

An empirical study on Service Quality of the Online Travel Agency customer's perspective

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Abstract – This study aims to explore on the CALABARZON region in terms of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The researcher used the quantitative research design among the 376 customers of online travel agencies in CALABARZON region using a survey. The results revealed that half of the respondents are employees and half are customers of OTA wherein majority of the respondents are Gen Y, female and single. There is a great extent of service quality among the online travel agencies in CALABARZON region especially in terms of empathy. It was found out that female respondents have higher perceptions on service quality, unmarried respondents have significantly higher response on service quality and Baby Boomers have significantly lower response on service quality of OTA Services. It was recommended for the Online Travel Agency to support the agent to look out for customers' needs in rendering services. It manifests empathy through sensitivity. The Online Travel Agency employee may exude empathy in its feature's sensitivity, effort and approachability. OTA managers may concentrate on timely handling of clients' fares, itinerary delivery, and the company's prompt service to customers via the internet, as well as designing a robust technical online system.

Keywords – Assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangibility and service quality

INTRODUCTION

Travel agencies is expected to manage and provide service quality to retain a competitive advantage. The impact of service provider' access to it and integration of customer information on travel agency companies are essential. In the face of shifting consumer trends, online travel agencies are looking for new revenue streams while ensuring quality service. Thus, the feeling of being welcomed and showing how the customer are important by showing the personnel empathy to each and every customer, it will become the pointing out towards satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, empathy for travel agency is very much important in travel agency to meet the customer's satisfaction and loyalty. The goal of every company is to maintain a long-term relationship with its customers and business partners. Customers' needs and demands should be recognized in order to acquire potential customers, and customer satisfaction has a significant impact on the entire business operation. As a result, for a successful business, it is critical for the organization to understand exactly what the customers require and how to gain loyalty.

The basic services of an online travel agency. Search services cover search for tourist products such as travel packages, hotels, means of transport, cruises, and tickets (air, boat, etc.). Booking services include booking of tourist products through special booking forms (online

or in a conventional way) and direct communication with the travel agency via e-mail. System management services which are optional and concern the travel agency are listed as 1) online introduction of tourist information, 2) updates, 3) collection of statistics, and 4) immediate customer service with automated notification on the course of their booking information [1].

Rosha and Kaur [2] described service quality as the perceived quality of a given service derived by the customer by comparing anticipated services against actual services they received. Tangibility refers to the appearance or ambience of the OTA's office (for example, a modern look) and its employees (like presentable employees). Reliability pertains to the sincerity of the OTA to get a swift resolution of a problem experienced by the customer. Responsiveness refers to the OTA's ability to understand the customer's needs and act upon them. Assurance is the quality that instills customer's confidence on the OTA due to the competence of the employees in handling the transactions with them. Empathy is the ability to provide individual attention to the customer and to ensure his/her satisfaction.

In this study, the service quality of online travel agencies in CALABARZON region in terms of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy was examined. The OTA's service performance in terms of customer satisfaction and

loyalty was analyzed. In the study conducted by Park et al., [3], affirms that the quality of OTAs which entice customers to book trips with them. Brick and mortar agencies were patronized by customers due to personal service, accurate knowledge of products and destinations, and fast and flexible service. In contrast, OTAs provided the following innovations: convenience, cheapest price, and familiarity. Park et al., [3] studied the dimensions of website quality which were ease of use, security/privacy, information/content, responsiveness, visual appeal, and fulfillment. They concluded that ease of use proved to be the most significant dimension of OTA's website quality. This was the choice of respondents, majority of whom were experts on internet use while 45% had three to six trips two years before the survey. Since, website quality affects not only return intentions and customer satisfaction but also an organization's profits, OTAs must innovate to make their websites attractive to customers and entice them to book their trips

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study generally aimed to explore the the service quality of online travel agencies in CALABARZON region in terms of Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. Furthermore, this study tested the significant difference on the responses on the service quality when grouped according to profile variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher used the quantitative research design. In the case of the present study, survey, and unstructured interview with online travel agency managers, supervisors and rank and file employees were also conducted to further enrich the information gathered. The respondents were the students, employees, professionals, and businessmen who are customers of OTAs. They were the 25-34 age group in the CALABARZON region IV-A. Respondents were those who have experiences with online travel agencies.

The researcher utilized the modified questionnaire based on the studies of Rosha and Kaur [2] and Johns, et al [4] on service quality. The instrument undergone into a content validation and pilot testing where the Cronbach's alpha result for service quality is 0.95 which signifies excellent hence, this set of questionnaires is considered valid for use. Use of google forms via email, in administering the survey facilitated data gathering. Video conferencing was also utilized for

those who need to be reached virtually to seek their cooperation in the study.

