

Efficiency and Stakeholders' Satisfaction in the DOLE's Single-Entry Approach in Labor Dispute Resolution in SAMARICA Area, Occidental Mindoro

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Abstract: This research assesses stakeholders' perceived efficiency and satisfaction regarding the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) program, a conciliation-mediation mechanism for labor dispute resolution in the Philippines. More importantly, it looks at how various demographic aspects such as social class, tenure/length of employment, educational attainment, income, and marital status relate to these perceptions, as well as the relationship between perceived efficiency and satisfaction levels. Data was collected using random sampling and a structured questionnaire from 46 employers and 46 employees from different industries. Findings indicate that SEnA is regarded as an efficient process; the highest scores were given to communication-effectiveness, and timeliness, although cost-effectiveness ranked slightly lower. Satisfaction with the program was similarly high, with strong ratings given to fairness, transparency, and accessibility. There were remarkable differences in satisfaction as ranked by various sub-groups: employees with lower income and single respondents generally rated SEnA's efficiency higher. Unlike lower-income respondents, employers and higher-income respondents expressed lesser levels of dissatisfaction regarding transparency and fairness. Also, while there is a positive relationship between efficiency and satisfaction, the degree of that correlation is minimal, suggesting that factors beyond the respondents' experiences are affecting this aspect. This research emphasizes that the augmentation of SEnA's satisfaction stems from improved timeliness and communication, reinforcing its position as an economical substitute for formal litigation.

Keywords: Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Single-Entry Approach (SEnA), alternative dispute resolution (ADR), conciliation-mediation.

1. Introduction

The patterns of an employment landscape undergo continual changes depending on the socio-economic disputes, derived from the conflicts between the parties attempting to gain control over a specific industry. Social and economic problems, including the struggle for fair wages and benefits, are persistent in the Philippines. This necessitates addressing the issues of conflict resolution alongside the deeper cultural and communicative aspects of the situation (Rebayla et al., 2023).

To foster collaboration between management and labor

towards achieving industrial peace, DOLE implemented the Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) as a mechanism for resolving labor disputes. This was part of former President Benigno S. Aquino III's 22-point Labor and Employment Agenda, particularly in revising the framework of labor arbitration and adjudication by streamlining it (Bañares, 2017). Such systems focus on optimizing operational effectiveness to simplify, reduce expenses, and minimize time spent on the dispute resolution system (Ilies, 2022).

Conciliation-mediation is classified as a conflict resolution technique where opposing parties attempt to discuss and resolve their issues peacefully with the help of a conciliator-mediator. While it seems very clear in principle, it is, to some extent, problematic (Rebayla et al., 2023). Furthermore, despite SEnA's goodwill, some issues have come to light regarding the 30-day conciliation-mediation period. Equally (Pervukhina and Yaroshenko, 2023) concentrated on solving the problem of rigid and region-specific clear court-mediator supervision control mechanisms that have been designed for enduring management.

To tackle the recurring issues of labor disputes, DOLE created SEnA to streamline and enhance the effectiveness of the dispute's resolution process. However, SEnA is incapable of providing solutions in every situation (Bañares, 2017), particularly mitigating disputes involving monetary claims and reinstatement, which are unlikely to reach an agreement. Settlements with these characteristics are reached frequently because of unequal distributions of power. Aggrieved employees too often are forced to abandon their cases because of the relentless court costs and delays which make accepting their proposed terms the only option.

Evaluating the perceptions of both employers and employees regarding SEnA's efficiency and satisfaction is crucial in determining its effectiveness. The research conducted by Rebayla et al. (2023) did not explore social dimensions such as subclass, length of employment, educational attainment, income, and marital status relative to their satisfaction levels. Hence, this study aims to address that by analyzing the

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perceived efficiency and satisfaction of the stakeholders as they relate to the dispute resolution processes within DOLE's SENa.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design. It outlined the demographic profile of the respondents, their perceived efficiency relating to timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and communication effectiveness, as well as their satisfaction level regarding fairness, transparency, and accessibility in the process concerning DOLE's Single-Entry Approach in labor dispute resolution. Further, it examined the relationships of some selected variables and tested the significance of some inter-relationships among the variables.

B. Study Setting

The study was conducted in Occidental Mindoro from October to November 2024 in the SAMARICA Area. SAMARICA represented the municipalities of San Jose, Magsaysay, Rizal, and Calintaan, and as per records, most labor dispute cases between employers and employees, under DOLE's SENa program, came from these localities.

C. Unit of Analysis and Sampling

The participants in this study included 46 employers and 46 employees who had some level of interaction with the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Single Entry Approach (SENa) program. The respondents were extracted from the records of the department to guarantee that they could answer the research tool and provide valuable information based on their knowledge and experience. The sampling method used was cluster sampling technique where employers were organized by municipality. A sample of 46 employers was randomly chosen from a population of 51 employers spread across different municipalities with 39 from San Jose, two from Magsaysay, two from Rizal and two from Calintaan. Of these selected employers, only one employee was included as respondent. While the number of employer respondents was intentionally set to match the employee respondents, it is important to note that typically, there are more employee participants than employers, especially in cases where employees collectively petition for SENa. The study acknowledges this as a limitation.

The study also attempted to reach all respondents from all SENa cases, whether resolved or unresolved. Six of the 46 samples were unresolved, meaning these cases had been brought to arbitration. One of the questions in the questionnaire specifically asked whether the cases had been resolved or escalated, so both types of cases were included. If the sample consisted only of resolved cases, the outcome would lean towards heightened satisfaction because respondents whose cases were resolved would be more likely to report positive outcomes. Hence, the study fortifies its conclusions by

including both resolved and unresolved cases to portray the SENa process and its impact from various perspectives. However, this creates an additional limitation where the processes are evaluated based on the case's current standing; satisfaction is likely lower for those with unresolved conflicts. This limitation should be considered when using the findings.

D. Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire supported by literature was used to gather data for this study. The questionnaire comprised three parts. Part I emphasized respondents' demographic profile in relation to the social class, tenure/length of employment, highest educational attainment, aggregate family income, and marital status. Part II consisted of item questions that measured the respondents' perceived efficiency in terms of timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and communication effectiveness regarding DOLE's Single-Entry Approach in labor dispute resolutions. Part III comprised item questions to measure the respondents' level of satisfaction with DOLE's Single-Entry Approach in labor dispute resolutions.

After the construction of the research instrument, the researcher sought the help of the research adviser, data analyst, and critical reader to check and evaluate the instrument's content for testing its validity. Comments and suggestions were incorporated. The instrument was tested on 30 stakeholders who were not the respondents to measure internal consistency and reliability. The reliability tests yielded coefficients ranging from .818 to .898, indicating generally good reliability of the items and suggesting that the instrument could be administered to the final set of respondents, as displayed in Table 1.

E. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher produced enough validated questionnaires to ensure all respondents had access to one. The researcher contacted the employers to get permission and explain the study before distributing the questionnaires. The in-person distribution was to both selected employers and their employees so that all process steps could be explained in detail. The respondents were instructed to complete the questionnaires at their convenience within a stipulated timeframe. Multiple follow-ups were conducted to increase response rates and resolve any queries. The researcher spent the first two months of the collection process, between October and November 2024, gathering and analyzing the completed questionnaires.

F. Data Processing and Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and analyze the gathered data. Frequency, percentage distribution, and mean were used in the respondents' profile. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to assess perceived efficiency and level of satisfaction. Inferential statistics were also used to test the significance and extent of the relationship between and among respondents' profiles, their perceived efficiency, and level of satisfaction. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

Table 1
Reliability test results

Variable	Num. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Perceived Efficiency of DOLE's Single-Entry Approach	15	.818	Good
Level of Satisfaction on DOLE's Single-Entry Approach	15	.898	Good

was applied. Various data gathered were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

G. Scope and Limitations

The study was confined to assessing the efficiency of and level of satisfaction by the stakeholders regarding DOLE's Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) in labor dispute resolution. The stakeholders included the employers and employees from San Jose, Magsaysay, Rizal, and Calintaan (SAMARICA) area only. The study considered only the following demographic characteristics: social class, tenure/length of employment, highest educational attainment, aggregate family income, and marital status of the respondents. Efficiency was measured in terms of timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and communication effectiveness only. The level of satisfaction was confined to fairness, transparency, and accessibility of the process only.

The efficiency and satisfaction variables were based on the perception of the respondents only and relied on their best judgment. No specific instrument or document was used to gauge efficiency and satisfaction. The limitations also included the difficulty of retrieving administered questionnaires and the willingness of potential respondents to participate. Furthermore, the study was limited only to the employers and employees of SAMARICA in Occidental Mindoro because these were the typical clients' locations who filed cases under the SEnA, which may not have fully represented broader populations. Moreover, they were those who filed from January to June 2024 and had the best experience regarding SEnA. The period was chosen as it allowed for the most recent and pertinent interactions with the SEnA process so that feedback was up-to-date and reflected current experiences.

H. Ethical Considerations

Respondents were given enough time to answer the questionnaire based on their real experiences and opinions. Consent and approval from respondents were obtained. Permission was also sought from DOLE to gather data from their system from January to June 2024 and conduct a survey on their clients of the SEnA program. This study was conducted with complete confidentiality. Furthermore, the respondents' identities were not disclosed to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of their data.

3. Results

A. Profile of the Respondents

There is an equal distribution of employees and employers among the respondents. Most of them are employed for 1 to 5 years at 57.6%, followed by those employed for 6 to 10 years at 22.8%. Others are employed for 16 to 20 years and 21 years or more of employment, each accounting for only 4.3%. The majority (85.9%) have a bachelor's degree, while 3.3% are high school undergraduates.

About 58.7% of the respondents have a monthly income of less than PhP 25,000 while some 17.4% have monthly income that ranges from PhP 50,000 to PhP 74,999. Only 2.2% earn at least PhP 200,000 per month. Finally, the majority (77.2%) are married, some 20.7% are single, while 2.2% are widowed. (Table 2).

Table 2
Profile of the respondents

Profile	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage
Social Class	Employee	46	50.0
	Employer	46	50.0
Length of Employment	1 – 5 years	54	57.6
	6 – 10 years	21	22.8
	11 – 15 years	9	9.8
	16 – 20 years	4	4.3
	21 years above	4	4.3
Highest Educational Attainment	High School	3	3.3
	Undergraduate		
	High School Graduate	6	6.5
	Vocational Training	4	4.3
Aggregate Monthly Income	Bachelor's Degree	79	85.9
	Less than P25,000	54	58.7
	P25,000 – P49,999	6	6.5
	P50,000 – P74,999	16	17.4
	P75,000 – P99,999	6	6.5
	P100,000 – P149,999	5	5.4
	P150,000 – P199,999	3	3.3
	P200,000 or more	2	2.2
Marital Status	Single	19	20.7
	Married	71	77.2
	Widowed	2	2.2

B. Perceived Efficiency in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

The ease with which the Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) resolves labor conflict disputes is particularly outstanding in the timely notification of parties, as captured by the overall mean score of 3.76 with a very low standard deviation of .22, which shows a consensus among respondents. Moreover, the process earned "Very High" ratings for resolving disputes within the legal cap of thirty (30) days, (mean=3.82, SD=.39), and

Table 3
Efficiency of DOLE's SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of timeliness.

