

Guest Service Management of Selected Resorts and Beaches towards Customer Satisfaction in Candelaria, Zambales

Rizza A. Lee, Edd.¹, John Roque E. Vengua², Melvin Anave³, Mark Jordan Alop⁴, Rikki Vance Anoché⁵, Carla Ysabel Dela Cruz⁶, Mcdarel Dumlaog⁷, Ginadel Edra⁸, Racquel May Espiritu⁹, Bethel Manalac¹⁰, Jhuniel Emmanuel Salunga¹¹

¹College of Tourism and Hospitality Management Dean, Northern Zambales College, Inc.

²College of Tourism and Hospitality Management Instructor, Northern Zambales College, Inc.

^{3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11}College of Tourism and Hospitality Management Students, Northern Zambales College, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated guest perceptions of service management at selected beach resorts in Candelaria, Zambales, across three service dimensions: warm hospitality environment, service excellence, and rewards for guest satisfaction. Using a descriptive quantitative design, a structured survey was administered to local and international guests. The sample was mainly middle-aged, female, married, employed in private or government sectors, with moderate monthly incomes and visitation frequencies of one to three times per year. Overall, respondents rated resort service management as excellent in all dimensions.

The warm hospitality environment was characterized by a relaxing atmosphere, cordial greetings, and personalized attention. Service excellence was reflected in quality management, efficient processes, and professional staff conduct. Reward-related satisfaction was high for comfortable accommodations and local cuisine, though tokenized reward mechanisms scored lower. Overall customer satisfaction was very high, driven by staff courtesy, relationship-building, and respectful treatment. ANOVA found statistically significant differences in perceptions of hospitality warmth and service excellence by sex, civil status, and occupation, while occupation alone significantly affected perceptions of reward satisfaction. These results suggest demographic characteristics shape guest evaluations of service quality. An action plan is proposed emphasizing personalized communication, innovative reward programs, staff training, and targeted marketing to sustain and enhance service excellence.

Keywords: guest service management, hospitality, service quality, customer satisfaction, beach resorts, Zambales, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines' extensive coastline and island geography make beaches and resorts vital national assets that contribute to gross national income and broader economic development. Yet these establishments face ongoing operational challenges that can undermine guest satisfaction and long-term profitability. Hospitality and tourism remain among the fastest-growing global industries, spanning many interrelated occupations and services (Luspo et al., 2021). Central to this sector's success is guest service management: delivering consistently high-quality service to meet and exceed visitor expectations (Cornell, 2024). Customer satisfaction and loyalty are particularly valuable because retaining existing guests costs less than acquiring new ones and directly supports revenue generation and firm survival (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 2017).

Research shows that effective service management enhances service quality and operational outcomes in resorts and hotels (Ozdemir, Colak & Shmilli, 2019). Local studies likewise report that customer-focused quality practices improve performance, though context-specific evaluations remain limited (Calubad & Namit, 2019).

Despite Candelaria, Zambales, being home to numerous resorts and beaches, there is a lack of empirical data assessing how guest service management influences visitor satisfaction in this municipality. To address this gap, the present study investigates guest service management practices at selected Candelaria resorts and their relationship to customer satisfaction and proposes targeted interventions to sustain and improve guest experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Warm Environment of Hospitality

A warm, hospitable environment is a vital element in the tourism and hospitality industry because it shapes guests' first impressions and overall experience. As tourism continues to contribute to inclusive economic growth, establishments are challenged not only to provide products and services but also to deliver personalized and seamless experiences that meet guests' changing expectations (Añasco & Lizada, 2014; Newswire, York, & York, 2016). In hospitality settings, this warm environment is reflected in proper grooming, courteous greetings, a home-like atmosphere, and prompt attention to guest needs, all of which contribute to positive impressions and stronger customer relationships (Al-Gasawneh, Anuar, Dacku-Pikiewickz, & Saputra, 2022).

Previous studies also emphasize the importance of ambience, architecture, and respectful treatment in making guests feel relaxed and valued, while effective complaint handling and sincere staff interaction further strengthen satisfaction and loyalty (Stojanovic & Denadic, 2019; Galicic & Ivanovic, 2016; Butcher, 2020). Thus, a warm hospitality environment serves as a foundation for building trust, comfort, and repeat patronage among guests.

