Spring 2019

2018 Department of Public Safety Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey Report

Olivia Edoff
University of South Dakota

Recommended Citation

Edoff, Olivia, "2018 Department of Public Safety Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey Report" (2019). *Honors Thesis*. 72.

https://red.library.usd.edu/honors-thesis/72

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figures	**Page**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Richard Braunstein, Sandy McKeown, and Dr. Shane Nordyke. I owe the completion of this thesis to their invaluable guidance, kindness, and patience. Thank you for your time and dedication to my success.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section aims to provide a shortened summary of the following thesis materials regarding the 2018 Department of Public Safety Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey. Each section has been shortened to a brief statement of the main findings. Be advised that the full thesis engages a more developed discussion of results found in analyzing data from this survey as well as framework information needed to fully understand the results of the 2018 survey data. This sections only summarizes overarching themes which should be considered within the context of the complete elaborations contained in the full report.

A. Author's Note

After introducing the events leading to my involvement with the 2018 DPS Survey, this section describes the high impact learning opportunities provided through my duties in the survey. Though I began the project with the expectation of having little responsibility, I overtook the majority of data analysis and report writing with Dr. Richard Braunstein's' assistance. Dr. Braunstein supervised my work, offered direction where needed, and heavily aided throughout the editing process. While working through those responsibilities, I developed a thorough understanding of how data can be manipulated and how to avoid that mistake.

I learned that engaging in undergraduate research and advanced writing advance critical thinking ability among other skills (Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015). Writing the information I found through data analysis into a comprehensive and scholarly research report molded me into a more proficient author. The experience

helped me gain confidence in my abilities which will aid me in my future academic and professional endeavors.

B. Introduction

The Department of Public Safety Stakeholder Satisfaction survey has been developed as a tool for DPS to gauge the opinions and dissatisfaction amongst their stakeholder community. The 2018 survey is the third installment in this series of surveys, so the survey aims to track changes in opinion as compared to the 2011 and 2015 surveys. However, the 2018 survey suffered from the lowest participation rate of the three surveys. This participation decrease raises serious questions regarding the applicability of the information contained within the report, as well as the potential of future surveys.

C. Principal Agent Framework

Through this framework, DPS serves as an agent bound to serve its principals which are stakeholders as well as citizens of those areas it serves. In an effort to ensure that it adequately meets the needs of its principals, DPS began this series of surveys which serve as an assessment tool. The communication avenue and transparency this survey has the power to create is conducted and used correctly fights information imbalances within the principal agent relationship. The survey allows stakeholders to hold DPS accountable for their areas of inadequate service delivery and dissatisfaction.

While those principals surveyed in this report only include stakeholders from DPS agencies, it is important to note that DPS serves other citizens and their representing legislative body as principals as well. This dynamic relationship creates a complex structure in which information imbalance across principals and agent as well as goal conflicts are a prominent concern. This situation creates an environment which can foster corruption if not addressed correctly. This sequence of surveys holds great potential to help remedy any existing failure to comply with stakeholder needs as well as protect against future corruption potential.

D. Appropriate Research Practices

This section examines the survey practices deemed acceptable by the American Association for Public Opinion Research and assesses whether the current survey techniques can be improved upon to better fit these twelve standards. The 2018 DPS Survey complies with these standards in that it lays out clear goals, "consider[s] alternative data beyond a survey", considers the format of its previous surveys to maximize trend analysis, conducts edits throughout the survey, appropriately analyzes data, and "discloses all methods of the survey" (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2019). However, those areas that the survey's methods do not comply with these standards revolve around the sample drawn in 2018. Three quality statements discuss conducting a survey based on a representative sample, which is an area previously established as one of concern in this installment. The only other concern involves confidentiality statement included. Given the small population in South Dakota, the researchers in future surveys should remain conscious that extreme specificity in stakeholder profiles may infringe on

confidentiality. All measures necessary to reasonably protect the stakeholders willing to participate in the survey should be upheld with vigor in every survey.

E. Research Methods

The methods used to recruit survey participants over the past three installments have changed in each studied year. In 2018, responses were solicited through email list serves and fire chief email addresses provided to the GRB by DPS. In 2018, 120 survey stakeholders participated whereas in 2015 two hundred nine participated and in 2011 two hundred seventy-six stakeholders participated. Agencies represented by those participants dropped from 25 in 2011 to just eight in 2015.

Only five agencies have maintained representation in the sample. Those agencies include Police Departments, County Sheriff's Office, University Police/Public Safety, Fire Departments, and County Emergency Managers. Fire Department representation has grown to dominate near half the sample. This raises concerns that the presence of Fire Departments in many of the negative view profiles may be due to their overrepresentation in the sample. These concerns are noted in the report along with suggestions to improve sampling in the future. Without a more representative sample, the survey is threatened by irrelevancy.

The data collected through this sample was analyzed through descriptive statistic techniques such as central tendency (including an analysis of means) and standard deviation. Correlation analysis and cross tabulation were both used to identify relationships between measures of satisfaction and stakeholder characteristics. Open response questions regarding service delivery improvements and expansion were summarized through content analysis and cluster analysis.

F. General Satisfaction with DPS Service Summary

Stakeholders were overall satisfied with DPS services with 82 percent positive responses and five percent negative responses. This satisfaction rating is further analyzed by agency type, showing that police departments have the highest percentage of positive ratings while county sheriffs had the highest percentage of negative ratings except the 'Other' category. Overall approval ratings generally decreased from 2015 to 2018, though the responses in 2018 were more spread around their mean than in 2015. No statistically significant correlations were found between overall satisfaction and jurisdiction size or region served. This lack of relation between these two factors and overall satisfaction was further demonstrated through a cross tabulation analysis.