Frequency Distribution and Percentage were used to present the profile of the respondent while weighted mean and rank were used to determine the service quality among the online travel agencies. Annova to analyze the significant difference

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Category	f	%
Type of Respondents	OTA Customer	188	50
	OTA Employee	188	50
Age	GenZ	125	33.2
	GenY	172	45.7
	GenX	65	17.3
	Baby Boomer	14	3.7
Sex	Male	101	26.9
	Female	275	73.1
Civil Status	Single	249	66.2
	Married	127	33.8

Table 1 displays the respondent's profile. Fifty percent of the respondents belong to the category of Online Travel Agency customer and the other half to the category of Online Travel Agent or employee.

Majority of the respondents belong to Gen Y with 172 or 45.70 percent, followed by Gen Z with 125 or 33.2 percent while the 65 or 17.30 percent are from Gen X and the rest are Baby Boomer with 14 or 3.7 percent.

The data show that majority of the customers who want to travel are the younger set i.e. Gen Y and Gen Z. Young people's future careers, political involvement, and goal orientation are all positively influenced by travel. Travel appears to boost not only the confidence and self-sufficiency of young travelers, but also their cultural awareness, acceptance, and adaptability. It agrees with related study of Nunez and Borbon [5] that younger people are fond of travelling. However, in this time of pandemic in whatever generation is, there are travel restriction and prohibition that limiting everyone to travel. Most often, younger people are more active and interested to travel as compared to other since older people are that vulnerable in this time of pandemic making themselves just staying at home.

The 275 respondents or 73.1 percent are female; the 101 or 26.90 percent are male. This reveals that majority of the respondents are female than male. This information asserts that women are more inclined to travel than men. Most of the responses were from female customers and employees. Most tourist enthusiast are women because they perceive those women tend to go for relaxation and have new environment [6].

Majority of the respondents are single with 249 or 66.2 percent and 127 or 33.8 percent are married. This can be attributed to the financial status of single people i.e.; they have funds for travel unlike married people who have to support dependents and/or their partners. Civil status of employees should not be an issue in any organization. Whether single or married, if an employee can do his or her job effectively, it should not matter. Considering the civil status of applicants still depends on the job they are applying, but most of jobs do not require a specific civil status. It will be an act of discrimination for organizations if they always require specific status of applicants. This was supported by Li [7] that majority of the respondents belong to the higher income brackets.

Table 2. Service Quality of Online Travel Agencies in terms of Tangibility

Tangibility	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. The OTA has a modern-looking office	3.30	0.65	GE	4
2. The OTA is utilizing advanced reservation technology	3.36	0.60	GE	3
3. The travel agency has neat-appearing employees	3.41	0.58	GE	1
4. There are available visually appealing promotional brochures	3.39	0.58	GE	2
Composite Mean	3.37	0.13	GE	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very Great Extent (VGE)t; 2.50-3.49: Great Extent (GE); 1.50-2.49: Moderate Extent (ME); 1.00-1.49: No Extent (NE)

Table 2 presents the service quality of the online travel agencies in terms of tangibility with composite mean of 3.37 verbally interpreted as a great extent of service quality. This rating means that the respondents give high regard for the OTAs' service quality based on the ambiance of the office, technology being utilized, appearance of employees and attractiveness of brochures. Othman et al. [8] reported that the physical environment in a company creates impressions on customers. In addition, promotion materials create the link between the company and potential customers.

Top indicators of service quality are the neat appearance of employees (3.41) and the visually appealing promotional brochures (3.39), both interpreted verbally as a great extent of quality. When it comes to job application requirements, the phrase "must have a pleasing personality" has become a running joke. But, in all seriousness, personality is one of the most important factors considered by human resource managers when hiring applicants and making employee-related decisions. An employee with strong communication skills may be assigned to field work involving dealings with other businesses and clients. They assign people with the right personality for the right job in addition to skills because they understand that a high-performing team requires more than just skills. Pleasing appearance of the employees exude a warm welcome or accommodation to the customers.

Attractive promotional brochures entice customers to book a trip with the travel agency. Brochures from travel agencies are important because they assist people in finding and booking exciting vacations. Everyone deserves a good vacation now and then. They're jam-packed with useful information, giving travelers all the information, they need to get the most out of their vacations. Trust in the service quality of the OTA inspired by the tangibility of the services builds the relationship of the customer with the OTA [9]. The importance of location and service quality cannot be overstated. However, we broaden the scope of current value dimensions by separating aspects of position and service quality more specifically. We may see variations in topics of interest between different types of accommodations by contrasting the specifications of the accommodations in terms of metropolitan versus rural and form of accommodation [10].