Excellence of Guest Service

Excellence of guest service refers to the consistent delivery of quality, efficient, and standards-based service throughout the guest experience. In the hospitality industry, excellent service is associated with customer-focused management, online responsiveness, efficient booking systems, and well-defined operational procedures that ensure service reliability and guest convenience (Calubad & Namit, 2019; Kaur, Geronimo, & Victoria, 2019; Mendoza & Espejon, 2022). Studies further show that service excellence is strengthened by competent front-line employees, effective communication skills, and continuous staff development, as these factors improve service coordination and enhance guest satisfaction (Clark, 2023; Astuti, Ginaya, & Sadguna, 2018).

Operational areas such as check-in and check-out processes, food service management, and technology use also play critical roles in maintaining high service standards (Wirya, Widiantera, & Budiasa, 2024; Bree, 2020; Sandhya, Kumar, Dinesh, & Harika, 2025). Moreover, organizational commitment to a quality mindset and continuous improvement supports the sustainability of service excellence in highly competitive hospitality environments (Liao, Soltani, & Wilkinson, 2023; Testa & Sipe, 2020). These findings indicate that guest service excellence depends on both human competence and system efficiency.

Reward for Guest Satisfaction

Rewarding guest satisfaction is an important strategy in hospitality management because it encourages loyalty, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth. Hospitality firms increasingly recognize that retaining satisfied guests is more beneficial than constantly acquiring new ones, and reward-based programs help strengthen customer attachment and perceived value (Shoemaker & Lewis, 2020; Oh, 2019). Research shows that loyalty cards, tiered membership systems, and incentive-based discounts can increase the likelihood of return visits and improve guests' emotional response toward a brand or establishment (Tanford, Raab, & Kim, 2020; Lee & Bai, 2024).

Beyond formal reward systems, comfort, quality accommodations, local food offerings, and thoughtful service experiences also function as rewards that shape satisfaction and encourage continued patronage (Lockyer, 2022; Baratta & Simeoni, 2021; Zrnic, 2023). In addition, studies suggest that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and loyalty, reinforcing the idea that meaningful rewards contribute not only to pleasure but also to long-term business success (Mosahab, Mahamad, & Ramayah, 2020). Hence, reward mechanisms remain a significant tool for sustaining guest satisfaction in resorts and similar hospitality establishments.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the central outcome of effective hospitality service and is shaped by the interaction of environment, staff performance, and service quality. It is commonly defined as the guest's evaluation of whether the service or product met expectations based on experience (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, & Baloglu, 2017). In tourism and resort settings, satisfaction is influenced by environmental conditions, staff responsiveness, food service, and the overall quality of guest interactions (Yu, Zhang, & Kim, 2023; Xiang, Schwartz, Gerdes, & Uysal, 2015).

Satisfied customers are more likely to return, provide positive reviews, and recommend the establishment to others, making satisfaction a key indicator of organizational performance and sustainability (Kim, Ng, & Kim, 2019; Bello & Majebi, 2018). In addition, customer satisfaction reflects the co-created nature of hospitality experiences, where both the provider and the guest contribute to the outcome (Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2019). Therefore, maintaining high customer satisfaction requires a balanced integration of warm hospitality, service excellence, and meaningful rewards.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Customer Satisfaction Theory, as discussed by Reichheld (2003), which emphasizes that the primary objective of guest service is to ensure guest satisfaction and long-term loyalty. When guests are pleased with their experience, they are more likely to return, thereby helping organizations build trust, commitment, and enduring relationships. In this context, effective guest service is reflected in principles such as transparency, availability, accessibility, friendliness, simplicity, empowerment, accuracy, and attention to detail.

The study also draws from Dissonance Theory, which explains the psychological discomfort that occurs when there is a mismatch between expectations and actual experience. In hospitality settings, this happens when guests anticipate high service quality but receive service that falls short of what was promised. Such inconsistency produces cognitive dissonance, which may negatively affect satisfaction and future patronage (Reichheld, 2003).

