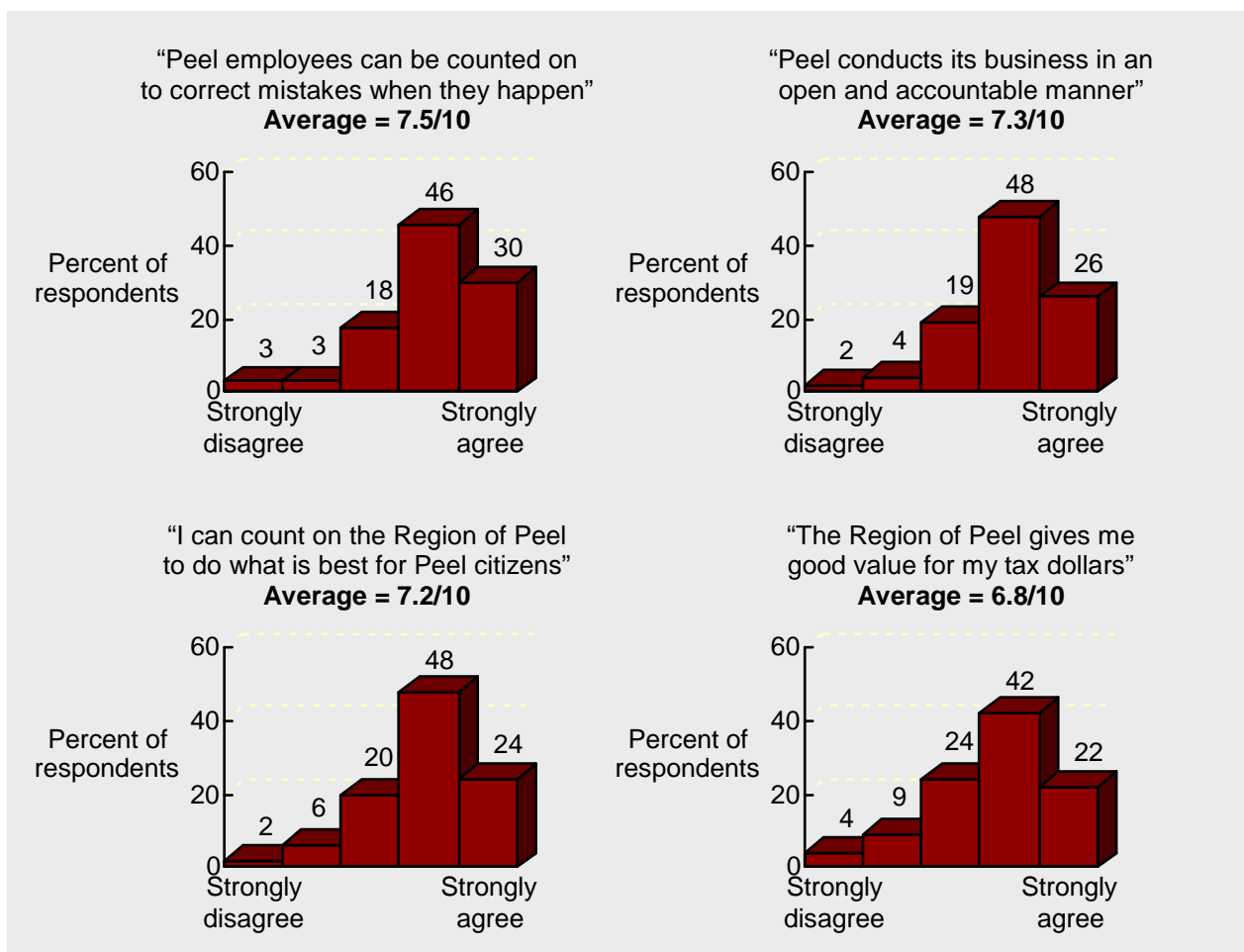


7. TRUST & CONFIDENCE IN THE REGION OF PEEL

Provision of services to citizens is a primary responsibility of governments. According to established theory, when governments do a good job they are rewarded by receiving the confidence of their citizens. The relation between service quality and confidence has been studied over many years in Canada and internationally. It is a complex phenomenon, because many other things can also affect confidence. Primary among these are the citizens' perceptions of elected officials, of public sector service providers and of the policies that governments embrace.

