

Service Quality among Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) Accommodation Establishments

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ABSTRACT

The study discusses the service quality based on the perceived level of perception and expectation as to reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles in the visitor and non-visitor accommodation establishments at Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study examined the 158 respondents in terms of their demographic profile. Through a descriptive and development type of research design, primary data were gathered through a survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using basic statistical tests such as frequency and percentage. Furthermore, thematic content analysis was used to analyze responses from the respondents' suggestions for the improvement of the MMSU accommodation establishments. The findings show that majority of the respondents reside in Ilocos Norte, aged 18-27, male, student, with a monthly income of less than Php. 10,957.00, high school graduate, high school graduate and single. The study revealed that in non-visitor accommodation establishments, there is a clear negative gap across all dimensions of service quality. This implies the dissatisfaction of respondents staying in the non-visitor accommodation establishments of MMSU. On the other hand, those who have stayed for at least one night in visitor accommodation establishments at MMSU have shown satisfaction in the service quality, with only a minimal negative gap in empathy and tangibles. Furthermore, comments and suggestions elicited include better customer service, housekeeping services, training in foreign language, and a visible emergency response. Recommendations of the study include training programs for the accommodation employees and improving its facilities and ancillary services.

Keywords: service quality, level of perception, level of expectation, accommodation

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is linked to the idea of people travelling to other locations, either domestically or internationally, for leisure, social or business purposes. Professors Hunziker and Krapf (1942) of Berne Switzerland defined tourism as the sum of the phenomena or relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to any earning activity. According to the World Tourism Organization (1993), tourism is defined as the activities of a person traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

Tourism improves relationships between nation states or businesses, creates opportunities for entertainment and recreation, and improves the value of a currency. It also opens cultural exchange opportunities, while for tourists, it leads to improved happiness, well-being and education. During the 22nd session of the United Nations World Tourism Organization General Assembly, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili (2020), Secretary-General, stated that "Around the world, in countries at all development levels, many millions of jobs and businesses are dependent on a strong and thriving tourism sector. Tourism has also been a driving force in protecting natural and cultural heritage, preserving them for future generations to enjoy". Furthermore, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (2020) expressed that "Tourism can be a force for good in our world, playing a part in protecting our planet and its biodiversity, and celebrating what makes us human: from discovering new places and cultures to connecting with new people and experiences." These statements coming from tourism intellectuals give us a view of how tourism directly impacts the world. Indeed, the tourism industry is a contributor to an area's economic growth.

Knowing that the tourism industry contributes a significant impact in the success of a destination, it is then understood that service quality is of great importance for the tourism industry to become successful, especially in the accommodation sector, where hotels, resorts and other similar establishments are granted a star-rating that signifies their level of compliance in various criteria. These criteria were set by the Department of Tourism that the establishments must comply with the minimum standards to become a DOT accredited accommodation. Being able to be issued a certification means that the establishment concerned ensures the comfort and convenience of the guests. Good service quality translates into good customer experience, tourist satisfaction and potential revisit intentions.

Businesses that meet or exceed expectations have high service quality. Service quality is an abstract concept, and in operationalizing it, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) have identified five dimensions of service quality; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. Although existing literature has shown the effects of service quality on revisit intentions, few, if any, have examined the impacts of each service quality dimensions on tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. According to the developer of the Five Gap Model of Service Quality, "Knowing what customers expect is the first and possibly the most critical step in delivering service quality. Stated simply, providing service that customers perceive as excellent requires that a firm know what customers expect." In the tourism industry, service quality is an important indicator to determine tourist satisfaction and the success of a certain destination. Identifying the perceived and expected service quality is essential because through this, problems encountered are recognized and there is a room for improvement for better tourist satisfaction in future visits. The higher the service quality, the higher the tourist satisfaction. Ensuring visitor satisfaction is critical to the long-term success of the destination and brings benefits for key stakeholders including the industry, the visitors, and local communities. An organization's focus must be to satisfy its customers.

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2021). These effects have also been greatly seen and experienced in the Philippine setting. And one of the fastest growing tourist destinations is the province of Ilocos Norte.

The *Paoay Kumakaway* tourism campaign was launched on March 1, 2011 and was institutionalized by the provincial government to promote Ilocos Norte's historical places and cuisine to tourists. The campaign boosted the tourism industry of the province as evidenced in the report of DOT Region I, where international arrivals reached a 120% increase in 2012 as compared to 2011 records. This campaign targeted domestic and balikbayans, and encouraged the Chinese markets to visit the province again despite the termination of direct flights from Taiwan and mainland China by offering a new set of tourist attractions and events. Since then, arrivals have always been above marginal leaps. Based on the 2018 records, the province has reached more than three million arrivals, 33.91% higher compared to 2017 figures.

In 2016, Ilocos Norte hit 91.24% growth in tourist arrivals during the Holy Week. It has also been disclosed that there was a 33.33% increase in the record of accommodation registry in the same year. The province attained steady growth through the years. Then in January 2019, the Ilocos Norte, I'M IN! was launched. With this program, the apparent outcome was the 28.89% increase of arrivals as compared to 2018 records.

Ilocos Norte is indeed one of the top tourist destinations in the Philippines. Ilocos Norte is blessed with different unique spots complemented by pleasing accommodation establishments. These are the reasons why tourists keep coming and revisiting the area. In an interview with Ms. Angel Lao, the former president of the Ilocos Norte Travel and Tours Association and owner of Travel Ilocandia on January 2020, she said that Ilocos Norte is in need of more tour guides as the province caters cruise ships that simultaneously dock at the Currimaos Seaport. It is in this premise that along with the need of more tour guides is the need of improvement and the increase in number of the needed service facilities such as accommodation establishments.

Ilocos Norte is composed of two (2) cities and twenty-one (21) municipalities. Among the cities and municipalities, the City of Batac is one of the most visited destinations in the province. In 2019, the City of Batac received a massive number of 51,648 tourist arrivals as per Ilocos Norte Provincial Tourism Office. The city is always included in an Ilocos Tour itinerary. The attractions that can be found within the city are the Batac Riverside where in tourists can taste the famous Ilocano empanada, Marcos

Museum and Mausoleum where the corpse of the late President Ferdinand Marcos was laid before it was buried at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*, and Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) which is classified as a Level 4 University (SUC Level IV).

MMSU's mandate is to provide advanced instruction in the arts, agricultural and natural sciences, and technological and professional fields. Its mission is "To develop virtuous human capital and sustainable innovations in a knowledge-driven global economy" and the institution is committed to providing quality education and initiating innovations. MMSU has a 7-point Agenda called "ACHIEVE" which stands for: A – Academic Excellence; C - Creative, Relevant and Innovative Research Programs; H - High Impact and Transformative Extension and Outreach Programs; I - Improved Revenue Generation and Resource Management; E - Expanded External Linkages and Partnerships; V - Vibrant and Engaging, Culturally-Focused University Campus; and E - Effective and Efficient Management.

In recent years, MMSU has received various national and international awards and recognitions. The University was awarded a 3-star rating by the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) Stars, ISO 9001:2005 Certification, ranked 401st-600th in the whole world and second in the country in the recent 2022 THE (Times Higher Education) Impact Rankings, among others. Moreover, it is also a partner to many international, national and regional institutions. The University also boasts its licensure examinations as these are consistently above national passing rate, producing board topnotchers, and hurdles to be always one of the top performing schools in the country.

Being in the limelight, the University has been receiving visitors from various public and private universities and colleges all over the country to benchmark on its best practices such as in academics, research, extension, internationalization, accreditation, and among various other fields. The visitors are usually housed at the university's accommodation establishments and accommodated by the MMSU Travel and Visitors' Bureau (TVB). The University Mansion, University Review Center (URC) and MMSU Hostel and Function Hall are visitor accommodation establishments offered to the visitors where they stay for a short-term period. On the other hand, the Student Residence Dormitory, Ladies and Men's Dormitory and MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall are being rented by students and faculty for a long-term stay. They are also called the non-visitor accommodation establishments. Rooms and its amenities vary in prices and service quality depending on what is availed. A more elaborate type of service is extended to guests staying in the mansion, URC and Hostel, while a meager and economic type of service is extended to the dormitory residents.

While these accommodations have differences, providing customer satisfaction by being meticulous with service quality must be duly considered. Thus, the study is conceptualized to show the difference between the perceived level of perception and expectation on service quality of the university accommodations. Considering that the tourism industry is a service industry where it is more than the tangible products that are being offered, service quality, therefore, becomes an indicator of tourism satisfaction. Hence, the conduct of this study.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study aims to determine the level of perception and expectation on the service quality of MMSU accommodations.

Specifically, it aims to:

1. Determine the level of expectation and level of perception on service quality in non-visitor accommodations of MMSU as to Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles;
2. Determine the level of expectation and level of perception on service quality in visitor accommodations of MMSU as to Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles;
3. Identify if there is a significant gap between perceived level of perception and expectation on service quality of MMSU accommodation establishments.

4. Elicit concerns and suggestions for improvement for the MMSU accommodation establishments.
5. Design strategies to be adopted to improve the service quality of MMSU accommodation establishments.