In contrast, Contrast Theory explains that when actual service performance is lower than expected, guests tend to magnify the difference between expectation and reality. This means that the greater the gap between expected and experienced service, the stronger the negative reaction of the customer. Thus, service shortfalls have a more pronounced effect on dissatisfaction than service excellence has on delight, especially when expectations are high (Reichheld, 2003).

Supporting these ideas, Lamarco (2018) noted that Guest Services Theory centers on attracting guests and, more importantly, retaining them through loyalty-building practices. The theory underscores that businesses must deeply understand guest service principles in order to remain competitive and sustainable. Without a strong foundation in guest service, an organization may struggle to maintain customer loyalty and long-term success.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research design used in the study, the participants involved, the data collection instrument, and the statistical methods applied in the analysis and interpretation of data

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to evaluate the guest service management of selected resorts and beaches in Candelaria, Zambales in relation to customer satisfaction. The descriptive component was used to present a clear profile of guest service management in terms of a warm hospitality environment, excellence in guest service, and rewards for guest satisfaction. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach enabled the collection of numerical data for statistical analysis, allowing the researcher to identify patterns and relationships among the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

There were 100 customers of beaches and resorts in Candelaria, Zambales, considered as the respondents of this research. They were considered the primary sources of information necessary to realize the objectives of this research. For this purpose, the study used the researcher-made questionnaire as the main instrument in gathering data to suit the context and the respondents of the study. The survey instrument was composed of three parts.

These included Part I, the profile of the respondents. Part II: The guest service management of beaches and resorts, and Part III: The customer satisfaction using a 4-point scale with 1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree.

Cronbach alpha testing was utilized to ensure the reliability of the survey instruments. Weighted Mean was utilized to obtain the average perceptions of the customer respondents about the guest service management and customer satisfaction. Analysis of Variance was used to test the difference between the guest service management and customer satisfaction based on customer profile. The applications and functions of these statistical tools for analysis were done with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the guest-respondents according to age, sex, civil status, occupation, monthly income, frequency of visits, and type of tourists.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution on the Profile Variables of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
61-70 years old	8	8.00
51-60 years old	14	14.00
41-50 years old	26	26.00
31-40 years old	31	31.00
21-30 years old	21	21.00
Total	100	100.00
Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	44	44.00
Female	56	56.00
Total	100	100.00
Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	39	39.00
Married	53	53.00
Widow/Widower	2	2.00
Separated	6	6.00
Total	100	100.00
Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Government Employee	42	42.00
Private Employee	45	45.00
Self Employed	13	13.00
Total	100	100.00
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
Php 90,001 - P 110,000	7	7.00
Php 70, 001 – P 90,000	17	17.00
Php 50,001 - P 70,000	9	9.00
Php 30,001 - P 50,000	21	21.00
Php 10,001 - P 30,000	46	46.00
Total	100	100.00
Frequency of Visits	Frequency	Percent
More than four times a year	20	20.00

Thrice a year	27	27.00
Twice a year	26	26.00
Once a year	27	27.00
Total	100	100.00
Type of Tourist	Frequency	Percent
Local	77	77.00
Foreign	23	23.00
Total	100	100.00

The respondents were mostly middle-aged adults, particularly those aged 31–50 years, with a slight majority of females. Most were married and employed in the private or government sector, suggesting a largely stable and working adult clientele. In terms of income, the sample was predominantly middle-income, with many earning between Php 10,001 and Php 30,000 monthly, indicating a generally budget-conscious travel market. Visit frequency was fairly distributed, with many respondents traveling one to three times a year. Overall, the profile shows that the resorts and beaches were largely patronized by local, middle-income, working adults who engage in occasional but repeated leisure travel.

