Hotel attributes, guest experiences, and satisfaction among DOT-Accredited Mabuhay accommodation establishments: A case in the Caraga Region

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Abstract

The study investigated respondents' demographic profiles, hotel attributes, guest experiences, and satisfaction, and then it was tested to determine the significant differences in responses based on various profiles. The researcher employed a quantitative method and a descriptive research design. Data was collected from 379 respondents who had stayed overnight in MAEs. The instrument used for data collection was adapted from four different studies. The statistical tests utilized included the Shapiro-Wilk test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, and Mann-Whitney U-test. The study found that most respondents were married millennial males aged 23-42, with an income range of ₱15,001.00 to ₱20,000.00, and were college graduates. Most respondents valued the human element of hotel attributes, suggesting a need for personalized service. In terms of guest experience, respondents prioritized emotional-related experiences and guest security, indicating a shift towards experiential hospitality. Regarding guest satisfaction, the locational benefits of the MAEs were highly favored, highlighting the importance of strategic location. The analysis examines differences in hotel attribute perceptions of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments based on guest profile variables, providing valuable insights for hotel management. Age significantly affects the Human Clue Factor, and income influences the Mechanic Clue Factor, while civil status, sex, and education show no significant differences in their response. In terms of guest experiences and satisfaction, only age, income, and educational attainment influence certain aspects, with most variables showing no significant differences, offering a comprehensive understanding of guest satisfaction drivers.

Keywords: customer experience, hospitality, hotel, personalized service, service quality

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1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the hospitality and tourism industry, the emphasis on guest experiences and satisfaction has never been more crucial. This shift is propelled by guests' changing expectations, diverse demands, and fierce competition among service providers. It is widely acknowledged that the attributes of a hotel and the experiences it provides play a pivotal role in shaping guest satisfaction. A study by Alrawadieh and Law (2019) indicates that factors such as the quality of hotel facilities, the cleanliness of rooms, and amenities significantly contribute to positive guest experiences. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of staff behavior, highlighting that friendly and helpful staff are associated with higher guest satisfaction levels. The guest experience, however, extends beyond the physical aspects of the hotel. Intangible elements like personalized service, efficient problem resolution, and the emotional connection the hotel staff fosters significantly influence guest satisfaction (Le et al., 2020). These findings underscore the need to exceed basic expectations to create memorable and meaningful experiences.

This study is grounded in an array of theoretical perspectives on service quality, customer experience, and customer satisfaction. First, it leans on the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which examines the gap between guests' expectations and actual experiences across five crucial dimensions: assurance, responsiveness, tangibles, reliability, and empathy. This framework has been instrumental in identifying areas for service quality improvement, leading to enhanced guest satisfaction in the hotel industry (Wąsowicz-Zaborek, 2023; Athanasopoulou et al., 2023). However, this particular study does not explicitly measure the gap between expected and perceived experiences among hotel guests. Building on Chepngetich et al.'s (2019) work, which explored service dimensions within hotels, this study identifies three primary elements - human, mechanic, and functional - closely aligned with SERVQUAL's dimensions. These elements encompass staff interactions (assurance and responsiveness), physical hotel aspects (tangibles), and the fulfillment of promises and attention to individual guest needs (empathy and reliability), emphasizing the holistic nature of the guest experience.

The growth of the hospitality and tourism sector is closely tied to the evolution of guest experiences, as evidenced by research from Zhang et al. (2023). Innovations like the sharing economy have transformed these experiences, underscoring the importance of co-creation and hospitality (Lee & Chuang, 2021; Mody et al., 2019). The concept of the experience economy, introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999) and adapted by Gubta & Verinita (2020), underscores the significance of creating memorable experiences. This framework suggests that while educational experiences may not directly impact customer satisfaction, aspects like entertainment, aesthetics, and escapism are crucial. Integrating these elements into hotel attributes can significantly enhance guest satisfaction, creating unique and memorable experiences. This approach is in line with recent studies by Şeker & Unur (2022), Akel & Çakir (2022), and Chang & Chiu (2023), which highlight the need for distinctive guest experiences as a pathway to increased satisfaction in the hospitality sector.

Furthermore, service attributes like hotel appearance, staff demeanor, and location impact guest satisfaction, as evidenced by Zhao et al. (2024), who employed the Kano model to categorize product features by their influence on satisfaction. Their research suggests that exceeding basic needs with innovative amenities or personalized touches significantly enhances guest satisfaction, while minor details may have negligible impact. This highlights the importance of tailoring services to meet diverse guest preferences, including accommodating family or adult-oriented needs (Chang & Chiu, 2023). Hotel attributes, both tangible and intangible, lay the foundation for guest experiences (Yen & Tang, 2019). When thoughtfully designed and implemented, these attributes can foster a sense of personalization, contributing to a more positive and memorable stay for guests (Lei et al., 2024).