Although still indicating a great extent of service quality, the lowest indicators were advanced reservation technology utilized by the online travel agencies (3.36) and the modern-looking office décor (3.30).

Travel agents can now research, book, and confirm travel online thanks to technological advancements. Agents no longer need to keep hard-copy client files, and they don't have to spend as much time collecting payments from clients and remitting balances to vendors. Even when travelers are on the ground at their destination, advanced bookings systems allow travel agents to manage changes and modifications in real time. With their booking systems, travel agents should no longer be restricted to 9-5 operational functionality. In many ways, good office design can both support and enhance the business. By providing various working areas as well as downtime spaces where employees can

relax and interact with one another, a well-designed and thought-out space can boost employee morale and wellbeing. Office design can actually result in skyrocketing productivity from employees, dramatically improving the bottom line, by utilizing ingenious and proven techniques. Many offices organizational norms that were once thought to be beneficial to productivity have now been proven to have the exact opposite effect by studies.

To address competition with rivals, OTAs have aspired to render a personalized service to customers which can be provided by the OTA personnel more than technology and modern office decorations. Lai [9] emphasized that the respondents' perception of service quality is subjective i.e., based on trust that the travel agency will deliver the anticipated services. In the study of Ding and Keh, [11] resulted that have practical implications for service firms' positioning strategies that differ through time (e.g., advance sale vs. on-site selling) and space (e.g., close vs. distant outlet), as well as which aspects to highlight in their marketing. Personnel capacity and customer satisfaction have an important positive effect on customer retention. Customer satisfaction moderates the impact of staff capability on customer retention to some extent [12].

Table 3. Service Quality of Online Travel Agencies in terms of Reliability

Reliability	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. The employees are completing the promised tasks	3.36	0.55	GE	2
2. The personnel are performing the service right the first time	3.32	0.62	GE	3
3. The provision of services at the time promised	3.37	0.58	GE	1
4. The employees are insisting on error-free transactions	3.27	0.58	GE	4
Composite Mean	3.34	0.17	GE	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very Great Extent (VGE); 2.50-3.49: Great Extent (GE); 1.50-2.49: Moderate Extent (ME); 1.00-1.49: No Extent (NE)

Table 3 shows the service quality of online travel agencies in terms of reliability with composite mean of 3.34 verbally interpreted as "great extent". Respondents perceive that OTAs services have the quality of reliability. Reliability is based upon the completion of promised tasks, perfect mastery of the tasks, timely delivery of services, and accurate execution of tasks.

Providing services at the promised time or timely delivery (3.37) ranked first followed by completion of the promised tasks by the online travel agencies (3.36) both verbally interpreted as service quality of a great extent. Customer and client satisfaction is enhanced by on-time deliveries. Customers will be pleased not only to receive their goods on time, but also to have a pleasant delivery process thanks to courteous courier services and prompt services provided by OTA. Certain goods have an expiration date, which means they must be delivered within a certain amount of time. Customers want to feel important, and they want to know that their business is valued. Customers and revenue are lost as a result of slow response times, especially when they occur repeatedly. Providing efficient service within the required time frame is the key to generating loyal customers.

In order to plan OTA's organization's processes and tasks, time management is critical. They must consider factors such as the urgency of a particular activity, the need (or not) to carry it out, and so on, in order to keep the company productive. Time management is critical so that they can prioritize all of their work tasks and achieve their objectives more quickly. They'll be able to take on new opportunities and grow their business in a sustainable manner if they better manage their time.

These factors describe the perceived value of the OTAs' services. Mishaps in transportation services for a tour package will cause delay in the customer's arrival at the desired destination. Hence timely services are highly appreciated. Cancelled perks will cause frustration and eliminate the possibility of repeat purchases of tour packages with the travel agency. On the other hand, satisfaction on service quality will promote the travel agency's business [9].

Proper execution of services the first time (3.32) ranked third and least in rank is the consistent faultless performance of the employees (3.27) still verbally interpreted as great extent. These factors though rated lower still showed the customers' high regard. When the service is rendered rightfully upon the first contact with the customers, the customers are convinced about the high quality of service. On the part of the OTA, it requires training and proper supervision for the staff to achieve that level of performance. Doing things right the first time not only speeds up the task at hand, but it also makes it easier to concentrate on one thing at a time. When something needs to be corrected repeatedly, switching context back and forth wastes a lot of time. Everyone agrees that doing things correctly the first time has numerous advantages [13].