Table 2 Summary of Table of Mean Rating, Descriptive Equivalent, and Rank on the Guest Service Management of beaches and resorts of Candelaria, Zambales

Guest Service Management	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Rank
Warm Environment of Hospitality	3.56	Strongly Agree	1
Excellence of Guest Service	3.44	Strongly Agree	2
Reward for Guest Satisfaction	3.34	Strongly Agree	3
Overall Weighted Mean	3.45	Strongly Agree	

The findings show that the guest service management practices of the selected resorts and beaches in Candelaria, Zambales, were generally perceived as **Excellent** across the three variables, with a warm environment of hospitality obtaining the highest overall mean, followed by excellence of guest service and reward for guest satisfaction. This indicates that respondents were highly satisfied with the overall service experience, particularly with the resorts' ability to provide a welcoming atmosphere, efficient service delivery, and meaningful guest rewards.

For the **warm environment of hospitality**, respondents gave the highest rating to the creation of a relaxing and worry-free ambiance, showing that the resorts were effective in making guests feel comfortable and at ease. Proper grooming, friendly greetings, home-like atmosphere, and caring responses to guest concerns were also strongly valued, while personalized communication received the lowest but still excellent rating. This suggests that while emotional warmth and staff courtesy are well established, there is still room to strengthen more personalized guest interactions.

In terms of **excellence of guest service**, all indicators were also rated excellent, with quality management practices receiving the highest score. Efficient check-in and check-out procedures, employee training, and seamless online reservation systems were likewise positively assessed, reflecting strong operational performance and staff competence. The lowest rating was given to social media communication, indicating that digital engagement may be an area for further enhancement even if overall service excellence remains high.

In **reward for guest satisfaction**, all indicators likewise received excellent ratings, led by comfortable accommodations, especially bedroom and bathroom quality. High-quality local food and beverages, exclusive discounts, and loyalty rewards were also appreciated by guests, although tokenized or innovative reward systems received the lowest mean and were only rated good. This implies that guests place greater value on tangible rewards and comfort-based benefits than on newer or more experimental reward mechanisms.

Overall, the results suggest that guest satisfaction in the selected resorts and beaches is strongly influenced by warm hospitality, efficient service, and tangible reward experiences. While the establishments are already

performing well, the findings also point to specific areas for improvement, particularly in personalized communication, digital guest engagement, and innovative reward programs.

Table 3 Summary of Table of Mean Rating, Descriptive Equivalent, and Rank on the Customer Satisfaction of beaches and resorts of Candelaria, Zambales

Level of Customer Satisfaction	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Build customer trust in resort/beach services.	3.61	Very Satisfied
2. Earn customer trust in the requested services.	3.62	Very Satisfied
3. Provide consistent quality services over time.	3.57	Very Satisfied
4. Show respect and honesty to customers.	3.64	Very Satisfied
5. Meet promises made to customers.	3.58	Very Satisfied
6. Encourage employees to help customers willingly.	3.63	Very Satisfied
7. Adapt services to satisfy customer needs.	3.63	Very Satisfied
8. Maintain politeness during service contact.	3.68	Very Satisfied
9. Work strongly to maintain customer relationships.	3.60	Very Satisfied
10. Spend sufficient effort to keep customer relationships.	3.65	Very Satisfied
Overall Weighted Mean	3.62	Very Satisfied

Hospitality research, notably supported by Zhang et al. (2024) and Tania et al. (2024), underscores that interpersonal behaviors—such as courtesy, respect, and transparent communication—are foundational to guest perceptions of service quality and overall satisfaction.

The findings indicate that the surveyed resorts successfully foster trust and strong, ethical relationships with guests, while responsiveness and service customization also significantly contribute to high satisfaction levels (Mandlik, 2023).

While overall satisfaction is high, minor opportunities exist to strengthen operational consistency and reliability, as emphasized by PJ et al. (2021), to fully secure trust and repeat visitation.