The present survey limits the enquiry to the direct impact that quality of service has on confidence: to what extent do citizens' perceptions of Regional services determine their confidence in the Region? To begin with, Figure 19 shows client response to four measures of trust and confidence.

Figure 19. Measures of trust and confidence in the Region of Peel

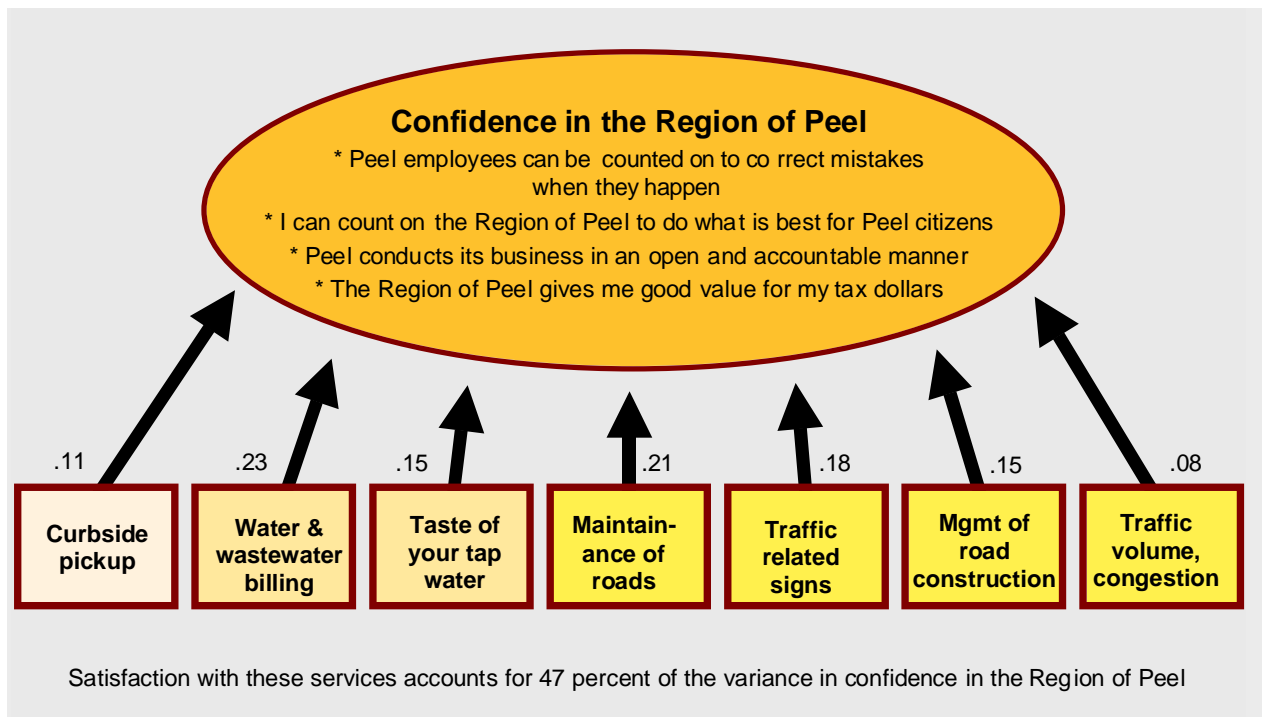


Confidence in government is a complex idea and no single survey question gives a complete measure of it. One solution is to use the four items in combination: each statements addresses a somewhat different aspect of trust and confidence and together they form a scale that captures several critical elements of confidence.

How, then, does service quality relate to confidence? Figure 20 shows how each of seven ETPS services contributes to confidence. Each contributes a significant increment; there is some variation in impact from service to service, but the seven services are more similar than they are different. Together they account for 47 percent of the variance in trust/confidence.

This is a strong result, and in fact it probably over-states the influence of service delivery in confidence. If other determinants of confidence were included (e.g. perceptions of government policies and elected officials) the role of service delivery could well decrease. For example, if citizens see their elected representatives as responsible in part for the quality of service delivery, then those representatives will become part of the confidence equation and the “pure” effect of service delivery observed in this study will be reduced. Identifying the contributions of these other factors to confidence in government is a worthwhile endeavour for the future.

