

9. DEMOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

Survey research traditionally includes an analysis of the role that demographic factors, such as gender, age and income level, play in shaping client perceptions. This analysis is included for the record, however most of the results are negative: demographic factors do not play a major role in the issues that this survey addresses.

The absence of demographic effects in Peel's present results are consistent with the findings of five studies of Citizens First over the past decade. In general, these factors appear to have little impact on citizens' perceptions of service quality or confidence in government. The reasons are likely that, a) government services are provided in the same manner to all, regardless of their demographic group, and b) governments strive to treat all citizens equally. The water supply, ambulance service, social assistance and other services work in the same manner regardless of a persons age or race or gender.

In the private sector, by contrast services are highly differentiated on a demographic basis. Most businesses, whether clothing or entertainment or restaurants, pitch their product to specific groups.

Table 15 summarizes the impact of seven demographic variables on three ETPS services. The first line reports the result of testing gender differences on satisfaction with curbside pickup, water quality and regional roads. In each of these three tests, there was not a statistically significant gender difference.

Table 15. Demographics have next to no meaningful impact on satisfaction with ETPS services

Demographic variable	Satisfaction with...		
	Curbside pickup	Water quality	Regional roads
Gender	–	–	–
First language: English vs others	–	–	2%
Immigrant vs not	–	–	2%
Age	–	2%	1%
Education	–	–	–
Occupation	1%	1%	1%
Income	–	–	–

– Not statistically significant

Percent is the amount of variance explained by the demographic variable

The second line of Table 15 shows that there was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction with regional roads on the basis of first language (those whose first language was English reported slightly lower satisfaction than those whose first language was not English). This difference, however, accounts for just 2 percent of the variance in response, meaning that the difference is negligible in any practical sense. With a large sample, very small differences can be statistically significant (meaning that another sample of the population would be very likely to give the same result).

In the present context, differences that account for less than 10 percent of the variance are of marginal interest. In contrast with the demographic variables now under consideration, drivers of satisfaction account for 59 percent of the variance in satisfaction with Peel service delivery

Table 16 reports clients' satisfaction with Health and Human Services. There are some small effects, particularly with respect to Peel Living. Age appears to be at the root of things: Older clients of Peel Living give higher satisfaction ratings than do younger clients. This underlies the Occupation difference: Retirees (i.e. older clients) give higher satisfaction ratings than to other occupational groups.

Table 16. Demographics have a slight impact on satisfaction with Health and Human Services

Demographic variable	Ontario works	Peel Living	Public Health
Gender	1%	–	–
First language: English vs others	2%	–	3%
Immigrant vs not	5%	–	–
Age	5%	12%	5%
Education	–	9%	–
Occupation	–	14%	–
Income	na	4%	–

– Not statistically significant

Percent is the amount of variance explained by the demographic variable

The situation with respect to confidence in the Region of Peel is quite clear: demographic factors have no meaningful impact (Table 17).

Table 17. Demographics have no meaningful impact on confidence in government

Demographic variable	Confidence in the Region of Peel
Gender	–
First language: English vs others	1%
Immigrant vs not	<1%
Age	1%
Education	–
Occupation	1%
Income	–

– Not statistically significant

Percent is the amount of variance explained by the demographic variable