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) process effectively ensures that labor disputes are resolved within the 30-day conciliation-mediation period.	3.82	.39	Very High
Parties involved in the SEnA process receive timely updates about the status of their cases.	3.82	.39	Very High
The conciliation-mediation sessions are promptly scheduled and conducted according to the prescribed guidelines of SEnA after filing of Request for Assistance.	3.76	.43	Very High
The termination of the conciliation-mediation process after 30 days, or upon any party violating the agreed terms, allows for timely escalation to arbitration, maintaining the continuity of dispute resolution.	3.71	.50	Very High
The enforcement of the 30-day resolution period contributes to minimizing disruptions in the workplace caused by prolonged disputes.	3.68	.51	Very High
Overall Mean	3.76	.22	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

updating information (mean=3.82, SD=.39). Respondents also attributed “Very High” marks (mean=3.76, SD=.43) to the stipulated timelines for scheduling conciliation-mediation sessions in SEnA as well as the commencement of arbitration after 30 days, or after attesting to terms deemed breaches of agreement (mean=3.71, SD=.50). Respondents further agreed to enforce the 30-day resolution mark, asserting the workplace disruptions associated with stalled disputes emanating from lingering conflicts (mean=3.68, SD=.51). Notwithstanding the deviations on some considered variables, it does seem that the SEnA process is acknowledged for having provided adequacy in meeting performance expectations in resolving disputes (Table 3).

Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) is highly effective in resolving labor disputes in a cost-effective manner, as shown by the received mean score of 3.69 with a low standard deviation of .24, indicating strong agreement among the respondents. In particular, SEnA was rated as “Very High” for the effectiveness in minimizing expensive legal advice, including lawyers and position papers (mean=3.74, SD=.44), alongside how well the services provided were cost-effective in the balance of the cost versus the quality of the dispute resolution services (mean=3.71, SD=.46). Respondents viewed the processes as successful in not only maintaining an agreed budget for all parties (mean=3.70, SD=.46) but also ensuring that the expenses incurred are reasonable and manageable through adequate monitoring and evaluation (mean=3.70, SD=.46). Moreover, SEnA’s cost disadvantage over formal litigation was rated “Very High” (mean=3.63, SD=.49) and in this section SEnA displayed greater variability. Overall, the results support the effectiveness of SEnA in providing affordable dispute resolution services without sacrificing quality. (Table 4).

The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) discloses its

effectiveness in communication as shown in the overall mean score of 3.73 with a low standard deviation of .23, which denotes strong agreement amongst respondents. The communications protocol within SEnA is very effective for keeping all stakeholders appropriately and adequately informed on the activities and decisions made at every step of the conciliation mediation blend process (mean=3.85, SD=.36). Also, the arrangement of SEnA allows the parties to articulate their concerns freely and effectively (mean=3.78, SD=.41) and enables the mutual understanding required to reach agreements during sessions (mean=3.75, SD=.46). Similarly, the framework ensures that systematic and unambiguous communications as specified in DOLE Department Order 107-10 are dealt with (mean=3.66, SD=.48) and supports provision of unimpeded and bounded open communication as designed in the process flow (mean=3.59, SD=.54). Overall, the finding substantiates that the SEnA communication framework’s effectiveness is instrumental to its success in dispute resolution owing to the active, clear, and straightforward communications provided throughout the processes. (Table 5).

The table summary highlights the effectiveness of the Single-Entry Approach in settling labor disputes with a grand mean of 3.73 and a low standard deviation of .18, showing a “Very High” level of effectiveness and strong consensus among respondents. Among the indicators, timeliness is the highest (mean=3.76, SD=.22), reflecting high order responsiveness to disputes during the set period. The rating for communication effectiveness was also received as “Very High” (mean=3.73, SD=.23), underscoring the role of communication in providing a resolution. Cost-effectiveness scored a mean of 3.69 (SD=.24), highlighting SEnA’s service delivery, confirming that affordable provisions are rendered. With these results, SEnA has performed remarkably well on all evaluated indicators, which proves comprehensive efficiency in

Table 4
Efficiency of DOLE’s SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of cost- effectiveness

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) efficiently minimizes the need for costly legal advice and representations (i.e., lawyers, position papers).	3.74	.44	Very High
SEnA effectively balances cost savings with the quality of dispute resolution services.	3.71	.46	Very High
The cost management in SEnA helps keep the process within budget for all parties involved.	3.70	.46	Very High
The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms under SEnA effectively control costs, ensuring they remain reasonable and manageable for employers and workers.	3.70	.46	Very High
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) offers a significant cost advantage to both employers and employees when compared to the expenses of formal litigation.	3.63	.49	Very High
Overall Mean	3.69	.24	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

Table 5
Efficiency of DOLE’s SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of communication effectiveness

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The communication protocol in SEnA effectively ensures that all parties are consistently informed of progress and decisions at each stage of the conciliation-mediation process.	3.85	.36	Very High
The Single-Entry Approach’s design empowers parties to express their concerns freely and effectively during the conciliation-mediation process.	3.78	.41	Very High
The communication framework of SEnA fosters mutual understanding and helps parties reach agreements more effectively during conciliation-mediation sessions.	3.75	.46	Very High
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA), as outlined under DOLE DO 107-10, ensures consistent and clear communication channels are maintained between disputing parties during the conciliation-mediation process.	3.66	.48	Very High
The structured process flow outlined in Department Order 107-10 ensures that communication remains open and transparent, fostering effective labor dispute resolution.	3.59	.54	Very High
Overall Mean	3.73	.23	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

addressing labor disputes. (Table 6).