Table 4 Test of Difference in the Guest Service Management Towards Guest Satisfaction of Resorts and Beaches in Candelaria, Zambales

	Warm Environment of Hospitality	Excellence of Guest Service	Reward for Guest Satisfaction
Age	.295	.400	.573
Sex	.022	.026	.443
Civil Status	.009	.020	.178
Occupation	.001	.003	.044
Monthly Income	.356	.946	.766
Frequency of Visits	.999	.954	.699
Type of Tourist	.087	.890	.929

Table 4 shows the test of difference on the guest service management and customer satisfaction in Candelaria, Zambales, when grouped according to profile.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate whether guest perceptions of a warm hospitality environment differ significantly based on demographic profiles. The results revealed that while age, monthly income, visit frequency, and tourist type yielded no statistically significant variations—indicating a uniform baseline perception of warmth across these segments—meaningful differences emerged based on sex, civil status, and occupation. Regarding sex, male respondents reported significantly higher mean perception scores than female respondents. This gender divergence aligns with Frederick and Thangaiah (2023), who found that gender significantly influences service quality perceptions. This indicates that male guests may be inherently more receptive to the general resort ambiance, whereas female guests may maintain more stringent standards for detailed relational warmth, such as personal attention and grooming.

Civil status and occupation also significantly modulated guest experiences, revealing distinct relational and operational expectations across different segments. Single and separated individuals reported higher satisfaction scores than married respondents, a trend supporting the work of Li et al. (2025), which demonstrates that empathetic communication and warmth cues enhance perceived value and trust. This is further reinforced by Pijls-Hoekstra et al. (2017), who frame hospitality warmth as a relational construct deeply influenced by guest identity and context, explaining why unpartnered guests may show a heightened responsiveness to emotional affirmation during travel. Additionally, occupational background shaped these insights; self-employed and private sector employees gave the highest ratings, while government employees gave the lowest. This pattern aligns with Muhammad Anas (2024), who observed that self-employed and private personnel prioritize service flexibility and personalization, whereas government employees evaluate hospitality through the lens of procedural consistency and standardization, making them less receptive to organic warmth cues.

An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) evaluated whether guest perceptions of service excellence vary significantly across demographic profiles. The results indicated that while age, monthly income, visit frequency, and tourist type yielded no significant differences—suggesting a stable, uniform baseline of perceived excellence—statistically significant variations emerged based on sex, civil status, and occupation. Regarding sex, male guests perceived service excellence more favorably than female guests. This divergence aligns with Millán et al. (2024), who noted that women prioritize relational and personalized aspects of service, whereas men focus primarily on functional and efficiency dimensions. Consequently, the operational execution of the resorts successfully satisfies male expectations, while female guests likely maintain more stringent standards for emotional or customized service delivery. Furthermore, civil status significantly influenced these evaluations, with separated and single individuals expressing higher satisfaction than married or widowed guests. This pattern is supported by Teng et al. (2023), who established that unpartnered travelers possess distinct motivations rooted in autonomy and novelty, responding more positively when service environments align with these personal values. This demographic relevance is further anchored by Morales et al. (2019) within a regional hotel context, confirming that marital status serves as a critical determinant of overall guest satisfaction.

Occupational background emerged as a highly influential factor for both perceived service excellence and perceptions of reward-related service strategies. Self-employed and private sector employees reported the highest satisfaction regarding service excellence, whereas government employees reported the lowest. This disparity suggests that self-employed individuals place a greater premium on flexibility and premium personalization, while government personnel, accustomed to bureaucratic structures, evaluate excellence through rigid procedural compliance and standardization. This finding aligns with Dimapilis et al. (2023), who demonstrated that occupational backgrounds heavily shape service quality expectations and perceived performance across diverse hospitality settings. Notably, occupation was also the sole demographic variable to show a statistically significant difference regarding reward for guest satisfaction, while all other profile characteristics remained non-significant. This underscores that employment type uniquely drives how guests perceive and value organizational loyalty or reward mechanisms, whereas the general appreciation of these reward strategies remains largely consistent across age, sex, income, and travel frequency.

Post hoc analysis reveals that self-employed guests perceive the highest value in reward systems, followed by private and government employees, indicating that occupational backgrounds significantly influence responses to loyalty programs. These findings suggest that tailoring rewards to specific guest profiles—such as targeting self-employed individuals with personalized incentives—is crucial for enhancing satisfaction.

