



# Trust in the Philippine Government: A Study on Public Perceptions of Poverty

Tricia Ompoc

Bulacan State University

Philippines

---

## ABSTRACT

*This study discusses the trust of poor Filipinos in the Philippine government. It covers matters of trust in different aspects, including services provided in terms of the health system, education system, readiness to protect people's lives against illnesses, climate change, the effectiveness of public service, citizen participation in decision-making, and importance to culture. Trust is measured through the use of the dimensions cited by Blomqvist (2002), which are capability, goodwill, behavior, and self-reference. adopted the questionnaire utilized by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in measuring the trust of the people in government of their member countries. coincides with the dimensions of trust, as explained by Blomqvist, which are based on capability, goodwill, behavior, and self-reference. self-structured questions based on the study Attributions for Poverty: A Survey of Student's Perception by Samuel (2012). Blomqvist's dimensional Model Trust's capability, behavior, goodwill, self-reference, respondents mostly agreed with categories for each. confirmed in categories such as trust that government is putting great importance on culture and values, resolving people's concerns when issues are talked about, allowing people's participation decision-making, providing services on health, education, administration, majority of the respondents unsure if they trust government as whole. the dimensions of capability, goodwill, behavior, and self-reference are not the only measure of trust of people in the government as they can not affirm a positive perception of people about poverty. Hence, components, reliability, responsiveness, openness, integrity, and fairness, which are cited in the OECD report may be considered to be put into practice to increase trust in government.*

**Keywords:** Communication, Government, Perception, Service, Trust.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Trust is considered to be the belief that a person is reliable, good, honest, and able. If you trust someone at all, within general limits you at least assume they are honest and that they will not intentionally When you give someone your precious or expensive things to hold, you trust they will take good care of them. If you do not trust anything, you feel insecure. It is practically synonymous with both trust and faith

From the civil government perspective, the legitimacy of a democratic regime is grounded in trust (at the very least consent is absent). When conducting many government-sponsored initiatives, the response of the public is crucial to their success. Trust in government reflects the faith citizens have in the actions of a government "to do what is right and fair." (Easton, 1965). It rests on the congruence between citizens' preferences – their interpretation of what is right and fair and wrong – and the perceived real functioning of government (Bouckaert and van de Walle, 2003). According to their varying expectations, individual citizens will display differing levels of trust in the government. As people achieve higher levels of education, their demands for the governance performance of governments become more stringent. Should citizens' demands for good governance outstrip the actual performance of governments, trust and satisfaction may decline. A government must mold public trust because it is vital for good governance. If people have faith in the state, they are more likely to follow laws of their own accord. Therefore, increasing voluntary compliance depends on increasing trust in the government. The government may accomplish more when it appears to its citizens that decision-makers are looking after their best interests. While it is easy to find possible scenarios of damage to public trust, It is a very difficult thing to build trust.

At the same time, poverty means not having the goods and services essential for a person to realize his or her human potential and to fulfill the natural responsibilities. That is how the World Bank Organization defines poverty. As well as lacking money, poverty means not being able to take part in leisure activities, take the kids out on field trips with their classmates or to birthday parties, and pay for the doctor's bills when you're sick. All these extra costs in one way or another come out of poor people's pockets. People who are already struggling to meet the necessities of life-like their housing and food, how can they possibly think about such additional expenses. Being ostracized from the mainstream of society, undereducated and vulnerable to disease has an impact on the whole social psyche.

Most of the theoretically sound explanations for why people are poor are too vaguely or incompletely formulated for quantitative study. The simple assertion that "people are poor only because of their laziness" illustrates an explanation which is far too one-sided to be able to account for all the variables. The assertion that "the sick have to be sicker" conflicts with the evaluation of causality. Though it is commonly agreed that low-income families tend to have many children, what kind of a cause-and-effect chain produces this result cannot be said.

According to the Asian Development Bank, over the last 40 years poverty in the Philippines may originate from factors such as timid economic growth, poverty reduction elasticity with modest growth, failures to create employment or to ensure that it is of good quality, incomplete agricultural development extended inflation during crises, much of population growth, substantial and persistently inequality (in terms of incomes and assets) which blunts the benefits of economic growth; and vulnerability to shocks such as economic crisis, war, natural disasters and environmental decay as well as between recurrent. Trust among the citizenry must necessarily be established in order for the entire country to operate efficiently, Thomas (1998) spent some time making suggestions on the reasons for the decline of trust in government. This argument is also seen in Thomas (1998) that, when government operations are under proper surveillance and control by the people, then the public will trust institutions.

This paper talks about the trust poor Filipinos have in the government of the Philippines. It discusses various kinds of trust, such as services provided on a health-care basis or educational system, readiness to keep the population safe from disease, climate change and natural disasters; effectiveness of government as related to the public interest; citizens' use of channels for citizen participation; and whether they perceive its importance as cultural norm. Money instead of measuring trust relies on the dimensions mentioned in Blomqvist (2002).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

Survey research is a process of research that is done using questionnaires, where the subjects are sent and responses recorded for analysis. The survey data is processed statistically in the period after collection in order to obtain valid study conclusions.