Table 6
Summary table on the efficiency of DOLE's SEnA in labor dispute resolutions

Indicators	Overall Mean	SD	Description
Timeliness	3.76	0.22	Very High
Cost-Effectiveness	3.69	0.24	Very High
Communication Effectiveness	3.73	0.23	Very High
Efficiency – Grand Mean	3.73	0.18	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

C. Level of Satisfaction in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

SEnA's fairness in resolving disputes is held in very high satisfaction among respondents, which indicates strong agreement (mean=3.75, SD=.24). The process flow captured the highest satisfaction score (mean=3.82, SD=.39), and it captured the respondents' satisfaction in guaranteeing equal case presentation and reaching agreement opportunities for all entitled parties. "Very High" was also the rating given regarding the principles and objectives of the SEnA (mean=3.78, SD=.41), noting strongly the advance of neutrality. The involvement of neutral conciliators ensures fair and balanced discussions (mean=3.77, SD=.42). At the same time, SEnA's legal architecture was adjudged as providing fairness and equity (mean=3.74, SD=.44). Finally, the conciliator-mediator approach ensures balanced resolution for both employers and employees (mean=3.66, SD=.48). These findings support SEnA's emphasis on fairness and ability of equitable resolution of disputes. (Table 7).

The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) provides transparency in the resolution of labor disputes, and the respondents are quite satisfied and supportive with it (mean=3.74, SD=.22). The legal structure guarantees that all participants are effectively granted

access to information regarding their rights and responsibilities, which received the highest score (mean=3.79, SD=.41). Further, transparency is offered by informing both the employers and employees regarding the procedures and processes as well as remedial actions undertaken (mean=3.77, SD=.42). The principles clarify by having the process steps and the processes themselves determined and defined for all respondents (mean=3.73, SD=.45), while having a defined process flow ensures transparency of the procedure as accessible (mean=3.71, SD=.46). In addition, the defined steps taken affords ensures transparent process within the procedures (mean=3.70, SD=.46). These results support SEnA's position on the right to participate openly and actively and that all the respondents are very satisfied with transparency. (Table 8).

The respondents are very satisfied with the accessibility of SEnA services. It achieves a very high level of accessibility in the dispute resolution processes (mean=3.78; SD=.17), which is in consensus among respondents. The highest rating was given to the ability of both employers and employees to access the process (mean=3.86, SD=.35). The principles and objectives further foster accessibility by providing streamlined resolution services (mean=3.80, SD=.40). The process also depicts simplicity and ease (mean=3.79, SD=.41). Moreover, the legal framework aids in the simplified procedures of courts and the formalism needed for litigation (mean=3.74, SD=.44). The conciliation-mediation process is made accessible through the involvement of DOLE and its attached agencies across the regions which enhances accessibility (mean=3.72, SD=.45). These results confirm that SEnA offers an accessible labor dispute resolution mechanism. (Table 9).

As demonstrated by the grand mean score of 3.76 with a standard deviation of .22, the level of satisfaction with the DOLE's Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) systems is

Table 7
Satisfaction of DOLE's SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of fairness

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The process flow outlined in Department Order 107-10 guarantees that all parties are given equal opportunities to present their cases and reach an agreement.	3.82	.39	Very High
The principles and objectives of SEnA ensures that labor disputes are handled without bias, promoting impartiality throughout the resolution process.	3.78	.41	Very High
The involvement of neutral conciliators in the SEnA process ensures that discussions and negotiations remain fair and balanced.	3.77	.42	Very High
SEnA's legal framework is designed to provide just and equitable outcomes for all parties involved in labor disputes.	3.74	.44	Very High
SEnA guarantees that both employers and employees experience a balanced resolution process through its conciliation-mediation approach.	3.66	.48	Very High
Overall Mean	3.75	.24	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

Table 8
Satisfaction of DOLE's SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of transparency

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
Under DO 107-10, SEnA's legal framework ensures that all parties are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities at every step of the conciliation-mediation process.	3.79	.41	Very High
SEnA maintains transparency by keeping both employers and employees updated on the progress and outcomes of the conciliation-mediation process.	3.77	.42	Very High
SEnA's principles, as outlined in DOLE DO 107-10, ensure transparency by clearly defining the process flow and criteria for all stakeholders.	3.73	.45	Very High
The process flow established in Department Order 107-10 enhances transparency by making the dispute resolution procedure straightforward and accessible to all parties involved.	3.71	.46	Very High
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) ensures a transparent dispute resolution process through its clearly defined conciliation-mediation procedures.	3.70	.46	Very High
Overall Mean	3.74	.22	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

Table 9
Satisfaction of DOLE's SEnA in labor dispute resolutions in terms of accessibility of the process

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
The Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) ensures that the dispute resolution process is easily accessible to both employers and employees.	3.86	.35	Very High
The principles and objectives of SEnA promote accessibility by offering streamlined resolution services.	3.80	.40	Very High
The process flow outlined in Department Order 107-10 is designed for simplicity, making it accessible to all parties involved in labor disputes.	3.79	.41	Very High
SEnA's legal framework facilitates accessibility by simplifying procedures and reducing the need for formal litigation.	3.74	.44	Very High
The conciliation-mediation process under SEnA provides accessible resolution options by involving DOLE and its affiliated agencies across various regions.	3.72	.45	Very High
Overall Mean	3.78	.17	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

exceptionally high. Among the indicators, the accessibility of the process received the highest rating (mean=3.78, SD=.17), showing that program stakeholders, like employees, can access the program without obstacles. Fairness (mean=3.75, SD=.24) and transparency (mean=3.74, SD=.22) also scored very high, emphasizing that the process is fair, impartial, and unequivocally defined for all participants. These results bolster previous chapters showing overall stakeholder satisfaction with the SEnA process concerning responsive public services in accessibility and equity for accessible labor dispute resolution. (Table 10).