Table 5 Test of Relationship Between the Guests' Perceived Guest Service Management and Customer Satisfaction

Sources of Correlation		Educational Management System	Student Outcomes	Decision/ Interpretation
Perceived Guest Service Management	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.610	Moderate relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	100	100	
	Pearson Correlation	.610	1.000	

Level of Customer Satisfaction	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	100	100	

Using the Pearson correlation coefficient, the analysis revealed a correlation value of 0.610, which indicates a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as guests perceive higher quality in service management—particularly in terms of hospitality, excellence of service, and rewards for satisfaction—their overall level of satisfaction also tends to increase. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was found to be 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 threshold, thereby confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. With a sample size of 100 respondents, the findings suggest that improvements in guest service management are likely to contribute meaningfully to higher customer satisfaction. This supports the assumption that service quality is a critical determinant of satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality industry and highlights the importance of continuous enhancement of guest service practices in local resorts and on local beaches.

Recent studies confirm that guest service management has a significant impact on customer satisfaction in resorts and on beaches, with findings showing that quality service practices directly influence loyalty and overall guest experience. Qutoriano, Echavez, & Dagang (2024) conducted a study on beach resorts in Misamis Oriental, Philippines, and found that customer satisfaction strongly predicts guest loyalty. Their descriptive correlational design revealed that when guests perceive service quality positively, they are more likely to return and recommend the resort, highlighting the importance of service management in sustaining satisfaction and loyalty.

Echavez (2024), in the International Journal of Science and Management Studies, emphasized that customer satisfaction is a critical factor in building long-term relationships with resort guests. The study concluded that service quality dimensions such as hospitality, responsiveness, and reward systems significantly affect satisfaction levels, aligning with your finding of a moderate positive correlation between service management and satisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Guest service management across the selected beach resorts in Candelaria, Zambales, achieves a remarkably high level of consumer approval, yielding excellent ratings across all primary service dimensions. Guests exhibit deep satisfaction with the warm hospitality environment, specifically praising the environmental ambiance, staff grooming, attentiveness, and personalized communication. Similarly, the resorts demonstrate exceptional performance in service excellence through robust quality management, proactive digital responsiveness, and high staff professionalism. While core reward mechanisms such as comfortable accommodations, local culinary offerings, and strategic discount programs are well-received, novel or tokenized loyalty systems present a marginal area for operational improvement due to slightly lower engagement ratings.

At the heart of this positive reception is the interpersonal execution of customer service, where staff politeness, active relationship-building, and respectful, ethical treatment emerge as the strongest determinants of consumer favorability. Crucially, the study confirms that service perceptions are significantly modulated by specific guest demographics, namely sex, civil status, and occupation. Male, single, and self-employed guests consistently report higher satisfaction with hospitality warmth and service excellence, revealing that personal identity inherently shapes service expectations and receptivity. In contrast, appreciation for reward structures remains largely stable across most demographic lines, with occupation serving as the sole differentiator; self-employed individuals value customized incentives far more than their counterparts in government service. Ultimately, a clear, positive correlation exists between guest service management and customer satisfaction. This operational link reinforces that deliberate, strategic upgrades in hospitality warmth, functional service execution, and personalized reward frameworks will directly catalyze superior guest satisfaction and long-term brand loyalty.

To leverage the established positive correlation between guest service management and customer satisfaction, beach resorts in Candelaria, Zambales, should implement targeted, demographic-driven operational and marketing strategies. Management must design service packages tailored to the lifestyle and preferences of their primary market segments while simultaneously executing localized staff training programs that reinforce the highly valued interpersonal elements of politeness, respect, and proactive relationship-building. To mitigate the minor performance gaps identified in operational consistency and novel incentive frameworks, resorts should

continuously innovate their loyalty structures by offering flexible, profile-specific reward options that particularly appeal to varying professional backgrounds, such as self-employed individuals who favor premium personalization. Furthermore, service delivery must be segmented to align with the distinct expectations of male, single, and separated visitors who display unique sensitivities to environmental warmth and functional execution. Finally, sustaining this elevated consumer approval requires continuous investment in robust digital responsiveness, quality management systems, and structured feedback mechanisms, complemented by future longitudinal research to track evolving demographic shifts and long-term satisfaction trends.

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