The discourse on customer satisfaction theories, especially concerning perceived value, reveals the significant impact of functional, emotional, and social values on guests' revisit intentions, marking perceived value as a cornerstone of the hospitality industry (Ghorbani et al., 2023; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022). Despite the DOT's stringent accreditation standards (DOT, 2021) aiming to guarantee high-quality guest experiences, feedback from platforms like TripAdvisor.com points to guest dissatisfaction in several areas, including room conditions, cleanliness, and service quality. This discrepancy underscores the ongoing need for improvement in maintaining and enhancing guest satisfaction, particularly considering the unique challenges faced by the hospitality industry compared to product-based organizations, due to the intangible nature of services (Ali et al., 2021).

This dissertation seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining the hotel attributes that crucially influence guest experiences and satisfaction within the Caraga Region's Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs). By analyzing the interconnections between hotel attributes, guest experiences, and satisfaction, this study aims to provide actionable insights and strategic recommendations to the Department of Tourism – Caraga and the Caraga-Agusan-Butuan Allied Hotels and Restaurants Association (CABAHARA). The goal is to align MAE services with guest preferences better, thereby elevating guest satisfaction and fostering sustainable hospitality development in the region. This study investigates the complex relationships among hotel attributes, guest experiences, and satisfaction within the DOT-accredited MAEs in the Caraga Region, encompassing five provinces. The study focuses on 37 establishments, including inns, guesthouses, hostels, and suites, that have been operating for at least three years and have 5 to 30 rooms. It is important to note that associating these establishments with motels can lead to stigma and stereotyping as "short-time hotels" (www.gmanetwork.com, 14 February 2020), which presented challenges in approaching and securing respondents' participation.

Objectives of the Study - This study analyzed how specific hotel attributes and guest experiences at DOT-accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments impact overall satisfaction. Specifically, the study described the demographic profile of respondents among these establishments, considering factors such as age, sex, civil status, education level, and income. It further determined the key hotel attributes, including human, mechanic, and functional clue factors. It assessed the guest experience in terms of atmospherics, emotional-related experiences, customer-to-customer interaction, and guest security. Moreover, it evaluated guest satisfaction based on factors like enjoyment, economic benefits, amenities, and locational benefits. Lastly, the study tested the significant differences in responses based on various profile variables.

2. Method

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the research approach employed in this study, encompassing research design, participant selection, data collection, analysis techniques, and ethical considerations, all essential for ensuring the rigor and trustworthiness of the study's findings.

Research Design - This research adapted a descriptive-correlational design (Borbon & Ylagan, 2022), commonly used in tourism research, to explore hotel attributes, guest experience, and satisfaction in DOT-accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments within the Caraga Region. A quantitative methodology (Basias & Pollalis, 2018) was implemented, utilizing questionnaires distributed across various establishments to gather representative data. Subsequently, quantitative techniques, such as regression analysis, were employed to uncover patterns, averages, and potential causal links among the variables of interest (Catapang & Ylagan, 2022).

Participants of the Study - This study specifically targets guests over 18 years old who have stayed in DOT-accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs) within the Caraga Region in the past six months (DOT, 2024). A sample size of 379 was determined using the Raosoft calculator, considering a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence level, and a 50% response distribution. The research focuses on 48 MAEs identified as inns, hostels, guesthouses, etc., that have been operating for at least three years and have a capacity of 5 to 30 rooms (DOT, 2024). These criteria align with O'Neill (2013) for evaluating hotel performance and ensure a robust

dataset for analysis (Ye et al., 2019).

Data Collection Instrument - The study utilized adapted instruments with high internal consistency (Cronbach's α > .70), exceeding the recommended level (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994 as cited in Kennedy, 2022; Hair et al., 2014, 2017; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). The first part, adapted from Mody et al. (2017), focused on demographics (Cronbach's α: .84 to .93). The second, from Chepngetich et al. (2019), assessed hotel attributes (Cronbach's α: .83 to .97), highlighting HCF's influence on buying behavior. The third, from Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown (2019), examined guest experience (Cronbach's α: .81 to .92), emphasizing the environment's impact. The fourth, from Tussyadiah (2016), assessed guest satisfaction (Cronbach's α: .87 to .93), revealing key factors. Content validity was ensured through consultations with experts. A pilot test on ≤ 10% of the sample, excluding them from the main study, confirmed reliability (α = 0.910 to 0.957, except amenities at α = 0.862)

Data Gathering Procedure - The Caraga Region's accommodation sector has witnessed significant growth, with 48 Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs), some dating back to 1989 and a notable increase in 2019 (DOT, 2024). These MAEs average 14 rooms and accommodate 749 guests monthly at a 70% occupancy rate (GlobalData, 2023; Monzon, 2023). Data collection involved securing permission from the CABAHARA President and obtaining guest numbers from the DOT (DOT, 2024). The researcher conducted site visits, personal check-ins, and face-to-face surveys from February to May 2024, traveling extensively across the region. Due to constraints in on-site surveys, trained enumerators administered questionnaires, ensuring respondents met the criteria. The researcher also surveyed individuals in public areas who had stayed at MAEs. Collected data was then processed, analyzed, and interpreted.

Data Analysis - The study used a validated survey questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015) and descriptive statistical tools (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). Demographic data was analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages. Weighted mean scores were calculated for each indicator within the major variables and interpreted using Best and Kahn's (2006) criteria. Due to non-normal data distribution, non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H) were employed to assess satisfaction variations across demographic groups. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient identified relationships between factors. Finally, regression analysis quantified the impact of variables on overall satisfaction.