Table 10

Summary table on the level of satisfaction with DOLE's SEnA

Indicators	Overall Mean	SD	Description
Fairness	3.75	.24	Very High
Transparency	3.74	.22	Very High
Accessibility of the Process	3.78	.17	Very High
Satisfaction – Grand Mean	3.76	.22	Very High

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Low; 1.51-2.50 Low; 2.51-3.50 High; 3.51-4.00 Very High

D. Relationship Between Profile of the Respondents and Perceived Efficiency in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

The analysis reveals different levels of importance, and the impact of relationships based on the different characteristics of respondents.

Social class has a moderately weak, negative correlation with timeliness ($r=-.295$, $p=.002$), cost effectiveness ($r=-.264$, $p=.005$), as well as communication effectiveness ($r=-.312$, $p=.001$). Overall efficiency also has a significant, moderately weak ($r=-.381$, $p=.000$) negative correlation. These findings imply that the social class of respondents has a moderate correlation with their perception of SEnA's overall effectiveness, whereby employers perceive slightly lower efficiency. The findings also noted that employees perceive SEnA as more efficient than employers regarding timeliness because they are more affected by the disputes during the waiting period. Strain during the resolution of disputes is significant, rendering the 30-day timeframe for conciliation-mediation vital for employees. Given that conflicts often affect them the most, employees may perceive the resolution process as a welcome reprieve when expeditious, particularly if they lack the means to navigate the formalities of litigation. Employers, in contrast, may be used to complex unexpressed processes and possess mechanisms to deal with disputes beyond the SEnA, which is why, from an employee perspective, timeliness is perceived poorly compared to employers. In the

same way, employees perceived the program as more cost-effective than the employers because SEnA is a low-cost substitute for formal litigation. As employees do not have the financial means to retain legal representation and undertake protracted court battles, SEnA's cost-benefit is greater. Employers, who generally have easier access to these resources, may be more guarded regarding the SEnA process because of their heightened expectations of the outcomes in dispute resolution. While the costs of SEnA are lower than those of formal litigation, they may still be considerable for employers, which explains their relative dissatisfaction with the cost-effectiveness of SEnA. Finally, employees believed that SEnA was more effective in communication than the employers.

The duration of employment does not display notable associations with the timeliness, cost-effectiveness, or overall efficiency. Nevertheless, there is a significant, albeit weak, negative correlation between duration of employment and the indicator of communication effectiveness ($r=-.181$, $p=.044$). This suggests that respondents employed longer may perceive communication within SEnA as less effective, although this explanatory power is weak. No significant relationships were found between respondents' highest educational attainment and any of the dimensions of SEnA efficiency, including timeliness, cost-effectiveness, communication effectiveness, and overall efficiency.

The aggregate monthly income shows a weak negative correlation with timeliness ($r=-.177$, $p=.048$), communication effectiveness ($r=-.208$, $p=.019$), and overall efficiency ($r=-.171$, $p=.043$). As these results have shown, in the case of higher-income respondents, the weaker perception of efficiency on these dimensions was lowered; indeed, the correlation is weak.

There are no significant correlations between marital status and the rest of the variables, like timeliness, cost-effectiveness, or overall efficiency. However, a significant, weak, negative correlation exists with communication effectiveness ($r=-.213$, $p=.025$), suggesting marital status has some bearing, albeit small, on respondents' perceptions of communication in SEnA.

In general, the findings indicate that the respondents' profiles have different backbone relationships and degrees based on their perception of SEnA's efficiency. Social class is the strongest of the variables considered, showing a moderate correlation with overall efficiency. In contrast, other social characteristics, such as length of employment, aggregate monthly income, and marital status, have weak correlations with some specific dimensions of efficiency. The absence of significant relationships with educational attainment suggests that this factor is not associated with the perceived SEnA's

efficiency. As these findings suggest, SENa efficiency perceptions have sharper boundaries- to confidentiality in trust—as different groups were sought through which more refined communications could be established. (Table 11).

Relationship Between the Profile of the Respondents and Level of Satisfaction in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

Social class exhibits a moderate negative correlation with transparency ($r=-.378$, $p=.000$) and a significant weak negative correlation with fairness ($r=-0.296$, $p=0.002$), accessibility ($r=-.212$, $p=.031$), and overall satisfaction ($r=-0.308$, $p=0.001$). These results suggest that employees seem to be associated with lower satisfaction with transparency, fairness, and accessibility in the SENa process.

Length of employment does not correlate significantly with perceived fairness or the level of accessibility of the process. It does, though, exhibit a slight negative correlation with transparency ($r=-.182$, $p=.044$) and overall satisfaction ($r=-.200$, $p=.018$) which is weak but significant. Respondents with longer tenure seem to perceive slightly lower transparency and overall satisfaction.

No significant relationships are noted between respondents' level of education and any of the areas of satisfaction such as fairness, transparency, accessibility or satisfaction in general. This means that educational attainment does not significantly impact their satisfaction with the SENa process.

The aggregate monthly income shows a significant, weak negative correlation with transparency ($r=-.193$, $p=.030$) and overall satisfaction ($r=-.189$, $p=.024$). This means that higher-income respondents tend to perceive lower satisfaction in these aspects. There are no significant relationships between fairness or accessibility of the process either.

There are no significant correlations between marital status, the fairness, transparency, and accessibility of the process, and overall satisfaction. This means marital status has little to no

impact on satisfaction levels with the SENa.

The results imply that of the profile variables; social class was the one most strongly related to satisfaction regarding transparency. Also, the length of employment and aggregate monthly income relate to satisfaction but are weaker than transparency and overall satisfaction. In contrast, educational attainment and marital status do not significantly correlate with satisfaction with SENa. These outcomes emphasize the need to improve satisfaction amongst employees or income groups who regard transparency and fair issues as central to their satisfaction, highlighting fairness perceptions necessitating strategy refinement concerning the SENa process. (Table 12).