Figure 20. Impact of Regional services on confidence: General Population



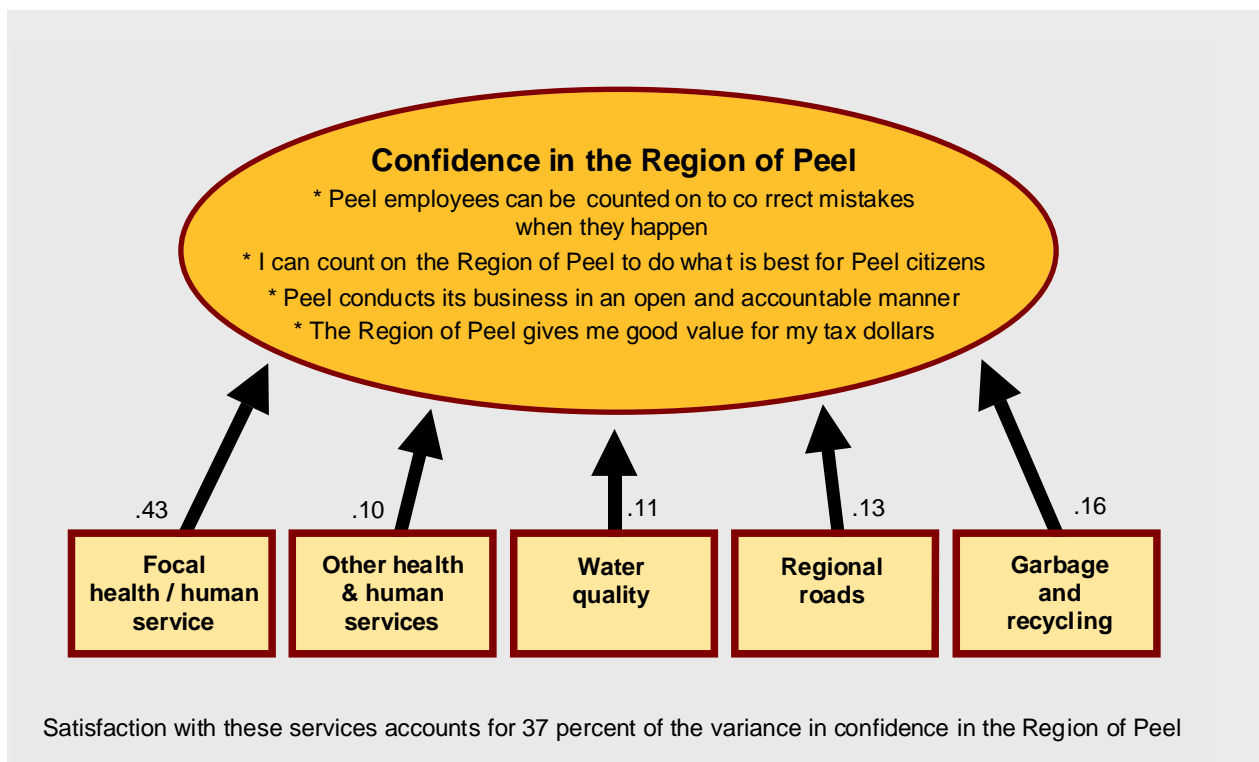
Numbers above the services are standardized regression coefficients. They indicate the impact that each service has on confidence.

The results in Figure 20 are based on the random sample of the Peel population and as such they apply to Peel citizens as a whole. The analysis was also conducted with Health and Human Services clients, with similar but not identical results. The Health and Human Services survey has many questions in common with the general survey, but less detail on ETPS services and more material on Health and Human Services. The ETPS services are represented by three overall ratings in the HHS survey.

The results for HHS clients emphasize the importance of the main service that they are receiving – OW, Peel Living, childcare, etc. This is labelled the ‘focal service’ in Figure 21, and it has a considerably stronger impact on confidence than do other services (although other services still play a role).

It is important to note that, as with the general sample, including the policy and political realms in this analysis would likely reduce the pure effect of service quality shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Impact of Regional services on confidence: Health and Human Services



Note: Some Peel residents have limited knowledge of the services that the Region provides. For this reason, the questions on trust and confidence were placed at the end of the survey. In earlier sections, the interviewer had asked the respondent about each of the 25 services listed in Table 3, explaining what the service was if the client was unsure. When the trust and confidence section began, each respondent had received a good overview of the Region’s responsibilities.