in Figure 5(c) categorizes the responses from Figure 5(a) and Figure 5(b) into three groups; Positive, Negative and Neutral.

As clearly evident in the below graph, negative responses are dominant in all five areas of service delivery. This obviously indicates a high level of dissatisfied customers and poor customer experience. The average for positive responses is a mere thirty-five percent (35%). Negative responses average forty-six percent (46%) while the neutral category makes up the remaining nine-teen percent (19%).

Figure 5(c): Average percentage of customer satisfaction per mode of service delivery for availability of staff and waiting time
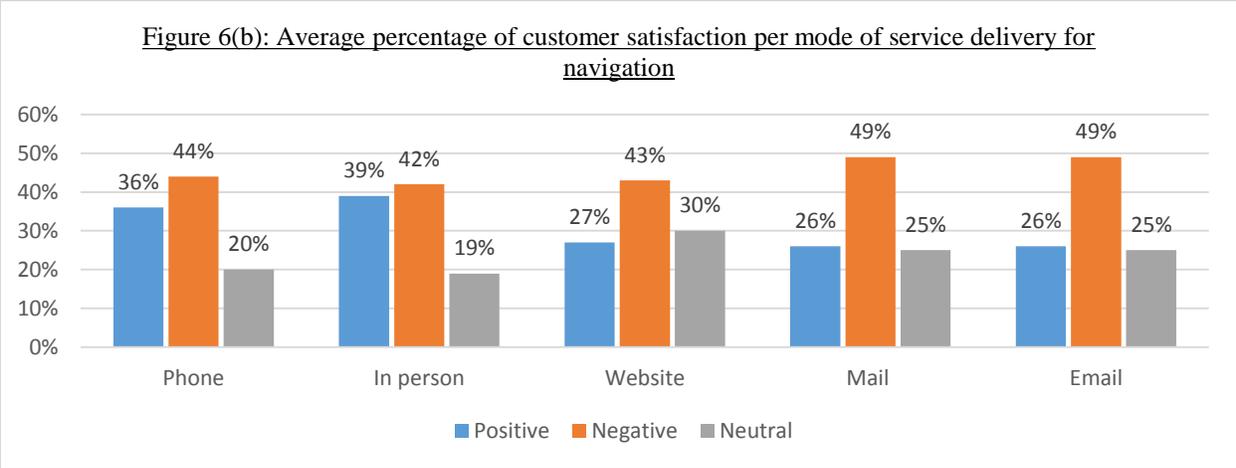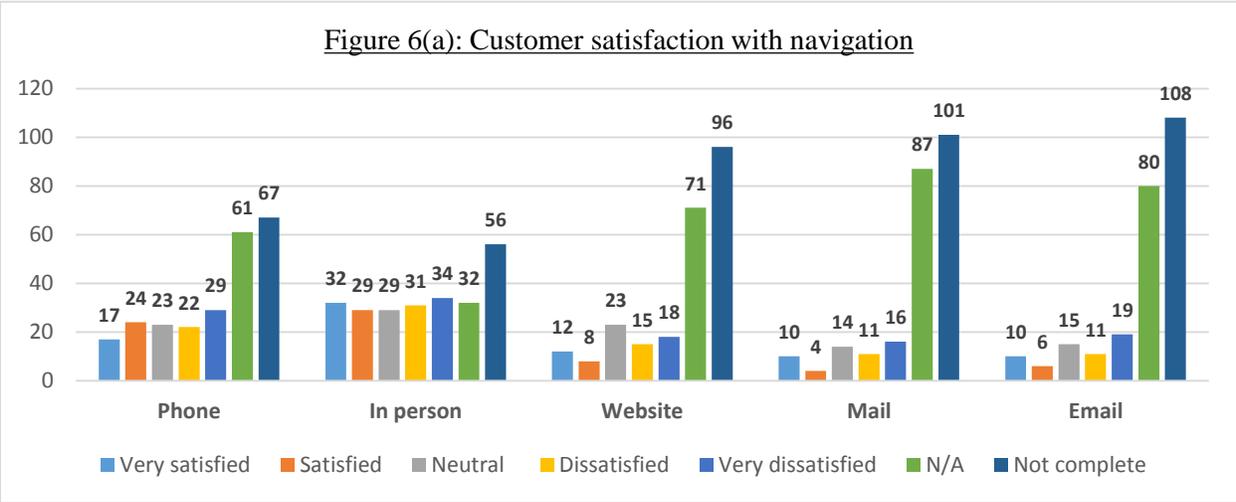