Relationship Between the Perceived Efficiency and the Level of Satisfaction with Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

A weak but positive correlation is noted alongside fairness ($r=.202$, $p=.022$) and transparency ($r=.208$, $p=.018$) with timeliness. Moreover, fairness and transparency also show SENa-related sentiments. SENa respondents' impression of timeliness influenced their perception of SENa as fair and transparent. Meanwhile, there is no notable correlation between accessibility and timeliness ($r=.049$, $p=.585$). This means that perceptions of timeliness do not relate to the accessibility of the process.

Cost-effectiveness correlates positively, but weakly, with transparency ($r=.213$, $p=.015$), which means achieving cost efficiency in SENa aligns with how respondents perceive transparency in the process.

No significant relationships are established with fairness ($r=.108$, $p=.214$) or accessibility ($r=.059$, $p=.508$) regarding cost effectiveness. This means cost efficiency lacks significant relevance to those dimensions of satisfaction.

Communication effectiveness shows significant weak positive correlations with fairness ($r=.219$, $p=.013$), transparency ($r=.174$, $p=.046$), and accessibility of the process

Table 11
Relationship between profile and perceived efficiency on DOLE's SENa

Profile of Respondents	Efficiency of DOLE's SENa	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Description
Social Class	Timeliness	-.295**	.002	Significant, Weak
	Cost-Effectiveness	-.264**	.005	Significant, Weak
	Communication Effectives	-.312**	.001	Significant, Weak
	Overall	-.381**	.000	Significant, Moderate
Length of Employment	Timeliness	-.051	.575	Not Significant
	Cost-Effectiveness	-.078	.381	Not Significant
	Communication Effectives	-.181*	.044	Significant, Weak
	Overall	-.098	.253	Not Significant
Highest Educational Attainment	Timeliness	-.029	.758	Not Significant
	Cost-Effectiveness	-.141	.131	Not Significant
	Communication Effectives	-.041	.658	Not Significant
	Overall	-.116	.192	Not Significant
Aggregate Monthly Income	Timeliness	-.177*	.048	Significant, Weak
	Cost-Effectiveness	-.122	.167	Not Significant
	Communication Effectives	-.208*	.019	Significant, Weak
	Overall	-.171*	.043	Significant, Weak
Marital Status	Timeliness	-.018	.850	Not Significant
	Cost-Effectiveness	-.086	.361	Not Significant
	Communication Effectives	-.213*	.025	Significant, Weak
	Overall	-.089	.322	Not Significant

Scale: .000-.150 Negligible; .151-.350 Weak; .351-.650 Moderate; .651-.850 Strong; .851-1.000 Perfect

Table 12
Relationship between profile and level of satisfaction on DOLE's SENa

Profile of Respondents	Satisfaction with DOLE's SENa	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Description
Social Class	Fairness	-.296**	.002	Significant, Weak
	Transparency	-.378**	.000	Significant, Moderate
	Accessibility of the process	-.212*	.031	Significant, Weak
	Overall	-.308**	.001	Significant, Weak
Length of Employment	Fairness	-.119	.186	Not Significant
	Transparency	-.182*	.044	Significant, Weak
	Accessibility of the process	-.145	.116	Not Significant
	Overall	-.200*	.018	Significant, Weak
Highest Educational Attainment	Fairness	-.136	.146	Not Significant
	Transparency	-.051	.586	Not Significant
	Accessibility of the process	-.053	.581	Not Significant
	Overall	-.077	.380	Not Significant
Aggregate Monthly Income	Fairness	-.153	.085	Not Significant
	Transparency	-.193*	.030	Significant, Weak
	Accessibility of the process	-.178	.051	Not Significant
	Overall	-.189*	.024	Significant, Weak
Marital Status	Fairness	-.157	.099	Not Significant
	Transparency	-.157	.097	Not Significant
	Accessibility of the process	-.096	.321	Not Significant
	Overall	-.114	.204	Not Significant

Scale: .000-.150 Negligible; .151-.350 Weak; .351-.650 Moderate; .651-.850 Strong; .851-1.000 Perfect

Table 13
Relationship between the perceived efficiency and the level of satisfaction with DOLE's SENa

Efficiency of DOLE's SENa	Satisfaction on DOLE's SENa	Correlation Coefficient	Significance	Description
Timeliness	Fairness	.202*	.022	Significant, Weak
	Transparency	.208*	.018	Significant, Weak
	Accessibility of the process	.049	.585	Not Significant
Cost Effectiveness	Fairness	.108	.214	Not Significant
	Transparency	.213*	.015	Significant, Weak
	Accessibility of the process	.059	.508	Not Significant
Communication	Fairness	.219*	.013	Significant, Weak
	Transparency	.174*	.046	Significant, Weak
	Accessibility of the process	.182*	.042	Significant, Weak
Overall	Overall	.266**	.001	Significant, Weak

Scale: .000-.150 Negligible; .151-.350 Weak; .351-.650 Moderate; .651-.850 Strong; .851-1.000 Perfect

($r=.182$, $p=.042$), suggesting that effective communication is positively related to respondents' satisfaction on all three dimensions, notably fairness.

A significant, weak correlation exists between overall satisfaction and efficiency ($r=.266$, $p=.001$). This indicates that respondents' perception of the overall efficiency of SENa increased their overall satisfaction with the process.

The results show that among the factors of perceived efficiency, timeliness and communication effectiveness have the strongest and most consistent positive correlation to satisfaction regarding fairness and transparency. Cost effectiveness has the most relevance to transparency, but only marginally impacts fairness and accessibility.

Enhancing timeliness, communication, and cost-effectiveness will improve satisfaction, especially regarding fairness and transparency, leading to higher overall satisfaction with DOLE's SENa. (Table 13).