The same goes true for the consistent faultless performance of the staff. Since reliability and quality affects satisfaction with on-line travel service quality, the website should first ensure the quality of product information, for example, by collecting the most recent reserving product, travel itinerary, and new product launch information. Most importantly, it must uphold its commitment and earn the confidence of customers in order to improve overall satisfaction. Lai [9] asserts that perceived value of the service goes hand in hand with service quality.

Table 4. Service Quality of online travel agencies in terms of Responsiveness

Responsiveness	WM	SD	VI	R
1. The employees understand the specific needs of the customer	3.46	0.54	GE	2
2. The online travel agency management ensure that they are giving prompt service	3.40	0.57	GE	3
3. All personnel are willing to help the customers' needs	3.48	0.59	GE	1
4. The employees are never too busy to respond to their customers	3.38	0.62	GE	4
Composite Mean	3.43	0.11	GE	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very Great Extent (VGE); 2.50-3.49: Great Extent (GE); 1.50-2.49: Moderate Extent (ME); 1.00-1.49: No Extent (NE)

Table 4 presents the service quality of online travel agency in terms of responsiveness with composite mean of 3.43 verbally interpreted as great extent. The OTAs implement strategies to impress upon the customers that they know the customers' needs. Xie et al. [14] cited that the hotel fulfills the requirements of customers (even beyond the anticipated services) enhanced by social CRM (customer relationship management) technologies.

All personnel are willing to help the customers in their needs (3.48) was the top-most indicators followed by the employees understanding of the specific needs of the customer (3.46). These indicators were verbally interpreted as great extent.

Customer focus entails putting yourself in your customers' shoes and concentrating on their needs, wants, and expectations. Being able to see things from the customer's point of view provides an outstanding customer experience. When it comes to any business decision, putting the customer first should be your top priority. Because it's your promise to your customers that you'll put them first, customer focus is the foundation for

customer loyalty. Customer focus, on the other hand, is critical for developing more human customer relationships. This entails listening to your customers and applying what you've learned to improve.

It is critical to know their customers well to run a successful business. Employees have an impact on the business environment by how they interact with one another and how they respond to customers. Employees who behave in a professional yet inviting manner may be better able to please customers and create a welcoming work environment. When an employee caters to the needs of their customers, they create customers who are loyal provide positive feedback and positive online reviews, which can help businesses strengthen their brand. Every successful business, whether it sells directly to individuals or to other businesses, revolves around knowing and understanding customer needs. They can use this knowledge to persuade potential and existing customers that buying from them is in their best interests once customers have it. Xie et al. [14] explained customer orientation at hotels. The staff must be sincere in rendering efficient services to the customers, with added "personal touch." They should precisely know the customers' desires, requirements and expectations.

The online travel agency management assures that they are giving prompt service (3.40) was the bottom-most indicator followed by the employees' willingness to respond to their customers despite how busy they might be (3.38). These indicators were verbally interpreted as great extent.

The foundation of any business that provides a service to customers is the importance of being prompt and professional. The customer's value should be the most asset to the company, so it's critical that expectations are exceeded to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction. Customers place a high value on their time and expect to have their issues and needs addressed quickly. As a result, a slow customer response time may cause OTAs to lose even their most devoted customers. It is critical for a website to respond quickly and effectively to any issues, as any delay could result in a loss of customers.

As a result, it is proposed that on-line travel websites store sorted problems in the form of a "data-bank" to set up an on-line customer service center to list routine problems by increasing the number of website columns, which makes it easier for customers to search. If the concern appears complex and involves a customer's unique needs, skilled workers must provide support to the customer to maximize their satisfaction [13]. Xie et al. [14] noted that hotels treat customers as the core of their business, hence they deliver services promptly.

They are always polite and pleasant in dealing with the customers no matter how busy they might be. Customers place a high value on their time and expect to have their issues and needs addressed quickly. As a result, a slow customer response time may cause to lose even their most devoted customers.

Table 5. Service Quality of online travel agencies in terms of Assurance

Assurance	WM	SD	VI	R
1. The online travel agency has competent employees	3.42	0.53	GE	3
2. The employees are instilling confidence in customers	3.38	0.56	GE	4
3. The personnel make sure that the customers feel safe during transactions	3.51	0.55	VGE	1
4. The employees have wide array of product knowledge	3.49	0.57	GE	2
Composite Mean	3.46	0.15	GE	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very Great Extent (VGE); 2.50-3.49: Great Extent (GE); 1.50-2.49: Moderate Extent (ME); 1.00-1.49: No Extent (NE)

Table 5 indicates the service quality of OTA in terms of assurance with composite mean of 3.46 verbally interpreted as great extent.