Ethical Consideration - Ethical considerations, guided by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), were central to this research. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, with data securely stored to protect participant identities. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were provided with comprehensive information about the research and their rights. Respect for privacy was prioritized, particularly during on-site surveys. Data transparency and honesty were maintained, with proper attribution given to all sources. Collaboration with the DOT and accommodation establishments was crucial, and ethical oversight was ensured through compliance with institutional guidelines. Generative AI tools like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Gemini were employed to enhance the research and writing process (Srivastava & Agarwal, 2024; Meroua & Noudjoud, 2024), followed by thorough review and editing. AI-driven research platforms aided in validating literature. The author takes full responsibility for the final content.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the results of the respondents' demographic profiles, which revealed that most of the respondents who participated are in the Generation Y or the Millennials category, indicating 64.10% of the total 379 participants, whereas the least category of respondents is in the Baby Boomers, revealing only at 5.0%. This implies that millennials are attracted to budget hotels due to high spending power (Sikand & Singh, 2020). In addition, Hossny (2021) emphasized that millennials are a key target for the hospitality industry due to their unique perspectives and values, which align well with the digital market era, making them a significant niche market for hotels.

In terms of the distribution of the respondents' civil status and sex, the majority are married and male at

50.90% and 51.50%, respectively. The quality of amenities and services at budget hotels significantly influences the preferences of married male travelers. Research indicates that service quality plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction and loyalty (Rahma, 2016). Male business travelers prioritize business-related services and facilities, such as fax machines and suites, while valuing clean rooms and free local phone service like their female counterparts (McCleary, 2016). Additionally, the evaluation of indoor environmental quality (IEQ) in budget hotels, including factors like acoustic environment and indoor air quality, impacts guests' perceptions and ratings, with different types of customers having varying requirements for IEQ (Shen, 2021). Ultimately, providing high-quality services and amenities in budget hotels can enhance the overall experience for married male travelers, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 1
Frequency Table for the Respondent's Profile

Profile	Frequency (*f*)	Percentage (%)
AGE		
18-22 (Gen Z)	28	7.4
23-42 (Gen Y)	243	64.1
43-62 (Gen X)	89	23.5
Above 63 (Baby Boomers)	19	5.0
CIVIL STATUS		
Single	186	49.1
Married	193	50.9
SEX		
Male	195	51.5
Female	184	48.5
INCOME		
P 5,000.00 to P 10,000.00	46	12.1
P 10,001.00 to P 15,000.00	93	24.5
P 15,001.00 to P 20,000.00	101	26.6
P 20,001.00 to P 25,000.00	61	16.1
P 25,001.00 to P 30,000.00	32	8.4
P 30,001.00 to P 35,000.00	19	5.0
P 35,001.00 to P 40,000.00	9	2.4
Above P 40,000.00	18	4.7
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Grade School	7	1.8
High School	35	9.2
College Level	141	37.2
College Graduate	186	49.1
Graduate School	10	2.6

The respondents' demographic profile in terms of their income, the study revealed that the majority of the participants generated a monthly income between P 15,001.00 to P 20,000.00, which is 26.60%. Respondents earned P 10,001.00 to P 15,000.00 at 24.50%, while the least earned income was P 35,001.00 to P 40,000.00; only nine respondents were 2.4% of the total participants. However, what is worth noting is the distribution of the respondents earning above P 40,000.00, where 18 or 4.7% of the participants. Budget hotels cater to guests with different income profiles through various strategies. Research indicates that factors like monthly spending, frequency of staying, and lifestyle play crucial roles in determining guests' decisions to stay in budget hotels, with more prudent lifestyles correlating with a higher likelihood of choosing budget accommodations (Simangunsong, 2021).

Additionally, the budget hotel sector is highly segmented, offering different levels of services and amenities to cater to diverse customer needs and income levels. Also, technology significantly enhances customer satisfaction in budget hotels, with online reviews and booking websites being key sources for guests to evaluate and choose accommodations, influencing their overall satisfaction levels (Ahmad et al., 2019). Furthermore, older residents in budget hotels often experience socio-spatial interactions that contribute to their sense of community within these establishments, showcasing how budget hotels serve as temporary housing options for individuals with varying financial circumstances (Lewinson & Carrion, 2020).

Regarding the respondents' educational attainment, the highest classification is college graduate (49.1%) while the least is on grade school level (1.8%). Budget hotels ensure accessibility for guests with varying educational levels through a combination of strategies. Firstly, they utilize smart systems to control and monitor electronic facilities in rooms, allowing guests to choose services based on their needs and budget (Hutabarat et al., 2023). Secondly, they implement new hygiene measures post-COVID-19 to attract customers and ensure safety, though some measures may disappoint guests due to financial constraints and limited staff (Wei & Batra, 2021). Additionally, the adoption of Self-Service Technologies (SSTs) (i.e., online booking) in budget hotels enhances operational efficiency and guest engagement, catering to different educational backgrounds (Giousmpasoglou & Hua, 2020). These diverse approaches aim to make budget hotel facilities and services accessible to all guests, regardless of their educational backgrounds.