To further analyze stakeholder satisfaction and create more normal variation in respondent opinions, six questions were indexed to create a 'satisfaction index' (see full report for specific questions indexed). This resulted in a moderate, statistically significant, positive correlation between jurisdiction size and satisfaction as well as between frequency of use and satisfaction. No statistically significant correlation was found between region served and satisfaction. In terms of indexed satisfaction by agency type, Police Departments showed the largest increase in positive ratings from 2015 to 2018. Fire Departments had the largest percent of 'low' indexed satisfaction. A profile of negative responding stakeholders showed they were most commonly Fire Departments serving smaller jurisdictions in the Southeast region.

G. Familiarity with DPS Services Summary

The majority of respondents, 66 percent, positively indicated they were familiar with and frequently used DPS services. 64 percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were familiar with procedures used to request DPS involvement with emergency management activities. Frequency of use positively correlated with familiarity with procedures to request DPS involvement and was statistically significant. Only six of the 98 respondents reported using DPS services eleven or more times a year and not being highly familiar with DPS procedures. Those respondents indicating low use and low familiarity tended to be Fire Departments residing in the Southeast region.

The report created an indexed familiarity measure by combining both familiarity with services and familiarity with procedures to request services. This indexed measure strongly correlated with jurisdiction size (with statistical significance). In examining familiarity by agency, the report found consistent improvement in familiarity across all agencies from 2015 to 2018. County Emergency Managers were reported the highest familiarity.

H. DPS Contributions to Agency Effectiveness Summary

Sixty-six percent of stakeholders positively agreed that DPS contributes to their agency's effectiveness. This indicates an eleven percent decrease in positive opinions from 2015. A profile of negatively responding stakeholders includes Fire Departments from small jurisdictions. Jurisdiction size was moderately and positively correlated with the

belief contribution to effectiveness. Two respondents strongly disagreed that DPS contributes to their agency's effectiveness. Complete profiles of those respondents can be found in the full report.

I. DPS Personnel Performance Summary

Only 48 percent of stakeholders felt DPS staffs adequate personnel, which was the lowest rated personnel measure. 66.3 percent found DPS personnel to be knowledgeable and capable. These positive responses were just over ten percent less than those expressed in 2015. Southeastern Fire Departments made up the negative profile of personnel measures.

E. Profile of Stakeholders not Using DPS Services Summary

The thirty-one stakeholders indicating they had not used DPS services in the past three years most commonly resided in Southeaster jurisdictions smaller than 5,000 and were Fire Departments. However, only three of the thirty-one respondents also did not indicate using the services of the Fire Marshal's Office, the Office of Homeland Security, the Highway Patrol, and the Office of Emergency Management. Those three respondents mirrored the same profile as the larger group of respondents.

F. Opinions on Whether DPS is Doing an Outstanding Job of Providing Services to the State of South Dakota Summary

The majority of stakeholders (60 percent) felt DPS was doing an outstanding job providing services to South Dakota which is 13 percent less than in 2015.

G. Fire Marshal's Office Summary

Of those agencies that requested investigatory services from this office, the vast majority approved of the response time with only three percent indicating poor response times. More respondents chose to use the Web-Based Reporting System in 2018 than in 2015. Though, open-ended responses indicated that stakeholders still feel improvements to the current reporting system are needed to improve its functionality. 82 percent of Fire Departments participated in training programs offered by this office, and approval rates for these trainings were overall positive, though less so than in 2015.

H. Highway Patrol Summary

Stakeholders were overall satisfied with professionalism displayed by highway patrol, with more than 85 percent indicating positive responses. This is a decrease from the 94 percent in 2011 and 2015. Stakeholders were similarly satisfied with partnerships with Highway Patrol. DUI Enforcement was the top ranked Highway Patrol service, and State Radio Dispatch Services were the lowest ranked. Open-ended comments on service

improvement centered around communication, collaboration, and relationship concerns as well as staffing and trainings offered to Highway Patrol. Stakeholders also commented on additional services they wanted to see implemented which included the introduction of drones, improved access to geographical mapping software, and school liaisons.

I: Office of Homeland Security Summary

This office held relatively high approval ratings, with 83 percent positive responses and no 'very poor' responses. Awareness of the Fusion Center and its services increased two percent from 2015 to 77 percent in 2018. More than 70 percent of respondents also found this office's weekly intelligence bulletin relevant and useful. Those stakeholders who made up the negative profile were not in law enforcement. Comments regarding improvement of existing services and new services needed centered around improving communication, agency relations, and the simplification of the current grant process.

J: Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Summary

This office has historically had lower rated than other DPS offices. The seven offices assessed received positive ratings between only 46.6 and 75.3 percent. Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness was highest rated while Citizen Corps was the lowest. Comments for improvement included grant application and distribution process, increased training opportunities, and enhancing support for those in remote areas of the state.

K. Use of Social Media Summary

This area experienced significant increases (12 percent) in stakeholder use from 2015. Though 61 percent still do not use DPS social media. Stakeholders overwhelmingly felt information shared by this platform met their needs and expectations. Improvement suggestions included greater relevance, variety of content. The majority of respondents prefer to receive DPS information from email as opposed to the DPS website and mail, though this measure is not compared to social media preference.