Conceptual Framework

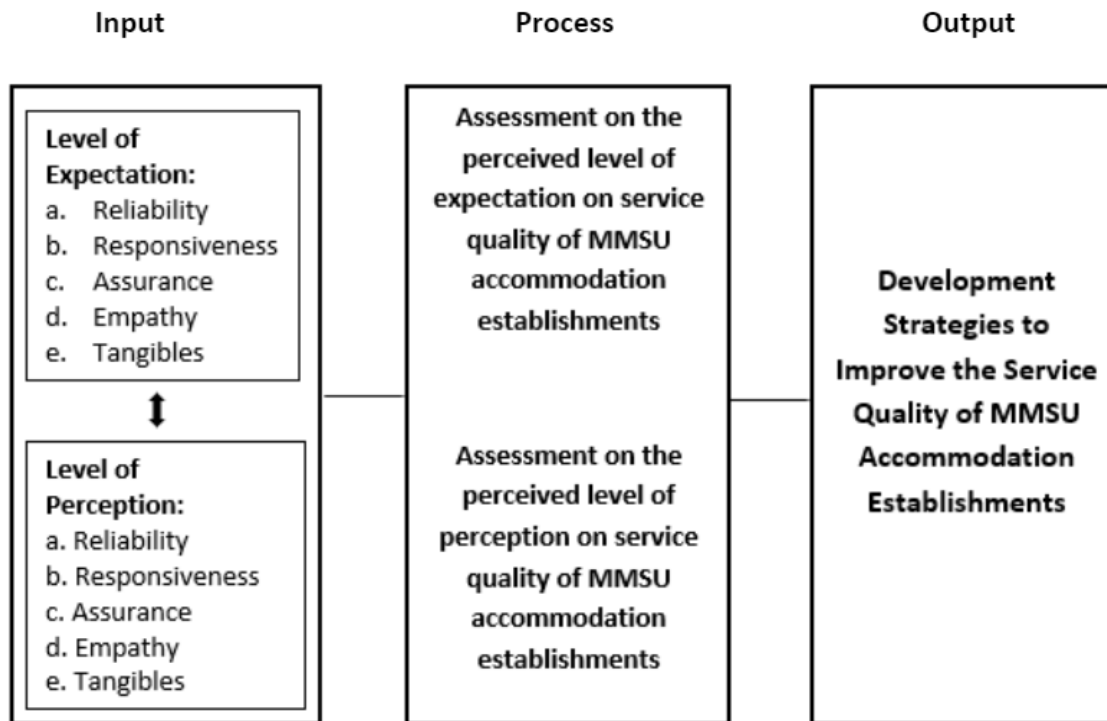


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study using the IPO format. The inputs of the study are the levels of expectation and perception covering the service quality dimensions, namely, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. There will be an analysis of the data gathered through the inputs. The study will assess the perceived level of perception and expectation on service quality of MMSU accommodation establishments. Through these factors, the output will be a set of developmental strategies to improve the service quality of the MMSU accommodation establishments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Service Quality

There are many ways to improve service quality. As noted by Yafang and Shih-Wang (2007), there are important dimensions in the aspect of marketing: understanding customer's demand, offering the products or service that can meet customer's demand and regarding customer-orientation service process. This concept is market-driven, which is used to fit customer-orientation marketing strategy as well as to be the essence of business administration. Sigala et al (2006) said that service organizations have been going through evolutions at macro and micro level resulting in customers becoming less loyal, more price-sensitive and discerning. Hence, satisfying customers' needs has become essential for businesses. According to Ganeshasundaram and Henley (2007), businesses have to stay focused on market needs because it is a prerequisite for their success (Barabba, 1995) and being sensitive to the needs of the customers is a distinguishing characteristic of successful business (Stevens, Wrenn, & Sherwood, 1997).

Service quality should be measured and analyzed over a period of time because it can help identify the expectation and concerns of the customers before it results in dissatisfaction (Russell, 2005). It was proposed that market segment, support services, budgeting, implementation and evaluation would help to suit the

specific requirements requested (Kinnell, 1989). In addition, service quality can be managed through monitoring at regular gaps to achieve better outcomes. Treating customers as part of the workforce can help to contribute to the service in ways which will improve their degree of satisfaction (Bowen, 1986). Longenecker and Scazzero (2000) have explained that human factors such as teamwork and cooperation among management personnel are important to improve service quality. They also elaborated that other factors such as assessing the current practices and leadership are equally important in managing service quality. Internal performance as well needs to be enhanced because it is a reflection of actual service quality, to customers' satisfaction with service quality (Jamali, 2007).

In the study of Ali, Bayad J., et. al. (2021) entitled "Hotel Service Quality: The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Hospitality", they have cited different studies that proves how service quality is essential to succeed in businesses. To succeed or simply to survive in the hospitality industry, establishments should be definitely interested in perception of the services to be in line with expectations, which, in fact, is the foundation of repeated business (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). The tourism and hospitality industries are essential in a country because it contributes to its economic growth. Therefore, many countries are attempting to catch the attention of guests and tourists to their destinations, as a result they will be able to grow and enhance their nation's life (Gardi et al. 2020). Hotels are considered a vital element of the tourism industry; the reason is hotels satisfy the most essential guest's needs which is accommodation (Prabhu et al. 2020). Hotel staff is an important factor in business success (Anwar & Shukur, 2015), because employees who deliver and provide services to guests. For example, if hotel staff do not deliver the right service to guests, it will lead to negative effects as a result guests might not come back to the same hotel. On the other hand, if hotel staff are able to deliver the right service to their guests in this case guests will have a positive experience and might come back again (Sultan et al. 2020).

Service Failures

Service failure is the inability to meet the expectations of customers regarding the standard service of delivery (Palmer, 2001). These experiences can leave a guest feeling cheated out of their desired experience, and have financial implications for hospitality resorts (Neir, Casielle, & Iglesia, 2010).

In the high-end hospitality industry, service failures can include anything the consumer believes the organization failed to accomplish (e.g., poor room quality, additional charges, flight delays, poor food quality) (Palmer, 2001, p. 492). Some of these may not be directly affected by the organization (e.g., flight delays), but can still affect the perception the consumer has on the organization. A guest might have high expectations for the service they receive, and any deviation from their expectations could prove troublesome to the organization. In the high-end hospitality industry, a business must subjectively cater to each guest on an individual level because each guest will have different requirements and expectations. Poor customer satisfaction could affect customer loyalty which will affect the organization as a whole.

Hospitality organizations can fail in customer service in several ways. One of those ways can be in the "physical surrounds" (Cranage, 2004, p. 211). Hoffman, Kelley and Chung (2003) identified three points of failure that can occur in the physical surroundings in an organization: cleanliness issues, mechanical problems, and facility design issues (p. 339-40). These issues are listed in the order of frequency they occur in hospitality services, and are important because they can directly affect the guest's experience. For example, service failures regarding cleanliness issues can be anything that pertains to foreign objects, foul odors, or poor room quality. Mechanical issues could include certain facilities not being made available (e.g., broken faucet). Facility design issues could include factors such as the room being next to a noisy highway. Hoffman et al. (2003) showed that facility maintenance impacts customer retention, and that proper facility maintenance can assist in mitigating negative expectancy violations with guests.

Customer Satisfaction Theory

Disconfirmation Paradigm

Disconfirmation theory indicates that customers compare a new service experience with a standard they have developed in their own minds. Their belief about the service is determined by how well it measures up to this

standard. The theory presumes that customers purchase based on their expectations, attitudes, and intentions (Oliver 1980). During or after consumption, a perception of performance occurs as customers evaluate the experience. The process is completed when customers compare the actual service performance with their pre-experience standard (Beardon & Teel 1993, Cardozo 1965, Day 1977, Oliver 1980) or expectation. The result is confirmation, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction.

There are four components to this paradigm which are expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation, satisfaction. The level of expectations represents pre-consumption expectation. Performance refers to the customer's perception of service. Disconfirmation results if there is a discrepancy between expectations and performance. Finally, satisfaction is determined by combining the satisfaction outcomes for the various attributes of the service. The first three components affect satisfaction, but it can be hardly determined whether or not these lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Neither is there consensus on how the variables interrelate.

Disconfirmation Theory was used through the set of questions that was created for this study's survey. Visitors were asked of the standard that they had in their minds before they visited the attractions through their level of expectations and the attractions' performance during their site visit which is their level of perception. The relationship between the two per dimension are the determinants of service quality in Ilocos Norte.

Expectancy-value Theory

According to expectancy-value theory, customers often make judgments about a product, its benefits, and the outcomes of using the product. People will learn to perform behavior that they expect will lead to positive outcomes (Tokman, 1932). Their overall attitude is a function of beliefs about an object's attributes and the strength of these beliefs. The impact of the attribute's importance on consumer decision making is also widely recognized (Heeler et al, 1979).

The relationship has been summarized as follows: $Q = I_i (P_i - E_i)$ (Carmen 1990), where, Q is the overall quality; I is the importance of service attribute I; the sum is over the number of service attributes; P is the perception; E is expectation.

There remains a need to provide a direct link between satisfaction and purchase (Barsky, 1990). Some models indicate a link between satisfaction and repeat purchase intention but not yet to actual purchase.

This theory focuses on the effect of customer's expectation to the customer's satisfaction and repeat purchase which was significant to the study. The study made use of the level of expectations of the visitors before site visitation to determine if there is a difference on their level of perception during site visitation on service quality.

SERVQUAL Model

There are different concepts on service quality, and one of the most widely accepted and used by researchers is the SERVQUAL model which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). The conceptual framework of service quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) was based on the interpretation of qualitative data from extensive explanatory research performed in several service businesses. The SERVQUAL instrument has been and still widely used all over the world nonetheless, it has received criticisms. Past researches which were conducted in different settings suggest that the SERVQUAL dimensions may not be universal and applicable for all services and that it is most likely unnecessary to apply the expectation every time SERVQUAL is administered (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; Parasuraman et al., 1991).

Apart from expectations-performance methodology by Parasuraman et al. (1988), Cronin and Taylor (1992) claimed that a psychometrically superior assessment of service quality could be obtained through the SERVQUAL performance items alone. According to Lassar et al. (2000), recent researchers have started integrating other measures along with the SERVQUAL dimensions in order to extend and improve the explanatory power of this model.

Dimensions of Service Quality

In an article entitled “How to measure the 5 dimensions of service quality” by Klokkena (2020), she defined the five dimensions of service quality and explained how to measure them accurately.

Tangibility is the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

Reliability is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.

Empathy is the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Development Strategies

Department of Tourism (DOT) Accreditation

In August 2013, with the previous Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez Jr., the Department of Tourism implemented new accommodation standards for hotels, resorts, and apartment hotels using a Star Rating System. The standards employ a points-based rating system focused on inventory, availability, condition, and quality of a specific facility or service. This is to boost industry competitiveness. On the initial implementation of the new standards and star rating system for classifying hotels, resorts, and apartment hotels, the DOT engaged the services of a private quality assurance firm that consequently tapped external auditors to conduct the assessment. The use of a third-party auditing firm is aimed at ensuring impartiality of the audit team and credibility of results. Most developed countries employ this scheme as independent audits are deemed more credible.

Through the launching of DOT Memorandum Circular 2012-02 in 2012, the new standard is part of the DOT's policy reforms pursuant to the provisions of the Tourism Act of 2009, which mandates the DOT to formulate and enforce standards for the operation and maintenance of tourism enterprises, prescribing minimum and progressive levels of operating quality and efficiency consistent with local and international standards. The Tourism Act also provides for the development and enforcement of a comprehensive system for mandatory accreditation for primary tourism enterprises, and voluntary accreditation for secondary tourism enterprises, in accordance with prescribed guidelines and standards.