4. Discussion

A. Profile of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents correlate

with insights from existing literature on the correlation of socio-economic factors in dispute resolution contexts. Freda (2014) emphasizes the importance of understanding respondents' backgrounds in social science research, noting how factors such as employment tenure, education level, income, and marital status may be correlated with engagement and responses.

Examining the employment tenure closely reveals that most respondents have been in their current positions for a period ranging from one to five years. This tenure might be indicative of lower expectation satisfaction in relation to the distinct gaps in tenure, as compared to the longer-tenured employees who, as a rule, value job security and stability within organizational customs (Berloff et al., 2019).

The significant percentage of respondents with bachelor's degrees (85.9%) suggests that they understand or have certain expectations about some operations within the organization. Perhaps this has to do with how different people engage with SENa, compared to less educated individuals who may feel disempowered or engage differently (Cheng et al., 2021).

Income inequality is also relevant. The majority subsist on an income of less than PhP25,000, which may shape their perceptions of SENa outcomes. Lower-earning respondents are

likely to have different expectations than higher earners, who tend to possess greater authority in the mediation process (Vladimirovich & Sergeevich, 2022).

Finally, the respondents' marital status—with 77.2% indicating they are married implies that their finances and family obligations may impact on how conflicts are resolved. Singh (2023) notes that married individuals frequently contend with distinct family support networks and responsibilities that influence workplace conflict management. Moreover, some studies show that married employees, women in particular, tend to experience greater home-to-work conflict, impacting their perceptions and engagement with processes, such as mediation (Nomaguchi, 2012).

B. Perceived Efficiency in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

The findings indicate that the timeliness of SEnA stands out as the most perceived 'efficiency' component. The 30-day conciliation mediation period guarantees that labor disputes are solved promptly, which prevents delays in operations and work disruptions. Dela Cruz (2021) and Tahura (2021) have also reported these findings concerning the effectiveness of ADR practices where timeliness and prompt action were not delayed.

For cost effectiveness, SEnA significantly reduces the dependence on hiring legal counsel, which is a great financial burden. This supports Bañares (2017), who agreed that the SEnA fulfills minimal legal fees by encouraging direct contact between the disputing parties. The cost mechanisms under SEnA discussed in the study indeed make the program a viable option compared to formal litigation.

Communication effectiveness fulfills its purpose well. SEnA's communication guidelines ensure coverage and facilitate understanding among the disputing parties. As remarked by Lazović and Jelenkovic (2020), clear communication greatly contributes to improving the outcomes of dispute resolution processes. In the Philippines, effective communication is in respect with culture, and social engagement cultural elements, therefore, enhance the effectiveness of SEnA (Utomo *et al.* 2023).

C. Level of Satisfaction in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

The high satisfaction scores in all categories validate that DOLE's SEnA has effectively managed labor disputes. The satisfaction bears the fairness of the process and the frame in Department Order No. 107-10, which requires SEnA desk officers (SEADOs) to observe rules that encourage bias-free mediation and balance during conciliation. SEnA grants parties the option to pre-terminate and voluntarily arbitrate, thereby bolstering procedural fairness while control of the outcome is positively acknowledged as a matter respondents have welcomed. Lutsenko (2023) remarks that a scope of mediation or conciliation covers an equal opportunity and fair disposition in resolving workplace disputes, focusing on logic, openness, and flexible activities.

Respondents have expressed high satisfaction with communication during SEnA processes, which contributes to

trust and engagement, and participation. Furthermore, respondents claim high satisfaction with communication and instructions as noted in their conversation with SEADOs about the steps taken in the process, hence promoting transparency. Szejda and Hubbard (2019) noted that the perception of neutrality and trust in processes is bolstered when the mediators give adequate explanations. These transparency practices help ensure that parties feel heard, respected, and empowered to engage meaningfully, thereby increasing their overall satisfaction experience.

The accessibility of SEnA is remarkably high, having streamlined processes which aid in reducing barriers to justice for both employees and employers. The processes are uncomplicated, devoid of any financial charges, and considerate despite educational and socio-economic status. Lutsenko (2023) notes that ADR systems such as SEnA, enhance justice by providing cheaper and faster resolutions, especially for disadvantaged groups.

The satisfaction score of 3.76 sheds light on the fairness, clarity, and transparency in the program. These results illustrate considerable positive feedback regarding SEnA's proactive approach to resolving labor disputes.

D. Relationship Between Profile of the Respondents and Perceived Efficiency in Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

Correlation analysis demonstrated that employers perceive SEnA efficiency as less than that of employees. This aligns with other research indicating that familiarity with a sector may influence perception of ADR processes. According to Fayda-Kinik (2022), people working in formal sectors or higher positions with more exposure to ADR frameworks may be more critical than employees with less exposure and lower expectations. Such a pattern indicates that familiarity with ADR processes and exposure to labor disputes may shape views towards efficiency more critically (Hum, 2017).

Although no notable correlation was found between respondents' tenure and SEnA's efficiency, Cundiff *et al.* (2022) suggest that longer tenure shifts workplace understanding of heuristics which could improve ADR perception. Regardless, their findings suggest that, regarding SEnA, tenure may not be profoundly influenced by efficiency and in fact, may be obscured by other more important factors such as familiarity with the process or role expectation biases.

The absence of a significant relationship between educational attainment and SEnA efficiency contrasts with broader ADR literature. Studies by Kengatharan and Tissera (2019) suggest that individuals with higher education levels often view ADR favorably due to enhanced problem-solving skills and critical thinking (Aissa and Goaïed, 2016). The divergence in this study could indicate that education is less correlated than practical experience or direct involvement in ADR processes within the context of SEnA.