A common concept in survey research is to employ a mix of questions, and then use an informal selection of naturally occurring respondents. From there participants are selected, data collected, and results analyzed. This kind of research is beneficial for professors anxious to bring their respondents the latest in trends and innovation.

It is typically the first step to get quick information about divisive issues, after which more rigorous and in-depth quantitative research techniques such as surveys and polls can be employed or qualitative research techniques such as focus groups and telephone interviews. Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, researchers can work in all sorts of settings.

The method of quantitative research is often pursued by researchers who subscribe to the scientific paradigm (Haq, 2014, p. 1). This technique aims at generalizing results from a sample to a target population, quantifying data, and making inferences (Macdonald et al., 2008, p. 9). Organizer here refers to what the study observes through recording data; it is presented as numerical information. Quantitative research also assumes objective statistical analysis (Macdonald et al., 2008, p. 9). Data Collection and Data Statistics

The researcher adopted the questionnaire that was utilized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in measuring the trust of the people in the government of their member countries. The set of questions coincides with the dimensions of trust as explained by Blomqvist which are based on capability,

goodwill, behavior, and self-reference. The researcher also included a number of self-structured questions which were based on the study *Attributions for Poverty: A Survey of Student's Perception* by Samuel (2012). Twenty randomly selected recipients of the 4P's program by the government participated in the study as respondents. They were provided with a two-page questionnaire consisting of 14 questions.

The researcher applied Frequency Statistics which simply counted the number of times that each variable quantity appears. It can alternatively be described as a straightforward count of a specific occurrence.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the results of the study on trust in the government of poor Filipinos and their perception of poverty conducted by the researcher.

**Table 1. Perception on Poverty. Perception of the Different Aspects of Poverty**

| Category                                                                                            | Agree |      | Unsure |    | Disagree |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|--------|----|----------|-----|
|                                                                                                     | F     | P    | F      | P  | F        | P   |
| The government is one of the major reasons for the continued poverty of the Filipinos               | 20    | 100% | 0      | 0% | 0        | 0%  |
| The plans and programs of the government will help in closing the gap between the poor and the rich | 20    | 100% | 0      | 0% | 0        | 0%  |
| Satisfied with the current status/situation in life                                                 | 11    | 55%  | 1      | 5% | 9        | 45% |

*F- frequency*

*P-Percentage*

Table 1 presents the respondents' perceptions of the different aspects of poverty. It shows that all the respondents *agreed* that the government is a major factor in poverty and that its undertakings will contribute to closing the gap between the rich and the poor.

Meanwhile, more than half of the respondents are satisfied with their current situation in life.

**Table 2.1 Trust of poor Filipinos in the Philippine government Capability Dimension**

| Category                                                             | Agree |     | Unsure |     | Disagree |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|
|                                                                      | F     | P   | F      | P   | F        | P   |
| Trust that the government provides health services                   | 8     | 40% | 5      | 25% | 7        | 35% |
| Trust that the government provides services for the education sector | 10    | 50% | 2      | 10% | 8        | 40% |
| Trust that the government provides administrative services           | 9     | 45% | 4      | 20% | 7        | 35% |

*F- frequency*

*P-Percentage*

Table 2.1 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents' trust in the Philippine government in terms of capability dimension. It shows that in the three categories most of the respondents *agreed* that they trust the variety of services being provided by the government.

**Table 2.2 Goodwill Dimension**

| Category                                                                                                        | Agree |     | Unsure |     | Disagree |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|
|                                                                                                                 | F     | P   | F      | P   | F        | P   |
| Trust that the government continuously finds ways to better the lives of the Filipinos                          | 6     | 30% | 8      | 40% | 6        | 30% |
| Trust that the government is capable of protecting the lives of Filipinos against future illnesses and diseases | 7     | 35% | 9      | 45% | 4        | 20% |

*F- frequency**P-Percentage*

Table 2.2 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents' trust in the Philippine government in terms of goodwill dimension. It shows that in the two categories most of the respondents are *unsure* of both the government's capability to improve the lives of the people and to protect them against ill health conditions.

**Table 2.3 Behavior Dimension**

| Category                                                                                    | Agree |     | Unsure |     | Not Satisfied |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-----|---------------|-----|
|                                                                                             | F     | P   | F      | P   | F             | P   |
| Trust that when issues are talked about by the people, the government resolves the concerns | 8     | 40% | 5      | 25% | 7             | 35% |
| Trust that the government allows its citizens to participate in the decision-making process | 10    | 50% | 6      | 30% | 4             | 20% |

*F- frequency**P-Percentage*

Table 2.3 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents' trust in the Philippine government in terms of behavior dimension. It shows that in the two categories most of the respondents agreed that they trust both the government's capability to resolve issues that are talked about by people and to allow them to get involved in making major decisions.