The personnel make sure that the customers feel safe during transactions (3.41) got the highest mean verbally interpreted as very great extent and followed by the employees have wide array of product knowledge (3.49) verbally interpreted as great extent.

Competence of employees can be manifested in how they present travel packages, hotel features, means of transport, cruises, and tickets. With their presentation, the customers achieve the relational value i.e., they believe in the credibility of the hotel service travel packages and the ability of the OTA to deliver them. As a popular slogan says, the customers feel they are in good hands when they contract the service of the OTA. The employees know the ins and outs of the OTA's business like the palm of their hand. Consumers have become accustomed to transacting business online, from banking to shopping.

Knowledgeable frontline employees have an impact on everything from whether a customer buys, how much they buy, and whether or not they return to your store. That is why product knowledge is critical for providing excellent customer service. Competence has a direct impact on productivity. Employee knowledge can be improved through periodic training and rotation, as

well as being flexible in responding to work dynamics so that employees can perform their work in accordance with organizational goals.

Product knowledge is a must-have for any salesperson. Understanding the features of your products allows you to present their benefits accurately and persuasively. Customers respond favorably to salespeople who are enthusiastic about their products and eager to share the advantages with them. Customer service agents with good product knowledge will not only provide better service to customers, but they will also increase sales, improve branding efforts, and make your call center agents more comfortable and confident in their daily duties. Teng [15] believed that hotels should promote social bonding tactics to solicit customer commitment and strong loyalty. Pansari and Kumar [16] asserted that the employees' efforts to achieve product and service differentiation can translate to customers' loyalty and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the employees are instilling confidence in customers (3.38) got the lowest mean and followed by the online travel agency having competent employees (3.42) both verbally interpreted as great extent. Customers want to know that the person they're dealing with is confident and capable of providing them with professional service. Being self-assured allows to take command of a situation and fosters a culture of accountability. It will aid in the development and maintenance of a better relationship with the customer, as they will have more faith with the employees.

Competencies that are clearly defined can aid in the development of a strong corporate culture, the creation of a more aligned workforce, and the establishment of key competitive differentiators. They also assist in ensuring that employee performance standards are consistent, which can aid in employee engagement and retention. Customers want to feel safe. Talwar et al. [17] advised that OTAs should clearly disclose the value of the service to prospective customers to entice their patronage.

However, they want to be assured that their personal and financial data are safe, and that confidentiality will be maintained. An instance where an employee can exhibit competence is when there is customer complaint. The employee may appease the customer with an acceptable solution to the extent of paying damages without need for supervisor consultation. Then, they should take the opportunity to redeem the image by reinstating the service quality [18].

Table 6. Service Quality of Online Travel Agencies in terms of Empathy

Empathy	WM	SD	VI	Rank
1. The online travel agency makes sure that individual attention is provided by the travel agent.	3.44	0.54	GE	2
2. The online travel agency has the sufficient resources to offer good service to their customers	3.44	0.56	GE	3
3. The employees follow up with each customer individually	3.36	0.62	GE	6
4. The employees provide personal attention to their customers	3.44	0.58	GE	4
5. The travel agents demonstrate having customer's best interest at heart	3.43	0.59	GE	5
6. The management understanding customers' specific needs	3.45	0.58	GE	1
Composite Mean	3.43	0.48	GE	

Scale: 3.50-4.00: Very Great Extent; 2.50-3.49: Great Extent; 1.50-2.49: Moderate Extent; 1.00-1.49: No Extent

Table 6 denotes the service quality of online travel agency in terms of empathy with composite mean of 3.43 verbally interpreted as great extent.

Top indicators confirm that the management understands the customers' specific needs (3.45) and the online travel agency makes sure that individual attention is provided by the travel agent (3.44) as well as having sufficient resources to offer good service to their customers (3.44). All these indicators were verbally interpreted as great extent.

Every successful business, whether it sells directly to individuals or to other businesses, revolves around knowing and understanding customer needs. They can use this knowledge to persuade potential and existing customers that buying from them is in their best interests once they have it. OTA can cut marketing costs while increasing sales and profit by paying attention to their customers' needs. Customers who are loyal to them are also more likely to help them gain new business. When a customer is pleased with a brand, they will want to tell their friends and family about it.

Enyioko and Onwusoro [18] cited the following strategies in building relationship with customers. The travel agency provides personalization and customer orientation. The commitment of the OTA in providing services is demonstrated through provision of complete facilities. Fulfillment of promises is assured through individual follow-ups with the customers. Personal attention is given to customers by observing ethical practices. The best interests of the customer are considered through emotional bonding. Management shows that it understands customers' specific needs as evident in users' review. They get to know the quality of products or services even before they consume the product or experience the service.

