

### Consumer Satisfaction with Complaint Handling Procedures of the Consumer Protection Section of the Louisiana Attorney General's Office

Satisfaction with complaint handling procedures of the Consumer Protection Section of the Louisiana Attorney General's Office (CPSLAGO) was determined. Overall, 40% of the respondents were satisfied with how their complaints were handled. Similarly, 41% were dissatisfied. Satisfaction was negatively related to income and education.

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The purposes were to determine a) satisfaction with complaint procedures of the Consumer Protection Section of the Louisiana Attorney General's Office (CPSLAGO) and b) relationships between satisfaction and selected variables. A survey questionnaire designed by the researcher was used for data collection. The Dillman (1978) "total design method" was adapted for administration of the questionnaire. In the spring of 1994, 133 survey questionnaires were mailed to persons who had filed complaints with CPSLAGO during the period of September 1, 1993 through November 30, 1993. Ninety-nine subjects responded, resulting in a 74% response rate.

Data were analyzed using frequency distributions to determine the number of respondents at each level of overall satisfaction and satisfaction with specific aspects of services. Simple linear regression and analysis of variance were used to test for relationships between satisfaction and selected variables. Analysis of covariance and logistic regression were used to explore models for predicting overall satisfaction with how complaints were handled. The level of significance was  $\alpha = .05$ .

Approximately one-fourth (27%) of the respondents reported being very satisfied with how the complaint was handled by the CPSLAGO. Thirteen percent were somewhat satisfied, 20% were uncertain. Eleven percent were somewhat dissatisfied, and 30% were very dissatisfied.

Respondents were most satisfied with the courtesy of the personnel (79%), followed by ease of completing the complaint form (78%), professionalism of the personnel (76%), and thoroughness of the complaint form (70%). Respondents' satisfaction was lower with the length of the complaint form (65%), knowledge of the personnel (60%), response time (59%), and helpfulness of the personnel (57%).

Overall satisfaction with how complaints were handled was related negatively to income and educational level. As income increased, level of satisfaction decreased. Similarly, as level of education increased, level of satisfaction decreased.

Neither satisfaction with response time nor satisfaction with the complaint form was significantly related to any of the selected variables. Satisfaction with the personnel was negatively related to educational level. As level of education increased, level of satisfaction with the personnel decreased.

A major benefit of the current study is the potential for the CPSLAGO to enhance the effectiveness of its services to consumers. In addition, using suggested improvements to the questionnaire, the study could be replicated nationwide to evaluate other states' consumer complaint handling services.

#### Endnotes

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