**Table 2.4 Self-Reference Dimension**

| Category                                                                               | Agree |     | Unsure |     | Disagree |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|
|                                                                                        | F     | P   | F      | P   | F        | P   |
| Trust that the government has concrete plans to resolve the problems of climate change | 6     | 30% | 10     | 50% | 4        | 20% |
| Trust that the government puts great importance on culture and values                  | 9     | 45% | 6      | 30% | 5        | 25% |

*F- frequency**P-Percentage*

Table 2.4 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents' trust in the Philippine government in terms of the self-reference dimension. It shows that in the first category, most of the respondents *agreed* that they trust the government's plans to resolve climate change concerns while they are satisfied with the importance that the government gives to culture and values.

**Table 3 Overall Trust in the Government**

| Category                | Agree |     | Unsure |     | Disagree |     |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|
|                         | F     | P   | F      | P   | F        | P   |
| Trust in the government | 6     | 30% | 8      | 40% | 6        | 30% |

*F- frequency**P-Percentage*

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents put their trust in the government.

**Table 4 Proposed Actions to Increase Trust in the Government**

| Components of Trust        | Proposed Action to Increase Trust                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reliability                | The government must be capable of reducing uncertainty in the economic, social, and political situation of its people and considerably.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Responsiveness             | The government should provide public services that are readily accessible, effective and customer-centered, and thereby achieve to the satisfaction of users what is sought for by the public.                                                                                                                         |
| Openness and Inclusiveness | The government should establish powerful, trilateral dialogue mechanisms to involve all stakeholders in ways that make sense and to make the output stakeholder-owned. To provide greater transparency, accountability and engagement information would be made available in an environment encouraging participation. |
| Integrity                  | The guidelines should be set by those public institutions and the government itself. We need codes of conduct to protect the public interest and prevent corruption.                                                                                                                                                   |
| Fairness                   | The government should treat its residents and all other bodies fairly in policy-making and implementation proceedings.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Table 4 presents the proposed actions to increase the trust of the people in the government. These components are based on the study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The paper delved on how poor Filipino view poverty and their trust on government. In the Blomqvist's dimensional Model of Trust which consist of capability, behaviour, goodwill and self- reference almost all these measurements were agreed mostly by respondents. Nevertheless, even though loyal to the government in particular dimensions — such as trust that the government pays a lot of attention culture and values, addresses issues when they are talked about, makes it possible for people take part in making decisions or delivers services on health, education or administration-

many of them doubted whether they could fully trust government as a whole. Even when the trust of the people in the government is controlled for, it cannot obviate the perception of poverty out from them in all four dimensions. This took in how they each thought about poverty in various ways — with the government as the number one cause of poor people being poor, and a major factor that could lessen inequality between rich and poor. But despite all these experiences, most of the respondents still expressed satisfaction in their current lives.

Therefore, the people's trust in the government is not a measure that only those dimensions of capability, goodwill, behavior and self-reference are; with out they affirm by reaching positive perception about poverty otherwise. Thus, the elements; components, reliability, responsiveness, openness, integrity and fairness as referred in the OECD report above could be considered to be implemented in reality for improving trust to government.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher also concluded that most of those responding were unsure about whether or not the government should play a role in reducing the income gap between the rich and poor. The thing is, the government need to consider researches that will give answers on what specific moves they should make so that the life of poor people's can be better. Each of these elements is included in the OECD report, and it also makes a rightful point to take those into account which may lead towards strengthening trust in government.

It is advised for the future scholars to look for an answer with the qualitative approach, which is exploratory and strives to get deeply into "how" & "why" a particular phenomenon or behavior operates in a specific context.

## REFERENCES

- Alfredo, G., & Gomez, V. (2019) *Education and Poverty*. <https://www.ebsco.com/products/ebooks/education-collection>
- Alkrajji, A., & Ameen, N. (2021). The impact of service quality, trust and satisfaction on young citizen loyalty towards government e-services. *Information Technology and People*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ITP-04-2020-0229>
- Hartanto, D., & Siregar, S., (2021). Determinants of overall public trust in local government: meditation of government response to COVID-19 in Indonesian context. *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy, Emerald Insight*.  
<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Determinants-of-Overall-Public-Trust-in-Local-of-to-Hartanto-Siregar/1beb600c49f14ad5a0836ea0230675ead815ee2c>
- Jachimowicz, JM, Chafik, S, Munrat, S, Prabhu, JC & Weber, EU. (2017). Community trust reduces myopic decisions of low-income individuals. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 114, 5401- 5406.  
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/83939986.pdf>
- Majumdar, Koustab. (2020). Perception of poverty: A study on the non-social work students. *Social Work & Society*. 18. 1-15.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345039991\\_Perception\\_of\\_poverty\\_A\\_study\\_on\\_the\\_non-social\\_work\\_students](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345039991_Perception_of_poverty_A_study_on_the_non-social_work_students)
- OECD (2013), "Trust in government, policy effectiveness and the governance agenda", in *Government at a Glance 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris. [https://doi.org/10.1787/gov\\_glance-2013-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2013-en)
- Saparniene, D, Reinholde, I, & Rinkeviciene, S. (2021). Relationship between citizens' trust in local government and participation in local governance. *Scientific Papers of the University of Pardubice, Series D, Faculty of Economics and Administration*. <https://editorial.upce.cz/1804-8048/29/2/1210>