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Certification

TESDA pursues the assessment and certification of the competencies of the middle-level skilled workers through Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System (PTCACS). The assessment process seeks to determine whether the graduate or worker can perform to the standards expected in the workplace based on the defined competency standards. Certification is provided to those who meet the competency standards. This ensures the productivity, quality and global competitiveness of the middle-level workers.

The *Front Office Services NC II Qualification* consists of competencies that a person must possess in order to be able to conduct the process of making a reservation, registering and checking-in and checking-out a guest in commercial accommodation establishments.

The *Housekeeping NC II Qualification* consists of competencies that a person must achieve to prepare guest rooms, clean public areas and equipment, provide housekeeping services, provide valet services, handle intoxicated guests, and laundry linen and guest clothes to a range of accommodation services. The *Food and Beverage Services NC II Qualification* consists of competencies that a person must achieve to provide food and beverage service to guests in various food and beverage service facilities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a descriptive and development type employing both the quantitative and qualitative approach of research design. A descriptive survey has been administered. Descriptive research is appropriate because this study described and interpreted the service quality of the accommodation establishments at Mariano Marcos State University.

Research Instrument

Data-gathering has primarily used questionnaires and administered to those who stayed for at least one night in any MMSU accommodation establishment. The questionnaire was adopted from the study of Pizaro (2020). The first part of the instrument contains the visitor profile, such as name, address, age, sex, employment status, monthly income, educational attainment, civil status, the MMSU accommodation establishment where the guest stayed, and the month stayed. The second part of the questionnaire contains the rating on the level of expectation and perception against the five identified dimensions of service quality namely, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. Along each statement is a space provided to elicit suggestions from the respondents for improvement the improvement of the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) accommodation establishments.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study are those who stayed for at least one night in any of the MMSU accommodation establishments from January-December 2023. The basis of determining the guests in the MMSU accommodation establishments were from the records from the Chief of Accommodations. Convenience sampling was applied to determine the sample size. Moreover, part of the inclusion criteria in selecting the respondents will be those who are 18 years old and above at the time of stay.

Inclusion/ Exclusion Criteria

NO.	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Tourists/Visitors that stayed for one or more nights in any of the MMSU accommodation establishments	Tourists/Visitors that did not stay in any MMSU accommodation establishment for one or more nights
2	Local, Domestic and International Tourist/Visitors ages 18 to 59 years old.	Local, Domestic and International Tourist/Visitors ages below 18 and beyond 59 years old.

The researchers verified the data taken from respondents whether they are a part of the criteria or not. Any data taken from excluded respondent were not counted in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers were guided by the following procedures throughout the conduct of the study. The study was conducted from January to December 2023 through personal transactions and online, by contacting the target participants using the different social media sites.

Application for Ethical Clearance. The researchers sought the permission of the University Research Ethics Review Board (URERB). The required forms were submitted for an ethical review to secure clearance approval of the conduct of the study.

Securing Approval for the Consent Letters. The researchers submitted consent letters to be signed by the Chair of the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management as well as the Dean of the College of Business, Economics and Accountancy.

Distribution of Questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed by the researchers personally or online through google forms. Moreover, various social media such as Facebook, Instagram, etc. were utilized to

contact the respondents. The researchers explained and clarified the purpose of the study to condition the participants through the google form. For the dataset gathering phase of the study, the participants completed the survey upon receiving the link to the questionnaire or the printed materials. The ideal time of completion for the dataset gathering questionnaire is 10-15 minutes.

Interpretation and Analysis. The data were collected through the answered questionnaires, the researchers checked, interpreted, and analyzed the results.

Data Storage and Destruction Plan. Data (paper-based document) collected will be stored in a steel cabinet. After the study, the researchers will shred the paper-based documents to ensure that no copy of the respondent's information is left. For electronic data, they will be on computer units with passwords. Then, the researchers will permanently delete the electronic data after the conduct of the study.

Statistical Analysis/Data Analysis Plan. The data gathered were analyzed and illustrated in tabular, graphical, and textual representations.

Frequency and percentage were used to summarize the respondents' profile with regard to address, age, gender, employment status, monthly income, educational attainment, travel period and MMSU accommodation establishments where university guests stayed. The formula to be used will be:

$$P = (f/N) 100$$

Where:

P = percentage

f = frequency

N = total number of respondents

Moreover, mode was utilized to determine the level of expectation and perception of visitors. To analyze the gap, the individual and overall mode of the level of perception was subtracted from the individual and overall mode of the level of expectation.

Furthermore, thematic content analysis was employed to analyze the responses from the respondents' suggestions to improve the service quality of MMSU accommodation establishments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section shows the tabulation, results, and discussion of quantitative responses from the data gathering made for both visitor and non-visitor accommodation establishments in Mariano Marcos State University along five dimensions of service quality; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness.

Non-Visitor Accommodation Establishments

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents, N=131

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Address		
Ilocos Norte	94	71.76
Outside Ilocos Norte but within the Philippines	37	28.24
Outside the Philippines	0	0.00
Age		
18-27	115	87.79
28-43	14	10.69

44-59	2	1.53
60 and above	0	0.00
Sex		
Male	66	50.38
Female	64	48.85
Did not state	1	0.76
Employment Status		
Student	121	92.37
Unemployed	4	3.05
Employed	6	4.58
Public or Private N=6		
Public	0	0.00
Private	6	100.00
Monthly Income		
Below Php. 10,957	99	75.57
Php. 10,957- Php. 21,914	7	5.34
Php. 21,914- Php. 43,828	4	3.05
Php. 43,828- Php. 76,669	0	0.00
Php. 76,669- Php. 131,484	1	0.76
Php. 131,484- Php.219,140	0	0.00
Php. 219,140 and above	0	0.00
Rather not say	20	15.27
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Graduate	2	1.53
High School Graduate	118	90.08
College Graduate	6	4.58
Post-Graduate	5	3.82
Civil Status		
Single	120	91.60
Married	11	8.40
Widowed	0	0.00
Separated	0	0.00
MMSU Accommodation		
Student Residence Dormitory	42	32.06
Ladies and Men's Dormitory	80	61.07
MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall	0	0.00
Others	9	6.87

Address. The profile of the respondents in terms of address is presented in this table. 94 out of 131 or 71.76% of the respondents reside in the province of Ilocos Norte. 37 or 28.24% reside outside Ilocos Norte but within the Philippines. Mariano Marcos State University has been recognized by the Professional Regular Commission as Top Performing School based on the outstanding performance of its graduates in various licensure examinations. Recently, it has been awarded 4 stars in the QS Stars Rating System. Moreover, MMSU achieved prominence in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings 2023 and ranked 107th in the WURI 2024 global rankings. It is no doubt that MMSU is the top priority of Ilocos Norte residents in considering their school for tertiary education not only because of its location but its international reputation.

Age. The age of the respondents is also reflected on the table. It can be observed that the majority of the respondents are *Gen Z* with ages ranging from 18-27. It has a frequency of 115 (87.79%). 14 out of 131 (10.69%) are Millennials with ages ranging from 28-43. Two respondents (1.53%) are *Gen X*. In the study of Jayvee Cuerdo Cebu entitled, "Self-Efficacy of Filipino College Students as Correlates to Demographics", college students were the selected population and their age group was 18-23 years old. Further, in the study of Jerome V. Cleofas and Ian Christopher N. Rocha titled, "Demographic, Gadget and Internet Profiles as Determinants of Disease and Consequence Related COVID-19 Anxiety Among Filipino College Students", the participants are from 18-22 years old. Majority of the college students in the Philippines are *Gen Z*.

Sex. As presented, there is a minimal difference on the demographic profile of the respondents as to sex but the majority of them are males. Male respondents have a frequency of 66 equivalent to 50.38%. On the other hand, female respondents have a frequency of 64 equivalent to 48.85%. One preferred not to answer. This result is contrary to some research. The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) based in the United States of America has performed research on the undergraduate enrollment in Fall 2021. Majority of undergraduate enrollees are female made up of 58% while 42% for males. It is further supported by an article from Matthew Reysio-Cruz, a reporter of Inquirer.Net in 2020 that Filipino women are enrolled in high school and college at significantly higher rates than men according to the 2020 Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Employment Status. Majority of the respondents are students with a frequency of 121 equivalent to 92.37%. 6 out of 131 or 4.58% are employed, and 4 out of 131 or 3.05% are unemployed. Mariano Marcos State University offers several housing facilities for its qualified students: Student Residence Hall, Ladies & Men's Dormitory, MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall, and Ladies Dormitory. This justifies the result that majority of the respondents are students of Mariano Marcos State University who have availed student housing facilities. Out of 6 respondents who claimed that they are employed, all are from private companies. MMSU also offers staff housing units. Employees, together with their families, may avail of this university facility.

Monthly Income. Monthly income is also reflected on the table. 99 respondents or 75.57% dominated by Below Php. 10,957 monthly incomes of respondents. It is followed by 7 out of 131 or 5.34% having a monthly income of Php. 10,957-Php. 21,914. Four respondents making up 3.05% have a monthly income of Php. 21,914-Php. 43,828 and one respondent 0.76% has a monthly income of Php. 76,669-Php. 131,484. Majority of the respondents are students which justifies the result that mostly also have an income below Php. 10,957. Furthermore, Mariano Marcos State University is covered by the Republic Act No. 10931, An act promoting universal access to quality tertiary education by providing for free tuition and other school fees in state universities and colleges, local universities and colleges and state-run technical-vocational institutions, establishing the tertiary education subsidy and student loan program, strengthening the unified student financial assistance system for tertiary education, and appropriating fund.

Educational Attainment. As to the educational attainment of the respondents, most answered that they are High School Graduates with a frequency of 118 or 90.08%. There are 6 respondents (4.58%) who are College Graduates, 5 respondents (3.82%) who are Post-Graduates, and 2 respondents (1.53%) who are Elementary Graduates. Mariano Marcos State University is a comprehensive institution of higher learning in the Ilocos region. The university provides advanced instruction in the arts, agricultural and natural sciences as well as in technological and professional fields. It offers a wide range of academic programs at the certificate, associate, baccalaureate, masters and doctoral levels. Additionally, the university has gained various recognitions throughout the years and committed to producing topnotchers in their respective fields making it among the country's top performing schools. There are 66 degree programs being offered by MMSU and this is the reason why high school graduates prefer to enrol in the university.