The perceived SEnA efficiency and the aggregate monthly income exhibited a weak negative relationship, which supports findings by Quérou *et al.* (2021), who found that people from lower income brackets appreciate the use of ADR because there

are limited resources for formal litigation. With a higher income, one may have more expectations and would likely assess alternatives more critically which in this case could mean a more negative assessment of the efficiency of ADR.

The weak relationship between marital status and the effectiveness of communications performed within the SEnA process, with single respondents regarding SEnA more positively, correlates with findings by Illankoon *et al.* (2019). Married respondents may participate in negotiation and compromises and thus find less parallelism with their expectations of the ADR systems. In contrast, unmarried respondents may enter the process with minimal expectations, which tends to be more favorable.

E. Relationship Between the Profile of the Respondents and Level of Satisfaction in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

An inverse relationship was found between the social class and satisfaction with transparency, indicating that employers view SEnA less favorably than employees do. This might arise from the difference in expectations and the level of commitment to the process. As Fayda-Kinik (2022) points out, employees in the formal sectors tend to be more educated about ADR processes and have better resource access, making them more likely to have positive perceptions. Employees in some informal sectors may be insufficiently supported or informed, which can decrease their satisfaction. In addition, Hum (2017) notes that industries with high levels of disputes are likely to increase workers' skepticism towards ADR due to repeated exposure revealing glaring procedural limitations.

Regardless of the weak adverse association between the length of employment and satisfaction, some studies indicate that tenure enhances satisfaction with ADR processes. Employees with longer tenure experience have greater trust and confidence in organizational processes, including ADR, because they understand the work environment better (Okudan & Çevikbaş, 2022). This experience also fosters appreciation of ADR's benefits; whereas newer employees may not appreciate these benefits, which may lower satisfaction with the ADR processes (Subrata, 2023).

The absence of a significant relationship between education and satisfaction with SEnA level engagement is surprising because it contradicts the generally accepted premise that higher education increases satisfaction with ADR. Research suggests that highly educated people tend to perceive the value of cooperation in using mediation instead of litigation and view ADR favorably (Sherman & Momani, 2025). Furthermore, educational attainment contributes to the development of cognitive skills such as problem-solving, which enhance satisfaction with the ADR processes and appreciation of its functions (Alverhed, 2024).

The weak negative association between income and satisfaction with transparency indicates the influence of economic factors on the ADR perceptions. People with higher incomes tend to possess greater resources such as legal aid, which improves their ADR experiences (Balzer & Schneider, 2021). Economic standing also influences how employees

approach dispute resolution; those with limited resources may focus on immediate financial stability rather than experienced resolution, which impacts overall satisfaction (Vladimirovich & Sergeevich, 2022).

Marital status did not show any significant relationship with satisfaction, but other studies have pointed to possible connections regarding ADR. Married people may have other supporters who aid in the constructive approach to disputes, thus increasing satisfaction with ADR (Cortés, 2022). Other people might adopt an independent position, resulting in different satisfaction levels with ADR processes (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2022).

F. Relationship Between the Perceived Efficiency and the Level of Satisfaction with Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms from DOLE's Single-Entry Approach

The weak yet notable correlation between timeliness and fairness confirms the findings of Wahid (2023) regarding the impartiality perceptions where prompt resolutions mitigate lingering tensions. Likewise, the positive correlation supporting timeliness aids the argument that consistent communication strengthens transparency, thus suggesting the processes are indeed timely. However, the absence of significant correlation to accessibility indicates that timeliness, in this case, does not resolve structural or procedural barriers to accessibility.

The absence of a significant correlation between cost and fairness indicates that affordability is appreciated but not necessarily tied to fairness. This aligns with Jan *et al.* (2022), observing that in fairness frameworks, cost-efficiency gets less focus and is often dominated by procedural considerations like fairness.

Facilitating effective communication strengthens understanding and cooperation while reinforcing fairness and transparency during mediation through honoring and respecting participants' feelings of being heard and valued. As Lazović and Jelenković (2020) noted, orderly and systematized communication improves the resolution of labor conflicts by enhanced understanding. Also, Bañares (2017) highlights the gaps in communication competencies of mediators, while Rebayla *et al.* (2023) advocate for heightened focus on communication training to improve mediators' effectiveness, which subsequently increases the participants' contentment with procedural fairness and transparency during the SEnA.

The low correlation existing between efficiency and transparency bolsters Olannye and Aliku's (2022) claim that trust in mediation processes is fostered by the existence of clear procedures. Lack of correlation between efficiency and accessibility, in turn, supports Amoah and Linde's (2022) perspective that accessibility is contingent upon certain factors which are beyond the procedure's effectiveness.

The slight yet noteworthy relationship between perception of efficiency and satisfaction indicates that efficiency is an incremental contributor to satisfaction. In this regard, Mishra and Aithal (2022) highlighted the importance of understanding that numerous elements contribute to satisfaction, thus reinforcing the need to improve holistic ADR processes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Most respondents are recent graduates, married, and lower-income earners. SENa's efficient communication and timeliness are among the most praised attributes noted by employers. High satisfaction scores affirm SENa's approach to being fair and accessible not only to employees but also to employers. Perceptions of SENa are more favorable among employees, unmarried, and those from lower income brackets, while tenure and educational attainment did not seem to impact perceptions. Employers and those from higher income brackets tend to be less satisfied with transparency and fairness. The weak correlation between efficiency and satisfaction suggests other contributing factors. This study suggests that DOLE may strengthen technical and advisory services. May also include labor and employment education seminars, or pamphlets aimed at employers and employees, especially these newer to the workforce from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to clear misunderstandings regarding SENa and educate them on their rights, responsibilities, and benefits. As for the public employment service offices (PESOs), DOLE may establish further cooperation to serve as additional sites for lodgment of calls for assistance, resource and facility sharing, and online conciliation and mediation. Finally, other satisfaction determinants are suggested for further investigation.

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