Table 2
Assessment on the Hotel Attributes

Dimensions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Human Clue Factor (HCF)	3.42	*Moderately Agree*	1
Mechanic Clue Factor (MCF)	3.32	*Moderately Agree*	3
Functional Clue Factor (FCF)	3.34	*Moderately Agree*	2
OVERALL MEAN	3.36	Moderately Agree	

Legend: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree, 2.50-3.49 = Moderately Agree, 3.50-4.49 = Agree, 4.50-5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 2 presents the overall mean of 3.36, indicating that, on average, respondents "Moderately Agree" with the hotel attributes across these three factors. This suggests a generally positive perception with potential for improvement of these attributes among guests of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs) in the Caraga Region. While each hotel attribute – HCF, MCF, FCF - is important on its own, their combined effect gives a holistic view of the MAE attributes that will lead to creating a memorable guest experience. Managers of MAEs must consider improving all three areas to achieve overall improvement of the hotel attributes. Research supports this, showing that aligning services, systems, facilities, and employee performance boosts guest satisfaction. A holistic approach that optimizes employee performance maintains high-quality facilities, and delivers exceptional services is essential for ensuring positive guest experiences and satisfaction in the hotel industry (Mursal et al., 2022).

Guests value the human touch most in their hotel experience, aligning with research emphasizing the significance of emotional engagement and personal interactions in the hospitality industry (Umasuthan et al., 2017). Warm and friendly staff significantly enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty, while respectful and polite interactions are fundamental to perceived service quality and customer satisfaction (Fernández-Amaya, 2022). In the accommodation sector, guest-employee interactions are key to service delivery, shaping customer perception and evaluation. Factors like staff attentiveness, warmth, respect, knowledge, and responsiveness are crucial, as the quality of staff performance is a critical determinant of overall customer satisfaction (Üngüren et al., 2021). Positive human interactions can significantly enhance the guest experience, increasing satisfaction (Szende & Dalton, 2021; Gold, 2024).

The Mechanic Clue Factor has the lowest mean score of 3.32, verbally interpreted as "Moderately Agree," and ranked third, suggesting that guests perceive some deficiencies in the physical environment. Guests find the hotel's layout somewhat confusing, the food and beverage services are nearly unsatisfactory, and the provided amenities are inadequate for their needs. This result is supported by various research indicating that the physical environment, including cleanliness and the condition of amenities, plays a significant role in guest satisfaction (Jang et al., 2018; Guest Experience, 2024). Cleanliness and hygiene are critical determinants of guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. Also, hotel layout and design significantly enhance the guest experience by making navigation easier (Becker, 1990, cited in Ying and Al-Khaled, 2023). While these attributes are still viewed positively, the relatively lower score suggests that there is room for improvement in maintaining high standards of cleanliness, functionality, and physical design to improve the hotel attributes of selected DOT-accredited MAEs.

Table 3

Assessment on Hotel Guest Experience

Dimensions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Atmospherics	3.31	*Moderately Agree*	4
Emotional-Related Experience	3.37	*Moderately Agree*	1.5
Customer-Customer Interaction	3.32	*Moderately Agree*	3
Guest Security	3.37	*Moderately Agree*	1.5
OVERALL MEAN	3.34	Moderately Agree	

Legend: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree, 2.50-3.49 = Moderately Agree, 3.50-4.49 = Agree, 4.50-5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows the overall mean of 3.34, interpreted as "Moderately Agree," indicating that hotel guests generally had a positive experience across various dimensions. This suggests that the MAEs in Caraga provide satisfactory service and environment, contributing to a generally positive guest experience. Research consistently shows that guest experience significantly influences satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Ko, 2018; Ilieva, 2023; Lončar, 2023; Xu, 2019). In the accommodation sector, factors such as room attributes, cleanliness, and host-guest interactions are crucial in shaping overall guest experience and satisfaction (Lončar, 2023; Xu, 2019). This is further supported by Ko's study (2018), which utilized big data analytics to enhance the understanding of the relationship between guest experience and satisfaction, revealing the various dimensions of guest experience and their impact on satisfaction. Ultimately, a positive guest experience leads to higher satisfaction and drives loyalty and positive recommendations (Ilieva, 2023).

The highest-ranked dimensions, Emotional-related Experience and Guest Security, both received a mean score of 3.37. This indicates that guests moderately agree that MAEs are addressing their emotional needs and security concerns, demonstrating a decent effort to create a welcoming atmosphere and ensure safety. However, there is room for improvement in enhancing the emotional experience and strengthening security protocols to elevate the overall guest experience further. Recent research challenges traditional views on emotions in customer experience (CX). Contrary to conventional wisdom, positive and negative emotions can coexist during consumption, and their outcomes are unpredictable (Manthiou et al., 2020). Furthermore, research on hotel safety and security has revealed that tourists' perceptions vary based on factors such as hotel classification and generational differences (Anichiti et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has further shaped these perceptions, with employees and customers expressing a positive view of implemented safety measures. Ensuring a secure environment through effective measures such as surveillance and secure access can lead to higher levels of guest experience (Chen et al., 2020; Llego et al., 2022).