Civil Status. As presented in the table, 120 respondents or 91.60% are single and 11 respondents or 8.40% are married. In an undergraduate research journal titled, “Saying ‘I Do’ in College: Examining Marital Status and Academic Performance” by Selena Beard (2018), Erikson’s Theory of Psychosocial Development indicates that because marriage as an undergraduate student is not a norm, marital status may have implications for college students’ academic performance.

MMSU Accommodation. The respondents were also asked to specify the MMSU Accommodation they are availing. Mostly reside in the Ladies and Men’s Dormitory with a frequency of 80 (61.07%). 42 (32.06%) of the respondents stay at the Student Residence Dormitory. 9 (6.87%) rather not specify where they reside. Because of the reputation that MMSU has, residents and nonresidents taking up tertiary education prefer to study in the university located in the City of Batac, Ilocos Norte. To save time and money, and due to the distance of the university from their homes, they opt to stay in the student housing facilities.

Table 1.1. Expectations and Perceptions on Reliability

RELIABILITY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
Statements	M	DI	M	DI
1. Providing services as expected.	5	SA	3	U
2. Sincere interest in solving the problems encountered during the visit.	5	SA	4	A
3. Performing services right the first time.	5	SA	3	U
4. Providing the services at the promised time.	5	SA	3	U
5. Maintaining error-free records.	5	SA	4	A
Mode	5	SA	3	U

Legend: *M - Mode* *DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

5	<i>Strongly Agree (SA)</i>
4	<i>Agree (A)</i>
3	<i>Undecided (U)</i>
2	<i>Disagree (D)</i>
1	<i>Strongly Disagree (SD)</i>

Table 1.1 shows the expectations and perceptions of the respondents of MMSU accommodation establishments for long-term stay on the aspect of Reliability. In an article written by Chris Arlen entitled, “The 5 Service Dimensions All Customers Care About”, it stated that customers value reliability. Not all dimensions are equal as 32% lies on the reliability of the service provider.

Overall, the modes of Expectation and Perception are 5 (*Strongly Agree*) and 3 (*Undecided*), respectively. All statements under Expectation show that the majority of the respondents had high expectations on the non-visitor accommodation establishments of MMSU in terms of its reliability which includes providing expected services, sincerity in solving problems, performing services right, providing services at the promised time, and maintaining error-free records. On the other hand, there are variations in the respondents’ answers in terms of the actual services provided. Majority of the respondents answered 4 (*Agree*) on the statements “Sincere interest in solving the problems encountered during the visit.” and “Maintaining error-free records.”. This implies that they were more satisfied in these aspects. On the other statements enumerated, respondents answered 3 (*Undecided*). Expectations are higher than the actual services received. Uzonboylu, N. (2016) in his study, “Service quality in international conference industry; a case study of WCES 2015”, viewed the large difference between expectation and perceptions and the decrease of level of satisfaction with provided services. It can be implied that the respondents expected accurate and dependable services to be provided and that the employees were sincere in providing help during their stay. The respondents’ expectations were not met. Thus, corrective measures must be taken.

Table 1.2. Expectations and Perceptions on Responsiveness

RESPONSIVENESS	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
Statements	M	DI	M	DI
6. Destination employees respond to queries of the tourists regarding the dos and don'ts on their pre-arrival and during the visit.	5	SA	4	A
7. Prompt services are given to the tourists on their pre-arrival and during the visit.	5	SA	4	A
8. Destination employees are willing to help in securing the documents needed to visit the destination.	5	SA	4	A
9. Proactive to the visitors regarding what to do and what to expect when visiting the destination.	5	SA	4	A
10. Locals and destination employees attend to the inquiries of visitors properly.	5	SA	4	A
Mode	5	SA	4	A

Legend: *M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

5 *Strongly Agree (SA)*

4 *Agree (A)*

3 *Undecided (U)*

2 *Disagree (D)*

1 *Strongly Disagree (SD)*

Table 1.2 shows the results in assessing the Expectations and Perceptions on Responsiveness. Responsiveness, according to Shakeerah Mohd Shukri, et.al., on their study “Role of Responsiveness, Reliability, and Tangibility on Customer Satisfaction” (2020), refers to the ability of service providers to support clients and provide timely service employees’ way of receiving, replying and attending to customer queries, feedback, and concerns. The overall mode for expectation is 5 (*Strongly Agree*) and 4 (*Agree*) for perception. The Expectation is higher than the Perception. The respondents’ expectations were high when it comes to pre-arrival and upon arrival reminders. They expected enthusiasm from the employees in assisting them. Thus, customer expectations are not met.

In the study of Diane Uyoga, Moi University (Kenya), 2018, entitled, “Relationship between Customer Responsiveness, Service Performance and Satisfaction Among Airline Passengers in Kenya,” it stated that customers perceive greater satisfaction when they are more responsive towards service performance. Perceived service performance mediates the relationship between customer responsiveness and their overall satisfaction.

Table 1.3. Expectations and Perception on Assurance

ASSURANCE	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
Statements	M	DI	M	DI
11. Trustworthiness of services in accordance with the safety and health protocols.	5	SA	4	A
12. Feels secured and safe with the facilities, services and the destination itself amidst pandemic.	5	SA	4	A
13. Destination employees are courteous to the needs of the visitors.	5	SA	4	A

14. Assurance shown by destination employees to provide solutions to problems encountered.	5	SA	3	A
15. There is a clear distinction of the safety protocols being observed in the destination.	5	SA	4	A
Mode	5	SA	4	A

Legend: *M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

5	<i>Strongly Agree (SA)</i>
4	<i>Agree (A)</i>
3	<i>Undecided (U)</i>
2	<i>Disagree (D)</i>
1	<i>Strongly Disagree (SD)</i>

The third component of the SERVQUAL model is Assurance. Assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire, trust, and confidence. On this table, the results on Expectation and Perception on Assurance are presented. Similar to the results presented in Table 1.2 Expectations and Perceptions on Responsiveness, Expectation has an overall mode of 5 with a descriptive interpretation *Strongly Agree* and Perception has an overall mode of 4 with a descriptive interpretation *Agree*. Expectations is higher than Perception. This result implies that there as to Assurance, Expectations of respondents were not met. The quality that they had in their minds was not executed properly by the accommodation establishment and the employees.

According to Zeithaml et al, 1990:120 and as stated by J de Jager & T du Plooy (2007) on their study “Measuring Tangibility and Assurance as Determinants of Service Quality for Public Health Care in South Africa”, the assurance perceived by customers is an important dimension of service quality in any industry. Moreover, Assurance is especially critical where trust and confidence in the service provider are crucial (Brassington & Pettit 2000:950).

Table 1.4. Expectations and Perception on Empathy

EMPATHY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
16. Destination employees give individual attention to visitors especially when there are special needs.	5	SA	4	A
17. Convenience of services and processes of visitation to visitors.	5	SA	4	A
18. Destination employees extending all kinds of cooperation.	5	SA	4	A
19. Destination employees and staff understand the need of the visitors in terms of safety and security.	5	SA	4	A
20. Destination employees' aims are the visitors' safety, security, and satisfaction.	5	SA	4	A
Mode	5	SA	4	A

Legend: *WM -Weighted Mean DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

4.21-5.00	<i>Strongly Agree (SA)</i>
3.41-4.20	<i>Agree (A)</i>
2.61-3.40	<i>Undecided (U)</i>

1.81-2.60

Disagree (D)

1.00-1.80

Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 1.4 presents the results of Expectation and Perception of respondents as to Empathy. The overall mode of Expectation is 5 with a descriptive interpretation *Strongly Agree*. The overall mode of Perception, on the other hand, is 4 with the descriptive interpretation *Agree*. In all statements under Empathy, Expectation is higher than Perception. The term “Empathy” was coined by Titchener in 1986. Stotland and colleagues created discussions on empathy that even date back to “the beginnings of philosophical thought (Stotland, Matthews, Sherman, Hansson, & Richardson, 1978). Moreover, according to Dr. Richard M. Frankel (2017) in his research entitled, “The Science of Empathy”, Empathy plays a critical interpersonal and societal role, enabling sharing of experiences, needs and desires between individuals.

With the results that were presented, respondents expected more of the attention that was shown to them, their cooperation, and their ways of assuring safety, security, and satisfaction. The respondents were not satisfied in this aspect.

Table 1.5. Expectations and Perception on Tangibles

TANGIBLES	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
21. Spacious and clean surroundings.	5	SA	4	A
22. Visually appealing physical facilities like chairs, desks, public toilets, and other tourist necessities.	5	SA	3	U
23. Availability of face masks and face shields at designated areas to cater emergency needs.	5	SA	4	A
24. Information materials are organized.	5	SA	4	A
25. Presence of tourist information centers in designated areas.	5	SA	4	A
Mode	5	SA	4	A

Legend: *M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

5 *Strongly Agree (SA)*

4 *Agree (A)*

3 *Undecided (U)*

2 *Disagree (D)*

1 *Strongly Disagree (SD)*

Table 1.5 displays the results for the 5th component of SERVQUAL which are the Tangibles. According to Tamwatin et al. (2015), tangibles are the appearance of service facilities and human resources when delivering organizational communication material that is directly related. Moreover, Moon (2013) stated that tangible is a concern and attention given by the organization to customers. If the tangible aspect given by the company is satisfactory, it can be assured that reliability will be formed by dealing with customers.

The results show that overall, Expectation is higher than Perception. The overall mode of Expectation is 5 with the descriptive interpretation of *Strongly Agree* while Perception is 4 with the descriptive interpretation *Agree*. Among the five statements, the majority of the respondents rated “Visually appealing physical facilities like chairs, desks, public toilets, and other tourist necessities.” with 3 with a descriptive interpretation of *Undecided*. Meaning, this is the item wherein the respondents were most dissatisfied. Corrective measures

must be taken by making sure that the physical facilities are visually appealing such as chairs, desks, public toilets, and other necessities. Staff must be prompt in maintaining the facilities well. Facilities that need repair and replacement must be immediately reported. Information materials must be organized and information centers or front desks must be present in case of urgent concerns and queries by the tenants.