The least indicators were providing personal attention to their customers (3.44), for travel agent to demonstrate having customer's best interest at heart (3.43) and for the employees to follow up with each customer individually (3.36). All these indicators were verbally interpreted as great extent.

Customer interactions are a rich source of information. They can assist teams in identifying customer pain points, determining how to improve customer satisfaction, and determining what steps they need to improve the overall customer experience. There are several ways to provide personalized service to a customer. To begin, they can anticipate their needs by recommending services or ideas that would be beneficial to them, as well as noticing their wants and needs before they ask. Another option is to treat each client as if they were a "Very Important Person." Asking the right questions to clients to understand their needs and determine the best solution for them is the key to taking charge. Provide a sense of safety for them [13].

Clients appreciate it when they take the initiative to advise them on what they should do rather than waiting for them to ask for help. The online travel market has been booming thanks to the collaboration of the Internet and travel industries; the expected number of online travel users will increase in the future, and service quality will become an important part of the tourism industry chain. It is up to travel companies to consider how to improve the quality of online travel services and customer satisfaction in order to maximize profits. Davis et al [19] concluded that empathy with customers can be more successful in predisposing customers to patronize a company's product or service.

Table 7. Differences on Service Quality when grouped According to Type of Respondent

	Customer	Employee	t-value	p-value	I
Tangibility	3.35	3.38	-2.470*	.014	S
Reliability	3.33	3.35	-1.390	.165	NS
Responsiveness	3.43	3.43	-.223	.823	NS
Assurance	3.46	3.46	.132	.895	NS
Empathy	3.45	3.41	.797	.426	NS

**Significant at $p < 0.05$; S=Significant; NS=Not Significant*

Table 7 presents the significant differences on Service Quality when grouped According to Type of Respondent. The response of employees regarding service quality in terms of tangibility ($M=3.38$) is significantly higher than the response of customers ($M=3.35$) and statistically significant at p-value of 0.014.

This means that customers views tangibility higher than the employees. It is instinct for customer to be more observant with regards to physical environment in a company that creates impressions on customers. In addition, promotion materials create the link between the company and potential customers Because it is something that cannot be imitated or replicated,

tangibility is very crucial in any products and service industry. Customers are more likely to choose and purchase products from a company that offers distinctive services. Customers will be satisfied if they believe that everything they see, and experience is based on a solid foundation and is not provided by other businesses. Tangible is the product or aspect of the service industry which is evaluated by the consumers. The dimension includes wide array of product provided by enterprise or industry including the food services, accommodation and the people who provide the services. For service industry, tangibility of the services includes the physical facilities, amenities, equipment used, personnel and even communication. Though tangibility is the least evaluated in the service industry, it still must provide core services and quality component [20].

Since the employees work in the premises of the OTA, the tangibility factors affect them more than the customers because the customers transact online and do not have to visit the OTA premises. Othman et al. [8] reported that the physical environment in a company creates impressions on customers. Promotion materials create the link between the company and potential customers. Trust in the service quality of the OTA inspired by the tangibility of the services builds the relationship of the customer with the OTA [9].

Maric, et al. [21] stated that tangibility and intangibility of services have a high effect to the consumer and employee's satisfaction. Based on the SERVQUAL model, tangibility is the aspect of services where the physical objects contribute to the feelings of safe, secured, and good quality of products. Moreover, the management aspect of men influences the engagement of the workers when they are in an environment that is suitable to their needs.

When perceptions of the OTA employees and the customers are compared in terms of all the other factors of service quality which are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, there is no significant difference since their p values are greater than 0.05. Reliability ($t=-1.39$, $p=.165$), responsiveness ($t=-.233$, $p=.823$), assurance ($t=.132$, $p=.895$), and empathy ($t=.797$, $p=.426$).

This proves that both customer and employees have the same view as to the service quality, service performance and customer orientation. As a result, it enables managers to direct their investments in a scientific manner to the variables that have the greatest effect on consumer satisfaction [22]. The importance of maintaining a good service environment for achieving

successful service recovery in increasingly diverse communities is a key implication for managers [23].