## Customer satisfaction with navigation

- *It was easy to find what I was looking for*

The nature of this question is to seek whether customers were satisfied with how easy it was to find the service or product that they were looking for. As shown in Figure 6(a), most respondents seem to relate this question with in person services. For example; a customer that is at the National Health Service seeking medical attention or a member of the public at the Ministry of Police seeking assistance/advice regarding a home robbery. Phone services follow closely with a total of 115 respondents indicating a high number of people also call in for assistance.

In terms of level of customer satisfaction, Figure 6(b) clearly indicates that negative responses are dominant in all five areas of service delivery. Negative responses average a total of forty-five percent (45%), Positive responses average only thirty-one percent (31%) while neutral responses stand at twenty-four 24%.

Figure 6(a): Customer satisfaction with navigation



Figure 6(b): Average percentage of customer satisfaction per mode of service delivery for navigation

## Customer satisfaction with visual appeal of the office

- *The office is visually appealing*

Customer satisfaction with regards to the visual appeal of the office is poor. Negative responses are dominant in all five modes of service delivery. Obviously this indicates poor customer experience and low levels of customer satisfaction.

On average, negative responses make up forty-five percent (45%), positive responses stand at thirty percent (30%) while neutral responses have twenty-five percent (25%).

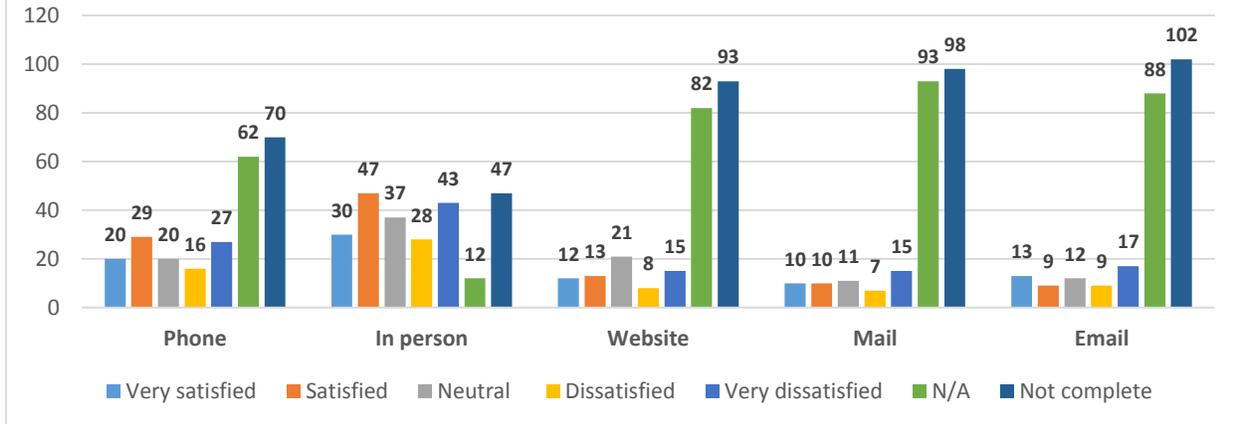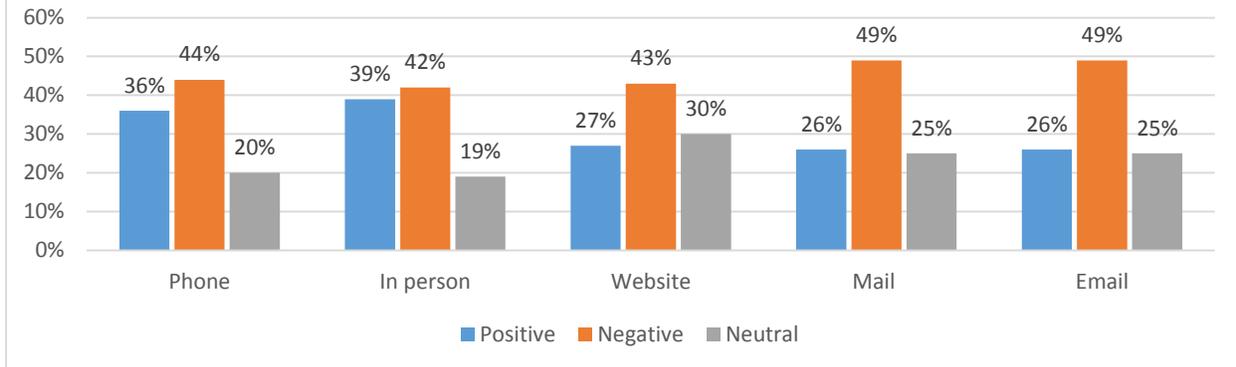**Figure 7(a): Customer satisfaction with the visual appeal of the office**