Visitor Accommodation Establishments

Table 2.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents, N=27

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Address		
Ilocos Norte	0	0.00
Outside Ilocos Norte but within the Philippines	24	88.89
Outside the Philippines	1	3.70
Did not state	2	7.41
Age		
18-27	4	14.81
28-43	16	59.26
44-59	4	14.81
60 and above	2	7.41
Did not state	1	3.70
Sex		
Male	9	33.33
Female	18	66.67
Employment Status		
Student	0	0
Unemployed	0	0
Employed	27	100
Public or Private		
Public	5	18.52
Private	22	81.48
Monthly Income		
Below Php. 10,957	1	3.70
Php. 10,957- Php. 21,914	3	11.11
Php. 21,914- Php. 43,828	13	48.15
Php. 43,828- Php. 76,669	3	11.11
Php. 76,669- Php. 131,484	2	7.41
Php. 131,484- Php.219,140	0	0.00
Php. 219,140 and above	1	3.70
Rather not say	4	14.81
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Graduate	0	0
High School Graduate	0	0
College Graduate	12	44.44
Post-Graduate	15	55.56
Civil Status		
Single	12	44.44
Married	9	33.33
Widowed	1	3.70

Separated	0	0.00
MMSU Accommodation		
University Mansion	12	44.44
University Review Center	11	40.74
MMSU Hostel	5	18.52
Month/s stayed		
January-March	0	0.00
April-June	2	7.41
July-September	0	0.00
October-December	24	88.89
Did not state	10	11.11

Address. The profile of the respondents in terms of address is presented in Table 2.1. 24 out of 27 with a percentage of 88.89% stated that they are from outside of Ilocos Norte but within the Philippines. 2 of the respondents making up 7.41% did not state their address and 1 respondent (3.70%) resides outside the Philippines. An article by James Loyola (2024) entitled “PH Tourism Rebounds on Robust Domestic Travel” stated that Philippine tourism has experienced a remarkable resurgence, largely driven by the resilience of domestic travel. This statement was according to a study by Leechiu Property Consultants LPC.

Age. As reflected in the table, the age group 28-43 or *Millennials* have the highest frequency amounting to 16 making up 59.26% of the total population. It is followed by ages 18-27 or *Gen Z* and 44-59 or *Gen X* with both frequencies of 4. 2 of the respondents age 60 and above or *Seniors*. and 1 respondent did not state their age. According to Candy B. Ruña and Angelus C. Diamante on their research entitled, “Travel Preferences of Millennials in a Highly Urbanized City in the Philippines (2020)”, Millennials or Generation Y greatly impact travel and tourism industry as they are in their peak earning years and spending power. They tend to travel more frequently and they are active travelers.

Sex. As to sex, the majority of the respondents are female, comprising a frequency of 18 or 66.67%. The frequency of male respondents is 9 or 33.33%. This is supported by Condor Ferries, as stated by Forbes (2023), that 64% of travelers worldwide are female, while only 36% are male. The Philippine Statistics Authority also stated that in 2022, there were more female travelers at 52.9% than male travelers at 47.1%.

Employment Status. The table shows that the 27 respondents or 100% are employed. 5 (18.52%) are from public companies and 22 (81.48%) are from private companies. In March 2020, 4 SUCs scheduled their benchmarking activity in Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and in April and May 2022, 4 schools were lined up for the same reason to learn about MMSU’s best practices and new developments. This is according to the article published in the university’s website written by John Vincent B. Toribio. MMSU has also been dynamic in building partnerships with private companies such as Bauertek Corp, Takara, Inc., Smart Communications, Inc., India-based company, and etc. to strengthen national and international linkages. This justifies the 100% result in the employment status of visitors of MMSU staying on its accommodation establishments.

Monthly Income. Majority of the respondents belong to the Lower Middle Income class equivalent to Php. 21,914- Php. 43,828 with a total of 13 respondents or 48.15%. It is followed by Low-Income But Not Poor class (Php. 10,957- Php. 21,914) and Middle class (Php. 43,828- Php. 76,669) with three respondents each, making up 11.11% of the total sample. Two respondents belong to the Upper Middle class which makes up 7.41% of the total sample. One respondent belongs to Poor class (Below Php. 10,957) and another one belongs to the Rich class with an income of Php. 219,140 and above per month. These two classifications make up 3.70% of the total sample. In the study of Albert, Jose Ramon G, and etc., entitled “Profile and Determinants of the Middle Income Class in the Philippines”, it stated that the middle-income class plays a crucial role in socio-economic development and in achieving long-term aspirations articulated in *Ambisyon 2040*, which envisages a predominantly “middle class” society where no one is poor. A study in Kenya has a similar result where it stated that strong domestic tourism is driven by a growing sizeable middle-class population and an increase in spending power among domestic consumers. The study is entitled, “Analysis of Domestic Tourists’

Demographic and Travel Characteristics in Kenya” by Wang’ombe, Lawrence, et al.

Educational Attainment. The respondents were also asked of their educational attainment during their visit to Mariano Marcos State University. Most of the respondents are Post Graduates with a frequency of 15 equivalent to 55.56% and the rest are College Graduates with a frequency of 12 equivalent to 44.44%. In the World Education News + Reviews, specifically, Education in the Philippines, which is an article by Macha, Wilson, et. al., (2018), stated that there are quality improvements and internationalization through increase in the number of higher education faculty holding higher degrees. There is growth in the percentage of instructors with master’s and doctoral degrees in 2015 compared to 2010.

Civil Status. As to the civil status of the respondents, the majority are single with a frequency of 12 (44.44%). Nine (33.33%) are married and one (3.70%) is widowed. According to the research entitled, “Demographic Factors and Travel Motivation Among Leisure Tourists in Tanzania” by Nasra Shoka Kara and Kezia Herman Mkwizu, singles are assumed to have more free time to engage in various activities compared to those with family. Married couples spend less time enjoying leisure due to family obligations.

MMSU Accommodation. Mariano Marcos State University has several accommodation establishments intended for university visitors. Among the three accommodations cited, the University Mansion has the highest number of arrivals with a frequency of 12 (44.44%). Followed by the University Review Center equivalent to 11 (40.74%), and MMSU Hostel with 5 respondents (18.52%). Various SUCs in the Philippines host their university visitors through their own accommodation establishments inside their campuses as part of their income-generating activities. Pangasinan State University, an SUC in Luzon Region 1, has the Golden Lion Hotel which is the only state-of-the-art training hotel in the heart of the historic town of Lingayen. Visayas State University in Region 8, has their own Apartelle, Seafront Suite, Balay Alumni, and University Hostel. Bukidnon State University in Mindanao, Region 10, also has a university accommodation establishment called Balai Ha BukSU. The SUCs that have been mentioned are only some of the SUCs in the Philippines that house their visitors.

Month/s Stayed. The respondents have been asked for their month of stay or in which quarter did they visit the university. Majority of the respondents visited in October-December with a frequency of 24 (88.89%). Two (7.41%) respondents visited in April-June, and ten (11.11%) did not state their time of visit. According to Vicky Brown in her article entitled, “Best Time Visit the Philippines”, December is one of the best months to visit the Philippines due to its dry and cold weather. April is gloriously sunny, but is a peak time to visit. May and October are great ideas for lower prices, fewer tourists and pleasant weather.

Table 2.2. Expectations and Perception on Reliability

RELIABILITY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
1. Providing services as expected.	5	SA	5	SA
2. Sincere interest in solving the problems encountered during the visit.	5	SA	5	SA
3. Performing services right the first time.	5	SA	5	SA
4. Providing the services at the promised time.	5	SA	5	SA
5. Maintaining error-free records.	5	SA	5	SA
Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: *M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation*

- 5 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 4 Agree (A)
- 3 Undecided (U)

2 Disagree (D)

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.2 shows the Expectations and Perceptions of respondents who stayed in short-term accommodation establishments of Mariano Marcos State University as to reliability. Overall, the mode of both Expectation and Perception is 5 with a descriptive interpretation of *Strongly Agree*. Among the answers of the 27 respondents who stayed in short-term accommodation establishments, four (14.81%) answered 4 with a descriptive interpretation of *Agree*. Reliability is the capacity to deliver its promises in time. The study of Charls-Davies, S.O. titled, “The Role of Service Reliability and Customer Empathy in Determining Customer Satisfaction in Rivers State Hotels” mentioned that service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and customer empathy, are significant predictors of customer satisfaction as measured by customer loyalty and referrals. The study concluded that hotel staff should be trained to provide prompt services. With the results of this study, it can also be concluded that the service quality of MMSU accommodation establishments’ staff in terms of reliability is outstanding.

Table 2.3. Expectations and Perception on Responsiveness

RESPONSIVENESS	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
6. Destination employees respond to queries of the tourists regarding the dos and don'ts on their pre-arrival and during the visit.	5	SA	5	SA
7. Prompt services are given to the tourists on their pre-arrival and during the visit.	5	SA	5	SA
8. Destination employees are willing to help in securing the documents needed to visit the destination.	5	SA	5	SA
9. Proactive to the visitors regarding on what to do and what to expect when visiting the destination.	5	SA	5	SA
10. Locals and destination employees attend to the inquiries of visitors properly.	5	SA	5	SA
Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: **M - Mode** **DI – Descriptive Interpretation**

5 Strongly Agree (SA)

4 Agree (A)

3 Undecided (U)

2 Disagree (D)

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.3 reflects the Expectations and Perceptions of the respondents as to Responsiveness. Similar to Reliability, the mode is equivalent to 5 with the descriptive interpretation of *Strongly Agree*. While the majority of the respondents answered 5 in their expected and perceived service, four (14.81%) of the respondents answered 4 with a descriptive interpretation of *Agree*. To Mohammed and Shirly (2009), which was also mentioned by Forje, et. al, (2021), in their study “Service Quality, a Correlation of Customer Expectation and Customer Perception of Services Received Responsiveness and Empathy in Shisong Hospital,” responsiveness is about proper communication to customers. They have found out that provision of right information to the right person at the right time has a great influence on customer satisfaction. The performance of the MMSU short-term accommodation establishments’ staff is commendable in terms of

responsiveness based on the table.