Table 8. Differences on Service Quality when grouped According to Gender

	Male	Female	t-value	p-value	I
Tangibility	3.34	3.38	-2.807**	.005	HS
Reliability	3.28	3.36	-5.020**	.000	HS
Responsiveness	3.40	3.44	-3.962**	.000	HS
Assurance	3.41	3.47	-3.979**	.000	HS
Empathy	3.44	3.42	.359	.720	NS

*Significant at $p<0.01$; HS=Highly Significant; NS=Not Significant

Table 8 presents that there are significant differences exists on the responses towards Service Quality when grouped According to Gender, wherein it shows that female have highly significant view on service quality, specifically, Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance. Significant difference exists between males and females on service quality in terms of tangibility ($t=-2.807$, $p=.005$), reliability ($t=-.5020$, $p<.01$), responsiveness ($t=-3.962$, $p<.01$), and assurance ($t=-3.979$, $p<0.01$).

Result showed that female respondents have significantly higher responses on service quality than males. As compared to males, the female respondents have significantly higher responses on service quality in terms of tangibility, reliability. Tangibility refers to the appearance or ambience of the OTA's office (for example, a modern look) and its employees (like presentable employees). Female clients tend to be more concern on the environment specifically referring to the appearance or atmosphere of the OTA's office. While, on the other hand, Reliability pertains to the sincerity of the OTA to get a swift resolution of a problem experienced by the customer. Those who supply services are aware of the customer's expectations and concerns. It can help organizations make educated judgments and assumptions. As a result, price is a component of quality, and its impact on total satisfaction is critical. The consumers' knowledge of the services that should have been apparent and expected will determine if the level of service meets their expectations. Customers', specifically female, reactions to how a company provides services and offers them to customers are examples of such perceptions. This is the method of gathering data from the environment, word of mouth, personal experiences, as well as the media.

Likewise, the differences are statistically significant. Females are more appreciative of the quality's responsiveness and assurance, than the males.

Responsiveness refers to the OTA's ability to understand the customer's needs and act upon them, thus, assurance is the quality that instills customer's confidence on the OTA due to the competence of the employees in handling the transactions with them. Females are currently traveling more than men, according to Marcus [24], especially to destinations of ecological and historical significance. Since women are now part of the workforce, they are also sharing their experiences with leisure activities that they enjoy, such as visiting monuments and museums, as well as ancestral homes and historical sites. Males, on the other hand, are more interested in tourism places that provide recreational activities like water sports and golfing.

Also, this is like Kourtesopoulou, et al., [25] found out the critical for online travel agency because they identify factors that influence online consumers' willingness to buy and support the development of the standard of online travel agency quality efficiency wherein it was found out that no significant difference exists on service performance and gender.

Table 9 Differences on Service Quality when grouped According to Civil Status

	Single	Married	t-value	p-value	I
Tangibility	3.37	3.36	1.064	.288	NS
Reliability	3.36	3.29	4.792**	.000	HS
Responsiveness	3.44	3.40	3.450**	.001	HS
Assurance	3.47	3.43	3.096**	.002	HS
Empathy	3.35	3.46	2.161*	.031	S

**Significant at $p < 0.01$; *Significant at $p < 0.05$ HS=Highly Significant, S=Significant, NS=Not Significant

Results showed in table 9 that single respondents have significantly higher response on service quality of online travel agency in terms of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, than married respondents. Significant difference exists on the single and married respondents rating given to service quality in terms of reliability ($t=4.792$, $p < .01$), responsiveness ($t=3.45$, $p=.001$), and assurance ($t=3.096$, $p=.002$).

The appearance or atmosphere of the OTA's office (for example, a modern style) and its workers is referred to as tangibility (like presentable employees). The higher ratings given by single people may be due to lesser burdens compared to married people. They have time to recognize the special features of service that contributed to its quality. Also, Single tourists are quite common because they are the ones who tend to look for partners in different places. The genuineness of the OTA in resolving a problem presented by the client is referred

to as reliability. Reliability is observed from various angles, including the perspective of service workers, as well as the delivery of their products and services to fulfill the expectations of their clients. They can supply services at a specific moment and anticipate the clients' future needs while traveling. Before a problem emerges, they suggest alternate options right away. If at all feasible, they guarantee that the process of service will be completed before the actual time and not only within a percentage of the provided service time [26].

The capability of an OTA to comprehend and respond to a client's needs is referred to as responsiveness. Paying attention to the entrepreneurs' new product development capabilities as well as market responsiveness through the implementation of cooperation is important. The creation of various intangible resources because of collaboration could strengthen entrepreneurial capacities (new product development and market response), resulting in increased competitiveness and performance. This material is recognized as a helpful resource that travel agency entrepreneurs and related agencies may utilize to better comprehend the expanded resources and capabilities required to guide them toward business growth and development. Kashkoli, et al. [27] report a regression analysis with a strong influence on responsiveness to satisfaction, which includes basic quality amenities and how of respect, which are highly valued and ranked as predictors of satisfaction.