Legend: Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, N/A, Not complete

**Figure 7(b): Average percentage of customer satisfaction per mode of service delivery for visual appeal of the office**



Legend: Positive, Negative, Neutral

## (V). Outcome

This section of the survey consists of a single question; 'In the end, did you get what you needed?'. As shown in Figure 8 below, responses are categorized into three groups; Yes, No and N/A.

**Figure 8: In the end did you get what you needed?**



Legend: Yes, No, N/A
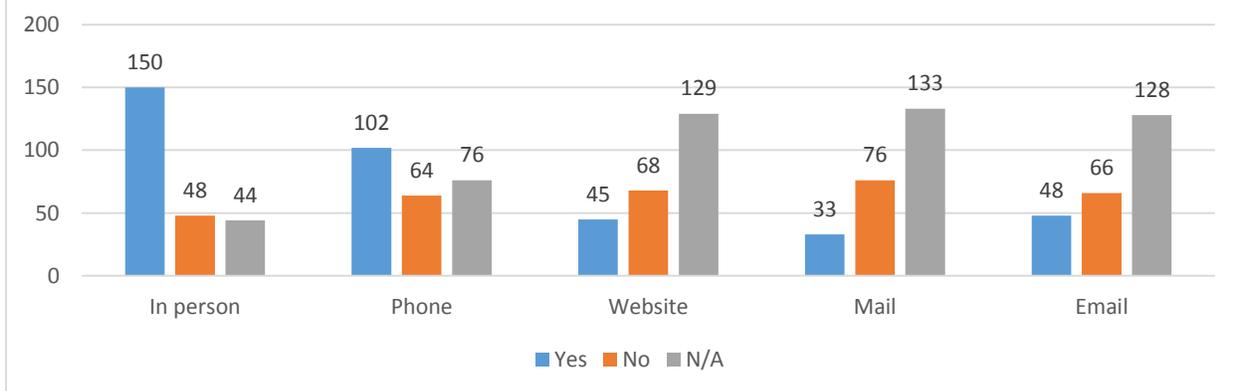
As presented in Figure 8 above, the responses received for this question provide interesting results. Out of all the previous sections and survey questions, this is the only data set that has yielded different results. Positive responses represented as 'Yes' are heavily dominant in the two of the most used modes of service delivery; In person and Telephone. In addition, and in line with earlier analysis, 'N/A' responses are high in the other three areas of service delivery; Website, Mail and Email. This further supports previous observations earlier in this report that Website, Mail and Email services are not used or accessed as much as in person and Telephone services by the public.

Another observation from the graph presented in Figure 8 is that regardless of the availability of staff, the visual appeal of the office, the amount of time spent waiting or the competency of the employees, the ultimate question is whether or not the customer received the requested service or product. As presented in the above graph, it is evident that most customers did in fact receive the service or product that they were looking for. However, this should not in any way pardon any weakness or gaps in the service delivery of government agencies as identified in previous sections.

## (VI). Additional comments and recommendations on how Ministries can improve on their services

The last section of the survey invites respondents to provide any comments, suggestions or recommendations to help Ministries which they had identified, build and strengthen their customer service standards. This is a vital section of the questionnaire as it allows respondents to go into more detail and explain what they had already indicated throughout the survey. They can describe in their own words their personal experience when using or accessing a government service or government agency and more importantly, provide constructive feedback on how government agencies can improve their service delivery.