Table 2.4. Expectations and Perception on Assurance

ASSURANCE	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
11. Trustworthiness of services in accordance to the safety and health protocols.	5	SA	5	SA
12. Feels secured and safe with the facilities, services and the destination itself amidst pandemic.	5	SA	5	SA
13. Destination employees are courteous to the needs of the visitors.	5	SA	5	SA
14. Assurance shown by destination employees to provide solutions to problems encountered.	5	SA	5	SA
15. There is a clear distinction of the safety protocols being observed in the destination.	5	SA	5	SA
Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation

- 5 *Strongly Agree (SA)*
- 4 *Agree (A)*
- 3 *Undecided (U)*
- 2 *Disagree (D)*
- 1 *Strongly Disagree (SD)*

Another component of the SERVQUAL model is Assurance. Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of employees, ability to inspire trust and confidence. The results of this study in terms of Assurance is seen on Table 2.4. The mode for both Expectation and Perception is equivalent to 5 with the descriptive interpretation of *Strongly Agree*. Based on the results, it can be noticed that there is no difference between the two. Thus, it can be concluded that expectation is met. Megan Daile in her study, “Working With Great Expectations: the Impact of Met and Unmet Expectations on Employee Engagement and Intent to Leave” (2022), states that expectations are part of everyday life. Met expectations can contribute to positive outcomes and unmet expectations have been linked to undesirable outcomes. Further, according to Parasuraman, et. al. (1985), a good service quality is considered as one which meets or exceeds consumer’s expectation of the service. The results in terms of Assurance indicate that the staff of MMSU short-term accommodation establishments are trustworthy and courteous.

Table 2.5. Expectations and Perception on Empathy

EMPATHY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
16. Destination employees give individual attention to visitors especially when there are special needs.	5	SA	5	SA
17. Convenience of services and processes of visitation to visitors.	5	SA	5	SA
18. Destination employees extending all kinds of cooperation.	5	SA	5	SA
19. Destination employees and staff understand the need of the visitors in	5	SA	5	SA

terms of safety and security.				
20.Destination employees' aims are the visitors' safety, security, and satisfaction.	5	SA	5	SA
Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: **M - Mode** **DI – Descriptive Interpretation**

5	<i>Strongly Agree (SA)</i>
4	<i>Agree (A)</i>
3	<i>Undecided (U)</i>
2	<i>Disagree (D)</i>
1	<i>Strongly Disagree (SD)</i>

Table 2.5 displays the results of Expectations and Perceptions of respondents as to Empathy. Empathy is the care and interest provided by the establishment toward customers to feel that they are their central concern and that their interests are essential (Abdullah Muzil Alharbi, et.al., 0222). In the study of Adrian Heng Tsai Tan, et. al. (2019), “The Role of Empathy in the Service Experience”, they mentioned that the provision of individualized attention to students to positively influence student experience in learning was deemed important. The table shows that the mode of Expectation and Perception as to Empathy is 5. This indicates that the expectations of the visitors are met in terms of the individual attention provided to them, their convenience, employees' cooperation, and the safety and security assured to them.

Table 2.6. Expectations and Perception on Tangibles

TANGIBLES	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
	M	DI	M	DI
Statements				
21. Spacious and clean surroundings.	5	SA	5	SA
22. Visually appealing physical facilities like chairs, desks, public toilets, and other tourist necessities.	5	SA	5	SA
23. Availability of facemasks and face shields at designated areas to cater emergency needs.	5	SA	5	SA
24. Information materials are organized.	5	SA	5	SA
25. Presence of tourist information centers in designated areas.	5	SA	5	SA
Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: **M - Mode** **DI – Descriptive Interpretation**

5	<i>Strongly Agree (SA)</i>
4	<i>Agree (A)</i>
3	<i>Undecided (U)</i>
2	<i>Disagree (D)</i>
1	<i>Strongly Disagree (SD)</i>

The results for Expectations and Perceptions of respondents as to Tangibles is presented in Table 2.6. The mode for both Expectation and Perception is equal to 5. Tangibles include the physical appearance of the facilities, accommodation equipment, and all physical features of the accommodation establishments. While the majority of the visitors rated the visitor accommodation establishments with the highest rating equivalent to

5, seven (7) respondents anticipated less in the establishments' tangibles, specifically its physical features. The lowest rated statement as per Expectation and Perception is on the availability of face masks and face shields at designated areas to cater emergency needs as the data were gathered post-pandemic. In the article of Roohangiz Norouzinia M.Sc. et. al., (2014) titled, Gap Analysis of Educational Services Quality based on SERVQUAL Model from Iranian Medical Students' Viewpoint", the highest gap recorded were attributed to Tangibles related to exterior attractiveness, of physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, chairs, and restrooms. Further, there is a lack of students' satisfaction with physical spaces and faculty's facilities. This supports the results of this study as to Tangibles. In terms of spacious and clean surroundings, visual appeal of all facilities, availability of necessities when it comes to emergency needs such as facemasks, organized information materials, and tourist information center or availability of front office attendants, expectations are higher than perceptions.

Table 3.1. Gap Between the Level of Expectation and Level of Perception on Service Quality in Non-Visitor Accommodation Establishments of MMSU

SERVICE QUALITY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
Dimensions	WM	DI	WM	DI
1. Reliability	5	SA	3	U
2. Responsiveness	5	SA	4	A
3. Assurance	5	SA	4	A
4. Empathy	5	SA	4	A
5. Tangibles	5	SA	4	A
Overall Mode	5	SA	4	A

Legend: M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation

- 5 *Strongly Agree (SA)*
- 4 *Agree (A)*
- 3 *Undecided (U)*
- 2 *Disagree (D)*
- 1 *Strongly Disagree (SD)*

Table 3.1 presents the overall mode of Expectations and Perceptions on Service Quality for Non-Visitor Accommodation Establishments of Mariano Marcos State University. In all dimensions, it has been recorded that Expectations are higher than Perceptions equivalent to 5 with the descriptive interpretation *Strongly Agree* and 4 with the descriptive interpretation *Agree*, respectively. All dimensions presented a negative gap. The highest gap is in the dimension of Reliability equivalent to -2. For the rest of the dimensions specifically, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangible, they all presented a similar gap equivalent to -1. The results signify that it is in the area of Reliability that the non-visitor accommodation establishments of MMSU must improve to maximize the service quality and satisfaction felt by end-users as they stay at any accommodation establishment. The study of Beni Agus Setiono (2022) titled, "Influence of Service Quality with the Dimensions of Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles on Customer Satisfaction", noted that simultaneously and partially the quality of service with the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles affect customer satisfaction. Mariano Marcos State University has to take corrective actions addressing all the dimensions of service quality to meet and exceed satisfaction among the non-visitor accommodation establishments through quality service.

Table 3.2. Gap Between Level of Expectation and Level of Perception on Service Quality in Visitor Accommodation Establishments of MMSU

SERVICE QUALITY	Expectation (Inaasahang Serbisyo)		Perception (Natanggap na Serbisyo)	
Dimensions	WM	DI	WM	DI
1. Reliability	5	SA	5	SA
2. Responsiveness	5	SA	5	SA
3. Assurance	5	SA	5	SA
4. Empathy	5	SA	5	SA
5. Tangibles	5	SA	5	SA
Overall Mode	5	SA	5	SA

Legend: M - Mode DI – Descriptive Interpretation

- 5 *Strongly Agree (SA)*
- 4 *Agree (A)*
- 3 *Undecided (U)*
- 2 *Disagree (D)*
- 1 *Strongly Disagree (SD)*

Table 3.2 shows the overall mode in both Expectations and Perceptions on Service Quality among Mariano Marcos State University visitor accommodation establishments. As compared to the results under the non-visitor accommodation establishments, the visitor accommodation establishments showcased better results as Level of Expectation and Perception in all dimensions resulted to 5. This implies that there is no gap recorded across all dimensions. The visitor accommodation establishments have exceeded the expectation of guest indicating customer satisfaction. The study of Phima Ruthia Dwikesumasari (2018) titled, “SERVQUAL Gap Analysis for Service Development of State-owned Export–Import Training Services for Small- and Medium Enterprises in East Java, Indonesia” has a similar and contradicting result as compared to the results of this study. All dimensions recorded no gap indicating that there is no need for development. However, in the said study’s result, reliability had a negative gap contrary to this study which had positive gap. The results imply that there is a need to develop the visitor accommodation establishments of MMSU but this doesn’t also limit the establishments’ plans to still improve for the betterment of its services and quality.

CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE NON-VISITOR ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS AT MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY

This section shows the concerns and suggestions of respondents for the improvement of the different non-visitor accommodation establishments in Mariano Marcos State University along five dimensions of service quality; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. These accommodation establishments are Student Residence Dormitory, Ladies and Men’s Dormitory, and MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall. Responses revolved around cooking equipment, occupancy level, hygiene essentials, and customer response.

Cooking Equipment

According to the response of SQR-0028, they highly think that the use of gas range to cook their meals is too dangerous; hence, they rely on the use of an electric stove. This response is connected to the statement under the dimension on Assurance, which asks if boarders feel secured and safe with the facilities, services and the

destination itself.

While there are a number of local restaurants, colloquially known as karindaria, and fast-food establishments within the vicinity of the university, cooking and preparing meals inside dormitories are still perceived to be more economical. Moreover, the use of an open flame through gas stoves is regarded to impose a higher risk and hazard than cooking equipment that rely on metal heating elements, especially since the Student Residence Dormitory is built primarily on wood. According to a study published in *Environmental Science and Technology* (2022), gas stoves, cooktops and ovens tend to leak gases — even when not in use — that can build up in the home and possibly cause hazards. On top of that, electric stoves are seen to be easier to install as compared to gas ranges that are more complicated to connect.

This generally shows the need for the university to thoroughly check the use of gas ranges, on top of other equipment, being used by boarders at the Student Residence Dormitory. Aside from that, the university must also take into consideration the continued refurbishment and renovation of its buildings to ensure the safety and security of its residents.

Occupancy Level

On the other hand, SQR-0137 emphasized the need to balance the number of occupants per unit in the dormitory. They specifically pointed that “four people should be [assigned] in rooms that can't accommodate five people because it's too hot.” Other respondents also shared the same sentiment, giving stress on the limited space shared by several boarders. This is attached to the statement under Tangibles on having spacious and clean surroundings.