Although guests moderately agree on the importance of the Atmospherics, with a mean score of 3.31 ranking it 4th, it is considered less critical compared to emotional and security aspects. However, research consistently highlights the significant impact of physical environment and Atmospherics on the overall guest experience. Studies have shown that hotel ambiance, interior-exterior design, and social environment positively affect guest experiences (James & Inyang, 2023). Moreover, a hotel's design, ambiance, and cleanliness significantly influence guest experience (Liu et al., 2024). While the score indicates moderate agreement on the importance of Atmospherics, there is room for enhancement. Improvements in areas such as lighting, decor, and scent could further elevate the overall guest experience by creating a more inviting and comfortable atmosphere (Lo & Yeung, 2020).

Table 4

Assessment on the Guest Satisfaction

Dimensions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Enjoyment	3.30	*Moderately Agree*	4
Economic Benefits	3.35	*Moderately Agree*	3
Amenities	3.38	*Moderately Agree*	2
Locational Benefits	3.40	*Moderately Agree*	1
OVERALL MEAN	3.36	Moderately Agree	

Legend: 1.00-1.49 = Strongly Disagree, 1.50-2.49 = Disagree, 2.50-3.49 = Moderately Agree, 3.50-4.49 = Agree, 4.50-5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 4 shows that the overall mean score of 3.36 indicates that guests moderately agree that they are satisfied with their experience at MAEs across all dimensions, suggesting a generally positive perception. However, this level of satisfaction is manageable, indicating areas for potential improvement. Enjoyment, economic benefits, amenities, and locational benefits all play crucial roles in influencing overall guest satisfaction. This suggests that enhancing these aspects could lead to a more positive and memorable experience for guests, increasing their satisfaction levels and the likelihood of recommending the establishment to others. Studies show that how guests feel during their hotel stay and the service they perceive play a big role in their overall satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021). In addition to factors like perceived value and convenience, sustainable initiatives in MAEs also contribute positively to the guest experience, particularly in areas such as value perception, service quality, and cleanliness (Sharrock et al., 2020). Furthermore, a MAE's location plays a crucial role in shaping guest experience, with accessibility to attractions, convenient transportation options, and the quality of the surrounding environment being key considerations (Yang et al., 2018). Finally, the availability of technology amenities (e.g., in-room amenities) and the perceived quality of service also significantly impact overall guest satisfaction (Vuković, 2023).

The highest-ranked dimension is Locational Benefits, with a mean score of 3.40, interpreted as "Moderately Agree," suggesting that guests are relatively more satisfied with the locational benefits than other dimensions. Locational benefits, including accessibility, convenience, and proximity to restaurants, are crucial for guest satisfaction. Most MAEs do not have an in-house restaurant; as such, guests prefer choosing MAEs near dining facilities to meet one of the human physiological needs – food. A study by DeFranzo (2022) highlights that location is critical to customer satisfaction, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sectors, where guests often prioritize convenience and accessibility when choosing accommodations. Understanding and improving locational benefits can significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty (CallMiner, 2017). Moreover, proximity to key attractions, public transportation, and dining options significantly influence guests' accommodation choices and overall satisfaction (Latinopoulos, 2020). Ultimately, the convenience and accessibility of the hotel's location can lead to a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for guests.

The lowest-ranked dimension is Enjoyment, with a mean score of 3.30, interpreted as "Moderately Agree." This suggests that while guests are generally satisfied with their Enjoyment, this aspect is perceived less positively than others, indicating an area where the hotel could potentially improve to enhance guest satisfaction further. The hotel's amenities and overall atmosphere were somehow not a pleasant experience for guests of some MAEs. This aligns with the findings of So et al. (2021), who state that Enjoyment is a critical component of overall satisfaction in the hospitality industry, encompassing various aspects such as entertainment options, recreational activities, and overall ambiance. Therefore, MAEs that focus on creating memorable and enjoyable experiences are more likely to achieve higher guest satisfaction and loyalty levels. Enhancing Enjoyment involves offering diverse activities and ensuring guests have a memorable and pleasurable stay (Vianna, 2022). Furthermore, collecting and analyzing feedback on Enjoyment can help identify specific areas for improvement, leading to higher overall satisfaction (Appinio, 2022).

Table 5

Differences of Responses on Hotel Attributes of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile Variables/ Hotel Attributes	H/U	P-Value	Interpretation
AGE			
Human Clue Factor	8.921	0.030	Significant
Mechanic Clue Factor	1.460	0.692	Not Significant
Functional Clue Factor	2.570	0.463	Not Significant
OVERALL	4.545	0.208	Not Significant
CIVIL STATUS			
Human Clue Factor	17309.000	0.546	Not Significant
Mechanic Clue Factor	17711.500	0.823	Not Significant
Functional Clue Factor	16463.500	0.162	Not Significant
OVERALL	17939.500	0.993	Not Significant