A total of one hundred and twenty-seven (127) or fifty-two percent (52%) of the two hundred and forty-one (241) survey respondents completed this section of the questionnaire and provided some feedback, comments and recommendations. The below table provides a summary of the most commonly recorded comments pertaining to each government agency. The comments list is sorted from the most to the least common;

Table 2: The most common recommendations and comments from survey respondents

| Government Agency | Common Comments / Recommendations |
|---|---|
| National Health Services (NHS) | 1. The waiting time for service is too long (phone and in person); <br> 2. Poor customer service and communication skills shown by Nurses, Front desk and phone operator; <br> 3. Not enough Doctors; <br> 4. Unfair/biased treatment of patients; <br> 5. Need regular customer service trainings to improve customer service skills of staff; <br> 6. New staff need to double-check with their supervisors to make sure that they are providing correct information to the public; <br> 7. Recommend to conduct follow up calls for patients after their operations; <br> 8. Cost of seeing a doctor and medical prescriptions are too expensive; <br> 9. Need to consider opening the pharmacy 24/7; <br> 10. Different costs/fees charged for same service (i.e. dentist); |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 11. Not enough car park;<br>12. Nurses provided excellent services to cater for patients; |
| Samoa National Provident Fund (SNPF) | 1. The waiting time for service is too long (phone and in person);<br>2. Staff/employees need to smile more;<br>3. Need to improve answering and servicing of incoming phone calls;<br>4. It is difficult to get a hold of staff when calling the NPF office;<br>5. Staff need to be more proactive and professional;<br>6. Keep up the good work NPF. |
| Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration (MJCA) | 1. The waiting time for the service was too long (phone and in person);<br>2. Staff/employees need to smile more;<br>3. Services are too expensive;<br>4. Staff/employees are always busy (meeting/out of office/leave) |
| Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC) | 1. Customer service skills of front desk, phone receptionist and some staff is very poor/unsatisfactory/rude<br>2. Biased service and unfair/unequal treatment of customers |
| Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (MPMC) | 1. The waiting time for service is too long (phone, in person and emails);<br>2. Poor customer service skills of phone receptionist;<br>3. Staff/employees need to smile more;<br>4. Office and waiting area is very untidy;<br>5. Unclear processes and inconsistent turnaround times for same services;<br>6. Proper dress code needs to be enforced (i.e. No miniskirts etc.);<br>7. No available staff at the front desk to serve customers. |
| Land Transport Authority (LTA) | 1. The waiting time for service is too long;<br>2. Poor customer service and rude attitude and behavior from staff and employees;<br>3. Service was all good. |
| Ministry for Revenue (MfR) | 1. Staff need to smile more;<br>2. Need to improve effectiveness and efficiency of service;<br>3. The waiting time for service is too long;<br>4. Biased service and unequal treatment of customers. |
| Samoa Water Authority (SWA) | 1. Poor customer service skills;<br>2. The waiting time for service is too long (phone and in person);<br>3. Need to ensure equal treatment for all customers instead of rationing water throughout the year for one part of the country but not the other. Everyone are paying their water bills and so should be treated equally.<br>4. Stop cutting water supply during the weekend if the cashiers are not open for payment.<br>5. Excellent services |
| Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) | 1. Staff and employees need to smile more;<br>2. Front desk and phone receptionist need to be polite and professional;<br>3. The waiting time for service is too long;<br>4. Staff and employees are always busy and don't have time for customers, particularly the ACEO level; |
| Office of the Public Service Commission (PSC) | 1. New staff need to double check with their supervisors to avoid giving out wrong information to the public/customers; |

| | |
|---|---|
| | 2. Biased service and unequal treatment of customers |
| Ministry of Finance (MOF) | 1. New staff need to double check with their supervisors to avoid giving out wrong information to the public/customers; |
| Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) | 1. Need to improve customer service skills (phone and In person)<br>2. Satisfactory service |
| Ministry of Health (MOH) | 1. Need to contact village communities if scheduled meetings between Ministry and Communities are cancelled at the last minute to avoid the hassle and trouble that the communities go through with preparing food, water, cultural meetings etc. |
| Samoa Airport Authority (SAA) | 1. Facilities are very dirty and unhealthy (toilets) |
| Samoa Life Assurance Company (SLAC) | 1. Staff and employees need to inform customers of their fees and service costs |
| Ministry of Police (MOP) | 1. Customer service skills of phone receptionist is unsatisfactory |
| Office of the Electoral Commission (OEC) | 1. Staff and employees are always busy and rarely answer the phone; |
| Samoa Housing Corporation (SHC) | 1. Loan interests are too high; |
| Electric Power Corporation (EPC) | 1. Satisfactory service |

The most common feedback from survey respondents is that 'the waiting time for the service/product is too long.' This comment was received for several government agencies including NHS, MNRE, MPMC, SNPF, MfR, LTA and MJCA. The second most common was with regards to the availability of staff and employees. A large number of survey respondents' stated that it was very difficult to book appointments or schedule meetings with staff and employees of government agencies, particularly at the management or executive level. Other popular suggestions and comments include 'employees need to smile more,' 'there's a need to conduct regular customer service trainings for staff' and 'biased service' or 'unequal treatment of customers.'