Based on the article written by Misheba, A. (2023), overcrowded dormitories pose major challenges for students. The article states that limited space forces many students to compromise, leading to discomfort and put privacy at risk. Furthermore, the lack of adequate facilities and maintenance can leave students with unhygienic conditions, compromising their health and overall well-being.

With the dormitories being part of the jurisdiction of the Business Directorate, and having the priority to generate substantial income for the university, it must not compromise boarders' comfort and convenience, instead it should be prioritized. While monthly rental fees and other expenses in school dormitories are much inexpensive than outside school dormitories, the university should be more considerate of boarders' needs.

Hygiene Essentials

As for concerns and suggestions geared toward Ladies and Men's Dormitory, SQR-0165 stated that the university does not provide any form of hygiene essentials such as face masks and face shields, especially at the height of the pandemic. This corresponds to the statement under Tangibles which tackles the availability and presence of face masks, face shields and other sanitation needs at designated areas. While nipahol is widely distributed in the university, other protective gears and materials are seen to be likewise necessary. However, the respondent also gave credit to the university's initiative saying “there are handwashing stations available” for its residents in the dormitory.

Satish Kumar, B. P., et al. (2020) raised the importance of understanding the need of personal hygiene. They elaborated that good hygiene is a principal barrier to numerous communicable diseases, and which promotes well-being and overall health. They further explained that to attain the significant health benefits, better hygiene should be built concurrently along with the development in the sanitation and water supply, and be merged with other interventions.

This implies that sanitary and hygienic necessities must be available at all times and must be visible in areas where most people pass by or convene. This raises the concern on how boarders can prevent the widespread of communicable diseases, and not only because there is a pandemic.

Customer Response

On another note, SQR-0170 commented that whenever they raise their concerns to the ladies and men's

dormitory in-charge, tendency is “problems are mostly unresolved.” While the problem that had happened was not specifically mentioned, it can be just regarded as a general concern of the occupants. The same concern was mentioned by other few respondents, citing the lack of concern from the dormitory employees. This comment can be regarded to fall under Reliability dimension with the statement about sincere interest in solving the problems encountered during the visit.

In the tourism and hospitality sector, customer service greatly affects corporate image, customer satisfaction, revisit intention and word-of-mouth. In the study of Jahanshahi, A. A. et al. (2011) as cited by Munusamy, K. (2024) on the study about the effects of customer service on customer satisfaction and loyalty, it revealed that not addressing the customer queries results to lower level of customer satisfaction.

This implies the need to be attentive to customer complaints and concerns, highlighting the value of being empathetic. Showing concern to the boarders’ earnest requests while finding ways to resolve the issue can help improve the image of the university and increased level of satisfaction. The word-of-mouth shared by ladies and men’s dormitory boarders can significantly impact the decision of potential boarders of the university. This can also prevent occupants to withdraw from the university dormitories and transfer to other apartments and dormitories.

Concerns and Suggestions for Improvement for the Visitor Accommodation Establishments at Mariano Marcos State University

This section shows the concerns and suggestions of respondents for the improvement of the different accommodation establishments primarily for visitors in Mariano Marcos State University along five dimensions of service quality; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy and Responsiveness. These accommodation establishments are University Mansion, University Review Center, and MMSU Hostel. Responses revolved around customer service, housekeeping services, emergency preparedness, sustainable practices, accessibility for differently-abled individuals, foreign language training, and availability of water supply.

Customer Service

A significant number of respondents who have stayed in visitor accommodation establishments at the university have mentioned the customer service they received and observed throughout their stay. In a more specific response stated by SQR-1028, projecting a good smile is a significant body language to show guests the strong desire to serve them. The respondent also added that employees must also have a service uniform to set branding quality and since uniforms can also set standards, apart from helping guests easily identify accommodation staff. This can drive guest loyalty, ensure an enhanced customer retention, and increase the general profitability of the accommodation (Mandlik, 2023).

This implies that effective relay of services to guests guarantees an increased overall experience. Confidently wearing a service uniform, added by a small curve on the face, can significantly make a difference; hence, this must be a constant element to make guests feel wholeheartedly welcomed.

Housekeeping Services

Another worth-noting remark expressed by several respondents is the housekeeping services in the visitor accommodation establishments of MMSU. While rooms have been spotless and room amenities are conveniently arranged during their stay, a hotel staff prepared to attend to housekeeping-related guest needs may be considered. Moreover, SQR-1051 said that cleanliness must always be observed not only inside the rooms but also in common areas like parking lots, common comfort rooms, hallways, and dining areas.

Bhatnagar and Nim (2019) elaborated in their study on the impact of housekeeping services on customer satisfaction that the housekeeping department is one of the crucial departments of a hotel. Their job to keep inventory and maintain the upkeep of all rooms and public areas is one of the major roles they must ace for the efficient conduct of the accommodation’s daily operations.

This shows the importance of housekeeping in accommodation establishments, considering them one of the backbones of this industry. Many accommodation establishments operate with the belief that they create a home away from home, and maintaining cleanliness and orderliness is an integral part of that. This then further reveals that regardless of the star-rating of an accommodation, it still must exude a 5-star service.

Emergency Preparedness

With how unpredictable the world is, the safety, security, and well-being of guests and workers must be a top priority. As suggested by SQR-1030, first-aid kits, emergency kits, and medicines must be visible and readily available in the public areas of the accommodation establishments. Another respondent also added that awareness of fire exits, maps, and directories must also be raised in case of emergencies.

Albattat et al. (2013) highlighted that safety and security are the top important issues for tourists, and in fact, the first aspect they consider is being free from any hazards whenever they are traveling. It concluded that all forms of accommodations must be able to respond to both internal and external hazards to ensure the safety of guests.

MMSU accommodation establishments, despite being a few meters away from the hospital, must give importance to equipping its workers to provide first aid treatment in addition to the presence and availability of kits. The university must show commitment to creating safe environments through staff training, workshops, and education. Perhaps conducting earthquake drills to ensure a regular reinforcement preparedness can be done. This will definitely set the university's accommodations apart from those of other accommodation providers.

Sustainable Practices

In connection with the world's unpredictable occurrences, the hotel industry must achieve the right balance of the three pillars of sustainable development. According to SQR-1004, green initiatives can be employed by the university. Transforming into having green programs, such as the use of energy-saving lightbulbs, adopting recycling projects and investing in green infrastructure like the use of solar panels, can be a good way to promote sustainability. The respondent added that, with the lack of water supply in the university accommodations, MMSU may consider harnessing rainwater to have available water during the summer season.

Sarode and Aleckal (2019) expressed the need to innovate sustainable practices in the hospitality industry. They added that one can create added value for all stakeholders while concurrently reducing environmental impact. Initiatives like this will enable hotels to adopt advanced ideas, enhance service procedures, improve levels of operational efficiency, meet customer needs, achieve profitability, and maintain competitive advantages in rapidly changing markets.

While adopting green initiatives can be expensive at first, it will help the accommodation establishments, especially the university, save a lot more in the long run. Aside from reducing harmful impacts on the environment, the university can also create a better brand reputation and competitive advantage through this.

Accessibility for Differently-abled Individuals

The presence of three different accommodation establishments at MMSU only shows that the university receives a number of visitors to cater, from the university visitors to ordinary tourists and travelers. MMSU is no exempt in catering persons with disabilities and "having ramps, higher level toilets, grab rails, parking space for handicap, ang a lot more" were suggested by SQR-1018.

Adegbola and Folajimi (2023) emphasized that differently-abled persons also want to fully integrate in the society, however, accessibility is crucial. Their study on hotel accessibility to people on wheelchair necessitates the need for accommodation establishments to reevaluate their facilities if these are PWD-friendly.

This provides the need to reassess the infrastructures built to become more inclusive, regardless of the person's

capacity. Once addressed, it will give the older people and the disabled to have equal recreational opportunities.

Foreign Language Training

Ever since Mariano Marcos State University has gained traction due to several international awards and recognitions, many Philippine and international universities, agencies, and corporations have inked Memoranda of Agreement with the institution. Whenever partnerships are forged, the university hosts the partner agency and houses them in the visitor accommodation establishments. While the majority come from the officials of universities and colleges, a considerable number of foreign individuals, such as representatives of international embassies, heads and officials of international universities, and even faculty and student exchange visitors, stay at the MMSU Hostel, University Review Center, or University Mansion.

SQR-1052 has conveyed that while it is not required for front desk officers to become bilingual or multilingual, a basic knowledge of common verbal greetings can be learned by university frontliners. This does not only serve as a competitive advantage for the accommodations operating in the global hospitality setting but also heightens customer satisfaction.

Learning a language other than Filipino can be an important hard skill in the hospitality industry. Having ample knowledge of conversing in English, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and other languages spoken by foreign MMSU partners will benefit employees in understanding customer needs and providing customer service. This will then strengthen or build rapport with guests from varying backgrounds, which can result in exceeding customer expectations.

Tziora et al. (2016) eloquently illustrated in their study that language barriers can block the hospitality industry's long-term success. It was also stressed that as the global market of tourists and tourism employees increases, so does the demand for high-quality foreign languages for tourism specialized skills. Hence, there is a need for basic foreign language lectures and education.

Availability of Water Supply

The MMSU Hostel, being situated along the busy road at the heart of the City of Batac is one of the sought-after budget-friendly accommodations in the city, most especially for visitors of the university. However, comments revolving its facilities such as shower rooms and restrooms were mentioned.

Several respondents specifically mentioned about the lack of water supply in rooms. SQR-1008 said that "water in the shower sometimes is not okay," with SQR-1014 citing that the "waterflow in the hostel [was] bad" during their stay. These comments from the respondents are closely attached to the dimension under Tangibles with the statement on having visually appealing physical facilities like chairs, desks, public toilets, and other tourist necessities.

It can be noted that there really is a water supply problem in the City of Batac (Climate Change Commission, 2023), that MMSU Hostel, other accommodation establishments and colleges in the university, even the agricultural sectors are not spared from this. Based on the study of Beshir, A. et al. (2024), on the assessment of customer satisfaction with the water supply system, it revealed that failure of water supply systems can have a severe influence on the level of satisfaction of users. Moreover, Kim, H. and Bachman, J. (2019) also stated that examining customer perceptions on restaurant restroom cleanliness, including provision of clean water, can impact their satisfaction and intent to return.