SEX			
Human Clue Factor	17538.000	0.705	Not Significant
Mechanic Clue Factor	16601.500	0.207	Not Significant
Functional Clue Factor	17566.000	0.725	Not Significant
OVERALL	17221.500	0.500	Not Significant
INCOME			
Human Clue Factor	3.539	0.831	Not Significant
Mechanic Clue Factor	15.933	0.026	Significant
Functional Clue Factor	6.845	0.445	Not Significant
OVERALL	7.915	0.340	Not Significant
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Human Clue Factor	5.816	0.213	Not Significant
Mechanic Clue Factor	2.378	0.667	Not Significant
Functional Clue Factor	5.361	0.252	Not Significant
OVERALL	6.161	0.187	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 5 analyses differences in responses on hotel attributes of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs) when grouped according to profile variables (age, civil status, sex, income, and educational attainment). The attributes are categorized into three factors: Human Clue Factor (HCF), Mechanic Clue Factor (MCF), and Functional Clue Factor (FCF). The table displays the H/U statistics, p-values, and interpretations of significance.

The analysis reveals that age significantly affects the HCF, with a p-value of 0.030, indicating that different age groups perceive the human elements of hotel service differently. This suggests that older and younger guests value human interactions differently, potentially due to varying expectations and experiences with guest service. Age-related differences in service expectations are well-documented; older guests often value personalized service and human interaction more than younger guests, who may prioritize efficiency and technology (Kim et al., 2021). However, there are no significant differences in the perceptions of Mechanic Clue and Functional Clue Factors based on age, with p-values of 0.692 and 0.463, respectively, and the overall p-value is 0.208, indicating no significant overall impact.

When examining civil status, the analysis shows no significant differences in perceptions of hotel attributes. This suggests that marital or relationship status does not significantly influence how guests perceive hotel services' human, mechanic, or functional aspects. While civil status can influence guest behavior, it appears to have little impact on evaluating hotel services, possibly because basic service expectations remain consistent regardless of civil status (Malik et al., 2020). Similarly, the analysis indicates no significant differences in perceptions of hotel attributes based on sex. This suggests that male and female guests have similar evaluations of the hotel services' human, mechanic, and functional aspects. Although some studies suggest differences in travel preferences and priorities between men and women, these differences do not appear to extend to evaluating hotel service attributes (Spoerr, 2021).

Income significantly affects the Mechanic Clue Factor, with a p-value of 0.026, indicating that different income groups perceive hotel service's mechanic aspects (e.g., facilities, equipment) differently. Higher-income guests might have higher expectations for hotel amenities' quality and functionality than lower-income guests. Income influences expectations and satisfaction levels, particularly regarding the quality of facilities and amenities, as higher-income individuals often have higher standards and expectations for service quality (Koronios et al., 2020). The Human Clue Factor and Functional Clue Factor show no significant differences with p-values of 0.831 and 0.445, respectively, and the overall p-value is 0.340, indicating no significant overall impact.

Regarding educational attainment, the analysis shows no significant differences in perceptions of hotel attributes. This suggests that the level of education only significantly influences how guests perceive the human, mechanic, or functional aspects of hotel services. Although educational attainment can influence guest behavior and preferences, it may not significantly impact the evaluation of service quality in hotels (Sirgy et al., 2000).

Table 6

Differences of Responses on Hotel Guest Experience of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile Variables/ Hotel Guest Experience	H/U	P-Value	Interpretation
AGE			
Atmospherics	3.501	0.321	Not Significant
Emotional Related	1.388	0.708	Not Significant
Customer-Customer Interaction	3.218	0.359	Not Significant
Guest Security	2.863	0.413	Not Significant
OVERALL	4.122	0.249	Not Significant
CIVIL STATUS			
Atmospherics	17537.000	0.698	Not Significant
Emotional Related	16478.000	0.166	Not Significant
Customer-Customer Interaction	16554.500	0.189	Not Significant
Guest Security	17225.500	0.495	Not Significant
OVERALL	16705.500	0.243	Not Significant
SEX			
Atmospherics	17791.500	0.889	Not Significant
Emotional Related	17515.000	0.689	Not Significant
Customer-Customer Interaction	17671.500	0.800	Not Significant
Guest Security	16965.500	0.358	Not Significant
OVERALL	17371.500	0.594	Not Significant
INCOME			
Atmospherics	13.075	0.070	Not Significant
Emotional Related	10.902	0.143	Not Significant
Customer-Customer Interaction	11.646	0.113	Not Significant
Guest Security	6.546	0.478	Not Significant
OVERALL	10.106	0.183	Not Significant
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Atmospherics	1.039	0.904	Not Significant
Emotional Related	5.953	0.203	Not Significant
Customer-Customer Interaction	10.103	0.039	Significant
Guest Security	5.662	0.226	Not Significant
OVERALL	2.685	0.612	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

Table 6 analyses differences in responses on hotel guest experiences of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments when grouped according to profile variables (age, civil status, sex, income, and educational attainment). The guest experiences are categorized into four factors: Atmospherics, Emotional Related, Customer-Customer Interaction, and Guest Security. The table displays the H/U statistics, p-values, and interpretations of significance. The analysis shows no significant differences in hotel guest experiences across different age groups for all dimensions (atmospherics, emotional-related, customer-customer interaction, and guest security), with p-values well above the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that age does not significantly influence how guests perceive their experiences in these establishments. However, research on hotel preferences reveals mixed findings regarding the influence of age. While some studies suggest age affects hotel selection factors (Uca et al., 2017) and room design preferences (Bogicevic et al., 2018), others found no significant moderating effect of age on behavioral intentions toward online booking (Chang et al., 2019).