Assurance is a feature that gives customers confidence in the OTA because of the staff's competency in conducting their transactions. Assurance focuses on high quality of service providers in the sector. Assurance must be incorporated into any services that the firm delivers since they must ensure that their clients receive all promised services. This is done to acquire their trust and have them suggest the products to others. It will also improve the likelihood of repurchase because customers would know that business staff can deliver on anything they promise. The capacity of employees to communicate properly with clients, as well as their fundamental knowledge of services and courtesy, are all advantages in gaining customer satisfaction. The organization's system ensures credibility in providing secure services to acquire consumer trust by assessing the assurance dimension of service quality [28].

Empathy is the capacity to deliver each client special attention and guarantee their sense of satisfaction. Being empathetic, according to Datta and Vardhan [29], involves picturing oneself in the shoes of another person. It supports being helpful and empathetic in a way that allows service providers to become more sensitive to

their clients' thoughts and feelings. As they develop commitment to what they are doing to serve the requirements of others, most policymakers and service providers think on the necessity of quality management in offering products and services to their clients.

Meeting new friends and encountering adventure during travel are one of the reasons why single tourists are always on top in travelling. They are motivated to travel as they also serve this as their escape in the stress of work unlike married tourists who tend to stay at home and enjoy the company of their family. Married tourists will be travelling most of the time with their children and it will cost them too much. Similarly, civil status moderately influences and have an impact of staff capacity on customer satisfaction, according to a moderation report [30].

Table 10. Differences on Service Quality when grouped According to Age

	GenX	GenY	GenZ	BB	f-value	p-value	I
Tangible	3.34	3.36	3.39	3.24	8.540**	.000	HS
Reliability	3.25	3.31	3.43	3.19	26.686**	.000	HS
Responsiveness	3.38	3.42	3.48	3.35	18.491**	.000	HS
Assurance	3.40	3.45	3.51	3.36	12.464**	.000	HS
Empathy	3.36	3.43	3.55	3.17	5.407**	.001	HS

**Significant at $p < 0.01$; HS=Highly Significant

Significant difference exists across ages on service quality in terms of tangibility ($f=8.54$, $p < .01$), reliability ($f=26.686$, $p < .01$), responsiveness ($f=18.491$, $p < .01$), assurance ($f=12.464$, $p < .01$) and empathy ($t=5.407$, $p=.001$). Results showed that Baby Boomers have significantly lower response on service quality, Online Travel Agency Services. This reveals that many young adults like traveling and discovering new things because they are more adventurous and intrigued about what is beyond their comfort zone. Through increased service delivery, the service employees will use empathy to make their customers feel unique and special. Customers' pleasure can be improved by small acts of kindness such as remembering their favorite destination or meal. They wanted to know that they were being treated fairly and that their needs were being considered when they were being served. Even if the company is small, their capacity to empathize with their customers can provide them a distinct competitive advantage over large corporations [31].

Furthermore, because this is the age group where technology has advanced significantly, millennials have frequently utilized it as a marketing tool to select their trip location. They spend a lot of time on their phones, which allows them to keep up with current events across the world, particularly in the tourism industry. Because

information is disseminated quickly, Millennials are drawn to places that offer them with the knowledge they require and deliver superior service to their competition. It may be due to their virtues i.e., they are more conservative and reserved regarding their opinion than the younger generations. Although both service experience with online travel agency employees and Artificial intelligence are strongly linked to customer engagement and loyalty, the findings indicate that only a few dimensions have major specific variances in the outcome variables.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Half of the respondents are employees and half are customers of OTA wherein majority of the respondents are Gen Y, female and single. There is a great extent of service quality among the online travel agencies in CALABARZON region especially in terms of empathy. It was found out that female respondents have higher perceptions on service quality, unmarried respondents have significantly higher response on service quality and Baby Boomers have significantly lower response on service quality of OTA Services.

The Online Travel Agency may support the agent to look out for customers' needs in rendering services. It manifests empathy through sensitivity. The Online Travel Agency employee may exude empathy in its feature's sensitivity, effort and approachability. OTA managers may concentrate on timely handling of clients' fares, itinerary delivery, and the company's prompt service to customers via the internet, as well as designing a robust technical online system. Philippine Travel Agencies Association or PTAA may conduct a webinar emphasizing on empathy of the travel agency and innovation on the product and services. While the Department of Tourism may organize conferences among OTA at the regional level so that a synergy for the improvement of services can be reached to boost tourism.

The future researcher may conduct further studies referring to the challenges and opportunities in OTA in the time of pandemic since the study is limited only on Service Quality.

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