This implies the need for the tourism operating sectors to note that even the ancillary services, such as comfort rooms, including other facilities that can provide water supply, can impact a visitor's level of satisfaction, and more importantly their revisiting.

Table 4. Strategies to be Adopted to Improve the Service Quality of MMSU Accommodation Establishments

Dimensions for Improvement	Strategies	Detailed Activities	Output	Responsible Unit/Person
Reliability	Customer Service Trainings	Annual customer service training must be extended to accommodation employees to strengthen motivation and increase morale among accommodation employees	Increased product/service awareness	Human Resources Office
			Effective and efficient delivery of services	
			Heightened customer service	
Responsiveness	Customer Response/ Proactively Attending to Guest Needs	Detailed review on the products/services of the accommodation establishment to be familiar with the offerings	Confidence in handling customer queries and complaints	Chief of Accommodations
	Housekeeping Training	Annual provision of a training on housekeeping for accommodation employees to be knowledgeable and be updated about excellent hotel practices	Optimized personalization of customer service	Human Resources Office
			Assured of having an environment that is spot-free and is conducive for guests	
			Heightened guest satisfaction	
	Develop standard procedures of all processes	A structured Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the accommodation processes must be established to ensure consistency, accuracy and efficiency of all work procedures	A set Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)	Chief of Accommodations, Human Resources Office (in collaboration with Tourism and Hospitality Management Department)
			Improved work efficiency and a smoother flow of transactions	
Assurance	Emergency Preparedness/ Strict Imposition of Safety Measures	An updated emergency plan and a regular conduct of trainings on safety procedures must be done by all accommodation employees	Accommodation employees will have the confidence in providing solutions to guest problems	Chief of Accommodations, Human Resources Office (in collaboration with University Infirmary/ Nursing Department)
		Safety protocols must be visible and communicated to all visiting and staying guests	Trustworthy and reliable accommodation employees	
	Sustainable Practices	Green practices must be adapted by the University	Better brand reputation and	Chief of Accommodation

		such as the use of energy-saving lightbulbs, adopting recycling projects and investing in green infrastructure like the use of solar panels and equipment used to harness rainwater to have available water during the summer season	image for the University	and PPDO
			Energy-efficient practices and significant cost reductions in operations	
Empathy	Foreign Language Training	Basic training of common verbal greetings in various languages (English, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, and other languages spoken by foreign MMSU partners) must be learned by university frontliners for them to be equipped with a special hard skill	A more in-depth understanding of customer needs	Chief of Accommodations and Human Resources Office
			Higher level of satisfaction	
			Building rapport and a strengthened relationship with guests	
	Professional and Personality Development Workshops	A workshop on professional and personality development workshops must be conducted for all accommodation employees	A better customer care and a more personalized touch of service	Chief of Accommodations and Human Resources Office
Tangibles	Inspection of Physical Facilities	Monthly inspection of physical facilities must be accorded to assure safety and security among guests and employees	Guaranteed safe and secure environment	Chief of Accommodation, accommodation employees, and PPDO
		Construction and installment of differently-abled facilities and necessities within the accommodation premises	Amenities and facilities and in good working condition	
			Seamless guest experience	
			Inclusive recreational infrastructures	

SUMMARY

Generally, this study focused on determining the service quality of the Mariano Marcos State University accommodation establishments categorizing them into non-visitor accommodations and visitor accommodations. Non-visitor accommodations include Student Residence Dormitory, Ladies and Men's Dormitory, and MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall. On the other hand, visitor accommodations include University Mansion, University Review Center, and MMSU Hostel.

Descriptive and development research design employing the quantitative and qualitative approach of research design were utilized. A survey questionnaire was used to gather data. It was then tabulated, interpreted, and has provided implications to the study. The first part contained the demographic profile of the respondents and the

second part contained a pair of 25 expectation and perception questions. Additionally, a comment box was added for each component to capture the five dimensions of service quality. The researcher conducted the study within the Mariano Marcos State University. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling. The quantitative part of responses was recorded and interpreted on a 5-point Likert Scale. As to the qualitative part of the study, comments and suggestions were interpreted through thematic analysis.

The results were analyzed through a 5-norm of interpretation. Data were described and interpreted by utilizing frequency count, percentage, and mode.

CONCLUSION

Non-Visitor Accommodation Establishments

Majority of the respondents reside in the province of the Ilocos Norte. Their ages range from 18-27. Mostly are male. They have an income below 10,957 because majority are students. Their civil status is single. The respondents were dominated by those who are residing in the Ladies and Men's Dormitory.

Among all the SERVQUAL components, there was a negative gap recorded which implies that the respondents staying in the non-visitor accommodations are dissatisfied in all aspects.

The highest recorded gap was on Tangibles with 1.029. The occupants' expectations were not met in terms of the accommodation establishments' surroundings. The physical facilities are not regularly maintained such as tables and chairs, public toilets, and other necessities. Emergency needs such as facemasks, and hand sanitizers were not widely available at all times. There are no information materials and information centers that can cater to their needs at any time.

The second highest gap recorded was on the aspect of Reliability equivalent to 0.897. Expectations are greater than the Perceptions which means that occupants are dissatisfied. The non-visitor accommodation establishments have difficulty in solving problems, providing expected services promptly, and services rendered are not accurate.

The third dimension of SERVQUAL is Assurance. Likewise, it is the third recorded highest gap among the components with a gap of 0.89. The quality that the respondents have on their mind was not met by the non-visitor accommodation personnels. Trustworthiness, security, safety, courtesy, and assurance were not felt by the respondents during their stay at the accommodation.

Another negative gap was noted under the dimension of Responsiveness which is equal to 0.785. Occupants were not given proper orientation of the dos and don'ts in the accommodation establishments. Willingness

to help was not seen among the employees. Occupants have expected that employees were proactive in helping them with their inquiries, feedback, and clarifications regarding the accommodation. Moreover, queries were not properly addressed.

The lowest gap recorded was on the Empathy. However, there is still a negative gap equal to 0.762. As empathy is a critical interpersonal and societal role, there was a high on expectation on receiving personalized attention to each of the occupants most especially in their special needs. The occupants were expecting all kinds of cooperation in terms of their safety, security, and satisfaction.

Respondents were also asked to raise concerns and elicit suggestions based on their experiences at the MMSU accommodation establishments. Responses were grouped into non-visitor accommodations and visitor accommodations.

Responses from the occupants of non-visitor accommodations, namely, Student Residence Dormitory, Ladies and Men's Dormitory, and MMSU Magnolia Residence Hall, revolved around the use of cooking equipment, occupancy level, presence of hygiene essentials, and active provision of customer response. These suggest that the university must take into account both the safety and convenience of its residents. With the majority of

occupants being students, employees of the university, and their families, customer service must likewise be provided to them. Providing utmost care to the primary stakeholders of the university will not only increase the satisfaction level of the boarders but also significantly enhance the positive image and impact of the university.

Corrective actions must take place in the Mariano Marcos State University Non-Visitor Accommodation Establishments to address the concerns in all dimensions of the SERVQUAL Model that will result to the elimination of gap or a positive gap where in Perceptions are higher than the Expectations.

Visitor Accommodation Establishments

Majority of the respondents that stayed at least an overnight at any visitor accommodation establishment are from outside of Ilocos Norte but within the Philippines. Their age range is from 28-43. The respondents were dominated by female who are employed. They belong to the Lower Middle Income class with a monthly income amounting to Php. 21,914- Php. 43,828. A greater number of the respondents are post graduates and single. They stayed at the University Mansion in the months of October-December.

Unlike the responses from the Non-visitor Accommodations which in all dimensions have a negative gap, the Visitor Accommodations posed more favorable results in three dimensions specifically Reliability, Responsiveness, and Assurance. On the other hand, there is a minimal negative gap in terms of Empathy and Tangibles.

The highest recorded negative gap is on Tangibles which is equivalent to 0.163. Similar to the non-visitor accommodation responses which has the highest negative gap on the Tangibles, respondents from the visitor accommodations were dissatisfied in terms of the environment and accommodation establishments' surroundings. There is a need to improve the physical facilities such as its tables, chairs, public toilets, and other necessities. Emergency needs such as facemasks and hand sanitizers were not widely available. Although, there is a front office department intended for each visitor accommodation establishment, desk officers was only found occasionally.

Another negative gap recorded is in terms of Empathy amounting to 0.07. Personalized attention given to each visitor matters as reflected on the results of both non-visitor and visitor accommodations. Special needs of the visitors need to be addressed with utmost cooperation from the employees. Employees should also be proactive when it comes to the necessities of visitors during their stay and must understand them in terms of their safety, security, and most importantly, employees' goal should be the visitors' satisfaction.

In terms of Assurance, there is no gap recorded. Meaning, Expectation is equivalent to Perception. Thus, respondents are satisfied. Employees, therefore, are trustworthy. There are no corrective actions that must be taken in terms of Assurance. However, there is a need to maintain the visitor accommodation establishments' performance when it comes to this dimension.

There are positive gaps recorded in both Reliability and Responsiveness equivalent to 0.037 and 0.015, respectively. The respondents' expectations were exceeded in terms of the two dimensions mentioned. It can be concluded that they were satisfied. In terms of Reliability, employees have provided services as expected and sincere interest in solving problems encountered upon visit was observed among them. They have made sure to deliver services right the first time and have maintained error-free records. In the Responsiveness dimension, employees have notified and reminded the visitors of the dos and don'ts. Services were prompt and there was willingness among them to help in securing documents needed before and during their stay. Inquiries were handled properly. These practices of the visitor accommodation establishments must be maintained and must continually improve to widen the positive gap and assure satisfaction whenever there are visitors.

Moreover, more substantial comments were obtained for the visitor accommodations. These accommodations are the University Mansion, University Review Center, and MMSU Hostel. Comments and suggestions were on customer service, delivery of housekeeping services, foreign language training, and the existence of an active emergency response. It is highly encouraged for the university to reinforce training among its accommodation employees, as they are considered to be the frontliners. Moreover, accessibility for

differently-abled individuals and the continuous availability of water supply were also noted. Apart from focusing on the people, the university should also consider improving its ancillary services. These may be considered extras, but being inclusive and empathetic to the needs of guests will provide equal opportunities. Lastly, visible sustainable accommodation practices were also suggested. With rising environmental problems, the university may implement sustainable green practices to mitigate potential problems and promote a favorable image in the community.

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