Similarly, civil status does not significantly affect hotel guest experiences, as indicated by the non-significant p-values across all dimensions. This implies that whether guests are single, married, or in another civil status category, their experiences regarding atmospherics, emotional aspects, interactions with other customers, and security do not differ significantly. Furthermore, while civil status can influence travel motives and preferences, it does not appear to significantly impact the core experience dimensions evaluated in this study (Saputra & Djumarno, 2021). Research on hotel guest experiences and demographics reveals mixed findings. For instance, while age, gender, and marital status significantly affect hotel room prices' perceived value and fairness, they do not impact willingness to pay (Saputra & Djumarno, 2021). Moreover, positive interactions with fellow guests, hotel staff, and even local residents enhance the overall experience for hotel guests (Paulose & Shakeel, 2022).

The findings further reveal that guest experiences are not significantly influenced by sex. This indicates that both male and female guests tend to have comparable evaluations of the hotel's atmospherics, emotional aspects, interactions with other customers, and security measures. However, it is important to note that while sex may not directly impact overall guest experiences in this study, research suggests it can influence individual preferences and experiences related to specific hotel services. For example, studies have shown that both genders value service environment satisfaction, but males tend to prioritize service delivery satisfaction, while females focus more on service product satisfaction when considering loyalty to a hotel (Sosianika et al., 2021). While income levels do not significantly impact hotel guest experiences overall, the trend approaching significance for the atmospherics factor (H/U = 13.075, p = 0.070) suggests a potential difference in how different income groups perceive the ambiance and atmosphere of the hotel. This might be because higher-income guests tend to have higher expectations for the ambiance and overall atmosphere than lower-income guests. Furthermore, income can significantly influence expectations and perceptions of quality, especially concerning the atmospheric and aesthetic aspects of hotel experiences. Consequently, income also influences the perceived value and satisfaction of the hotel experience. Guests who perceive their experience as valuable and satisfactory are more likely to share positive reviews, which impacts the hotel's reputation through electronic word-of-mouth (Chao & Rashid, 2020).

Finally, the study found that educational attainment plays a significant role in shaping guest experiences, particularly when it comes to Customer-Customer Interactions (H/U = 10.103, p = 0.039). This suggests that guests with varying educational backgrounds may perceive and experience interactions with other customers differently. Those with higher education levels may have different expectations or preferences for social interactions within the hotel environment. This finding aligns with the understanding that educational attainment can influence social expectations and interaction styles. Higher education levels are often linked to stronger social and communication skills, impacting how individuals perceive and interact with fellow guests. In essence, guests with higher levels of education may indeed have distinct hotel experiences compared to those with lower educational levels. This disparity can be attributed to various factors, such as differing expectations, perceptions of service quality, and emotional responses to the hotel environment (Souki et al., 2023).

Table 7 analyses differences in responses on guest satisfaction of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs) when grouped according to profile variables (age, civil status, sex, income, and educational attainment). The guest satisfaction factors are categorized into four dimensions: Enjoyment, Economic Benefits, Amenities, and Locational Benefits. The table displays the H/U statistics, p-values, and interpretations of significance.

The analysis reveals a significant difference in overall satisfaction based on age (H/U = 8.005, p = 0.046), suggesting that different age groups experience varying satisfaction levels. Furthermore, although not statistically significant, the locational benefits factor approaches significance (H/U = 7.351, p = 0.062), hinting that age might influence how guests perceive the hotel's location and its advantages. While the analysis indicates that economic benefits and amenities do not significantly impact guest satisfaction, the potential link between satisfaction with the location and overall satisfaction (p = 0.062), along with the overall significant result (p = 0.046), underscores the role of certain factors in shaping overall guest satisfaction. These findings align with existing research, which shows that age can influence travel preferences and satisfaction levels. Older guests often prioritize comfort and convenience, while younger guests may value location and attraction accessibility (Bi & Kim, 2020). Additionally, research has shown that age significantly influences guest experience among older tourists, who prioritize service convenience, positively impacting their satisfaction (Bi & Kim, 2020).

The findings indicate that a guest's civil status, whether single or married, does not play a significant role in determining their overall satisfaction with the MAEs. This suggests that the core elements contributing to positive guest satisfaction, such as the quality of service, amenities, and overall atmosphere, are valued equally across different civil statuses. While it is true that one's civil status can shape one's travel motivations and preferences—for example, couples might seek romantic getaways while families prioritize child-friendly

facilities—these preferences do not seem to translate into significant differences in how satisfied they are with the fundamental services and benefits offered by the MAEs. This could imply that guests, regardless of their relationship status, have a baseline expectation of quality and service that, when met, results in comparable satisfaction levels. However, while civil status may not directly affect overall satisfaction, specific groups, like single female travelers, prioritize safety and security, highlighting the need for hotels to address these concerns (Zhou et al., 2024; Ghai & Chowdhri, 2022). Additionally, service quality and staff interactions significantly impact satisfaction, and single guests might have different expectations compared to married guests (Vuković et al., 2023), emphasizing the importance of personalized service.