On the other hand, several government agencies also received some positive feedback from satisfied customers. Although there was a lot of negative criticism from the public relating to the customer service of NHS staff, some customers at the same time praised the performance and support shown by nurses and doctors. The SNPF, the EPC, the MFAT and the LTA also received positive feedback with their service delivery. All these responses are listed in table 2 above.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the collated data shows that two hundred and forty-one (241) respondents completed the survey. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of this total were females while thirty-two percent (32%) were males. In terms of highest level of education attained, ninety-six (96%) indicated that they had completed tertiary level education while the other four percent (4%) completed secondary level. Only 210 out of the 241 respondents however, provided and identified the particular government agency that they had used or had access to over the past 12 months

Feedback from the 210 respondents covered a total of 33 government agencies. The NHS received the highest amount of responses accounting for one quarter (1/4) or 53 out of the 210 responses. The number of questionnaires received for other government agencies are listed in table 2 above.

It is also clear from the results that in terms of the different modes of service delivery, telephone and in person services are accessed and used much more than website, mail or email services. This is proved and supported with the data received throughout the other sections of the survey. In addition, overall customer

satisfaction with regards to the costs, timeliness, accessibility of government service is average at best. As presented in Figure 2(d), the percentage of satisfied customers is 17%. The Percentage of dissatisfied customers on the other hand is 18%.

In terms of the performance of staff and employees in delivering their services, the collated data suggests that the standards are below average. As evident in Figures 3(c), 4(c), 5(c), 6(b) and 7(b), the dissatisfied customers or 'negative' responses mostly outnumber the satisfied or the 'positive' responses. Additionally, positive responses for this section of the survey stand at an average of forty percent (40%) with none ever surpassing the fifty percent (50%) mark. This clearly indicates a below average level of customer satisfaction regarding the performance of government employees.

As shown in table 2 above, some of the most common recommendations from survey respondents are basic customer service skills. For example; staff and employees need to smile more, phone receptionist needs to be more attentive to the request and stricter dress codes need to be enforced etc. Other suggestions include the need to conduct customer service trainings for government employees more often, particularly for those at the front desk and phone receptionists, as they are the first people to interact with the public and therefore play an important role as a primary representative of a government agency. Additional suggestions were aimed towards the management level of government agencies. Several survey respondents stated that it was difficult to schedule a meeting with an Assistant CEO or a CEO and different excuses were always given for their unavailability.

Although in total there are some positive responses and satisfied customers, the worrying trend is that the numbers for most questions of the survey show that 'negative' responses always outweigh the 'positive' responses. Ultimately this means that although there are some employees and staff who are performing well and delivering effective, efficient and professional services, there is still much room for improvement.

## Way forward/Recommendations

Ideally, positive responses should make up the majority with minor criticisms and complaints that would be used to strengthen any weak areas of service delivery. It is acknowledged however that there are some issues mentioned by survey respondents that are complex and goes beyond the scope of customer service. For example: the issue of the shortage of specialized doctors which has caused complaints relating to the waiting time at the NHS or the percentage of interest rates for loans at the Samoa Housing Corporation.

The following are recommendations provided by survey respondents as well as from observations and analysis made from the collated data to help improve customer service related issues for government agencies;

- Highlight and stress the importance of professional customer service during induction for all Government employees;
- Continue with regular customer service training and tracer studies of all staff;
- Seek other related customer service capacity building opportunities;
- Implement the OPAIT to assess organizational performance;
- Encourage and enforce office cleanliness policies;
- Strengthen enforcement and compliance of the Public Service Code of Conduct and Public Service Values;
- Encourage and strengthen use of complaints registers for all Government agencies as a way to improve systems and processes regularly;
- Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation activities relating to customer service standards;

- Raise awareness on importance of the survey and encourage participation.