Table 7
Differences of Responses on Guest Satisfaction of DOT-Accredited Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments when grouped according to Profile Variables

Profile Variables/ Guest Satisfaction	H/U	P-Value	Interpretation
AGE			
Enjoyment	4.431	0.219	Not Significant
Economic Benefits	4.959	0.175	Not Significant
Amenities	2.970	0.396	Not Significant
Locational Benefits	7.351	0.062	Not Significant
OVERALL	8.005	0.046	Significant
CIVIL STATUS			
Enjoyment	17112.000	0.429	Not Significant
Economic Benefits	16498.500	0.171	Not Significant
Amenities	17429.500	0.623	Not Significant
Locational Benefits	17366.000	0.581	Not Significant
OVERALL	17363.500	0.583	Not Significant
SEX			
Enjoyment	17340.000	0.571	Not Significant
Economic Benefits	17414.000	0.620	Not Significant
Amenities	16002.500	0.067	Not Significant
Locational Benefits	17697.500	0.818	Not Significant
OVERALL	17264.500	0.526	Not Significant
INCOME			
Enjoyment	8.450	0.295	Not Significant
Economic Benefits	14.201	0.048	Significant
Amenities	13.888	0.053	Not Significant
Locational Benefits	4.768	0.688	Not Significant
OVERALL	14.534	0.042	Significant
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Enjoyment	1.675	0.795	Not Significant
Economic Benefits	2.830	0.587	Not Significant
Amenities	3.707	0.447	Not Significant
Locational Benefits	1.292	0.863	Not Significant
OVERALL	1.247	0.870	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

The study reveals no significant differences in overall guest satisfaction when comparing male and female guests. This observation spans all the dimensions measured in the study, suggesting that both sexes experience similar levels of contentment with their hotel stay. This finding suggests that, despite having different motivations or priorities, both male and female guests ultimately seek and appreciate the same core elements in a hotel stay, such as a comfortable environment, convenient amenities, and high-quality service. Additionally, the result of this study aligns with research by Boto-García et al. (2021), indicating that women tend to prioritize the emotional aspects of their hotel experience, and when these needs are met, their overall satisfaction is likely to be higher. However, while overall guest satisfaction might not differ significantly based on sex, the study contradicts what Zakic et al. (2022) revealed in their research when it comes to the use of digital services in hotels. Their study showed a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels between men and women

regarding online reservations and social media interactions, suggesting varying expectations and experiences with digital interfaces.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed that economic benefits and overall satisfaction show significant differences based on income (H/U = 14.201, p = 0.048 and H/U = 14.534, p = 0.042, respectively). This suggests that guests with different income levels have varying perceptions of value and overall satisfaction, with higher-income guests often having elevated expectations for service quality and value for money. While income did not significantly affect satisfaction with enjoyment, amenities, or locational benefits, the findings underscore the importance of understanding how income influences guest expectations and satisfaction. Furthermore, Boto-García et al. (2021) support the notion that guests with higher income levels may have different expectations regarding value for money compared to those with lower incomes.

Lastly, there are no significant differences in guest satisfaction based on educational attainment across all factors, suggesting that the level of education does not significantly influence how guests perceive their overall satisfaction with the hotel's services and benefits. While educational attainment can influence travel behavior and preferences, it may not significantly impact the service quality evaluation in hotels, as fundamental expectations regarding service and satisfaction appear consistent across different educational levels. However, it is worth noting that some studies suggest that higher education levels are associated with increased satisfaction (Dewi et al., 2020).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found that most respondents are married millennial males aged 23-42, with an income range of ₱15,001.00 to ₱20,000.00, and are college graduates. They demonstrated moderate agreement across all three factors examined, particularly emphasizing the human clue factor. Furthermore, emotional-related experiences and guest security were prioritized as key aspects of their hotel experience.

Additionally, respondents showed moderate agreement across all dimensions, especially regarding satisfaction related to locational benefits. The analysis revealed that age significantly influenced their perception of the human clue factor, while income impacted their perception of the mechanic clue factor. Both factors significantly affected overall guest experience and satisfaction. In contrast, the guest experience remained largely consistent across demographic profiles, except for educational attainment, which influenced customer-customer interaction. Finally, the analysis showed no significant differences in individual satisfaction variables across profiles, but the overall satisfaction score varied significantly. Similarly, only economic benefits showed an individual significant difference in income, but overall satisfaction differed across income levels.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that Mabuhay Accommodation Establishments (MAEs) in the Caraga Region prioritize facility maintenance and upgrades, ensuring cleanliness, functionality, and aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, investing in comprehensive staff training programs to enhance interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, and local knowledge is also crucial. Additionally, tailoring services to meet the specific needs of different demographic groups is essential. Encouraging guest feedback through surveys and online reviews will help identify areas for improvement. Finally, future research could employ a mixed-method approach with larger sample size and interviews to evaluate better MAEs' hotel attributes, guest experience, and overall guest satisfaction.

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