

# Analysis Of The Filipino Brand Of Customer Service In The Accommodation Sector

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## *Abstract*

In recent times, accommodation and hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing sectors because of significant tourism campaigns, government efforts, and development of economy. This industry requires manpower who are proactive and compassionate to their guests. Filipinos manifested such qualities which made the country as the supplier of manpower to other countries. The purpose of this study was to determine the Filipino brands that represent the hospitality manpower and explore the actions that demonstrate these qualities. Thirty-two (32) participants were purposively sampled, 16 as front desk officers in hotels Zamboanga City and 16 as general customers. Findings indicated that there were major characters that Filipino workers in accommodation industry demonstrated. Some of the character include dedication, Filipino warmth, friendly, tactful, and articulate. The natural disposition of Filipinos to be happy and friendly plays a significant role in customer service interactions, making customers feel welcomed and valued. Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry is built on a foundation of hospitality, positive attitudes, and a genuine desire to ensure customer satisfaction. These characteristics, along with the training and proactive management of human resources, contribute to the growth and success of the accommodation industry in the Philippines, attracting more tourists and foreign business travelers to the country.

Keywords: accommodation sector, Filipino warmth, Filipino hospitality, positive attitude, quality service.

## **Introduction**

The high quality and distinctive attitude of Filipino customer service have become well-known in the accommodation sector. Filipino service personnel are highly sought-after assets in the international hospitality sector because of their reputation for

friendliness, hospitality, and genuine caring. The adoption of a customer-centric approach not only facilitates the cultivation of an effective connection with customers, but also contributes to the optimization of the overall performance (Brown et al., 2002). Hence, the implementation of a well-devised strategy focused on ensuring customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty within the hotel organization is likely to result in an improved brand image and heightened performance levels (Fan & Ku, 2010; Tajeddini, 2010).

This study intends to explore the experiences of Filipino front desk officers and customers, looking at its guiding principles, cultural influences, and certain service qualities. This study aimed to shed light on the factors influencing the performance of Filipino service providers and find insightful knowledge that can be implemented to improve customer service practices in the accommodation industry globally by studying the major elements and techniques used by Filipino service providers.

Hospitality plays a pivotal role in the industry as it encompasses the provision of significant and amiable services to guests (Vicente, 2022). The services provided in the hotel industry encompass a range of offerings such as room accommodations, meals and drinks, meeting facilities, bookings, information on hotel services, details about local attractions, and other similar services (Gumaste et al., 2015; Ionel, 2016). As a result, the concept of hospitality is inherently subjective, varying depending on individual perspectives and preferences.

Employees have role in hospitality because they “not only deliver and create the service but are actually a part of the service in the customer’s view” (Bowen & Schneider, 1985, p.129). Customer focus is significant in an industry, particularly in terms of its alignment with a Customer Relationship Management system (Yim et al., 2004). It is imperative for the organization to establish a harmonious relationship with its customers in order to effectively manage and nurture these relationships (Alshourah, 2015).

As Wong (2012) expressed, Filipino hospitality astounds everyone who has experienced it and visitors from abroad have praised the generosity of Filipinos in the Philippines. In the study of Vicente (2022), it showed that front desk personnel in the Philippines is capable on the global stage because of their competence in customer service. Enhancing external marketing efforts, elevating customer satisfaction levels, and optimizing business and organizational performance requires a heightened emphasis on addressing the needs of the customer within the company (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975).

Employee commitment refers to the psychological attachment and alignment that individuals develop towards an

organization's objectives, principles, and customs (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022; Anderson & Martin, 1995). Committed employees exhibit a psychological attachment to their respective organizations, demonstrating a strong dedication to delivering high-quality service and displaying a reduced likelihood of voluntary turnover (Chen et al., 2011; He et al., 2011). In tourism, the attitude of employees is an important factor in customer service because these individuals are actively involved in direct interactions with customers, thereby playing an essential part in shaping the overall service experience (Khuong & Nhu, 2015). The sentiments harbored by employees towards service delivery are intrinsically linked to their level of dedication and commitment towards the organization they represent (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022).

Employee commitment serves as a representation for assessing the effectiveness of performance in delivering highquality services. Additionally, employee commitment has been found to be a strong predictor of customer satisfaction and, consequently, plays a vital role in determining tourism revenue (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022). The goal of this study was to determine some remarkable qualities of Filipino front desk workers in accommodation industry, which do represent Filipino trademark for hospitality. These qualities could provide reflections on the quality of customer service in local areas.

The goal was to gain insights into the quality of customer service in local areas, with Zamboanga City as a specific case study. This study explored and analyzed the qualities of Filipino front desk workers in the accommodation industry, specifically focusing on their commitment to their work. This study determined how employee commitment impacts the delivery of high-quality services and its role in customer satisfaction. By using narrative analysis from both workers in the industry and customers, the researchers seek to identify remarkable qualities that represent the Filipino trademark for hospitality.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have conclusively demonstrated that the quality of service plays a crucial role in fostering cognitive loyalty (Ahrholdt, 2017; Ahrholdt, 2019). Moreover, numerous comprehensive investigations have consistently demonstrated that service quality could influence customer satisfaction (Yoon et al., 2010). Service quality can be defined as the comprehensive perception that customers have regarding their overall service experience, encompassing various service dimensions and their associated attributes (Ahrholdt, 2017).

Marketing and management studies have consistently observed a significant correlation between the quality of service offered by

employees and their corresponding attitudes (Bowen & Schneider, 2014; Elmadağ et al., 2008). Service quality attributes are crucial for management to determine whether customers received what was expected. As a result, the relationship between service quality and employee dedication is critical for increasing service climate, client fulfillment, and loyalty (Agyeiwaah et al., 2022).

Osman et al. (2016) explained that employees who align themselves with an organization's objectives are more inclined to deliver high-quality service. Affective commitment pertains to the emotional bond an individual forms with an organization. In this context, it is important to note that work experiences have been identified as a crucial factor influencing an employee's level of attachment to the organization. Therefore, it can be established that there is a positive relation between the level of social interaction and employee affective commitment (Heffner & Rentsch, 2001). This is because interactions provide employees with assistance in interpreting the social context of their work. Employees who commit themselves to a business have a greater tendency to be more productive, more eager to work more diligently, and have a positive attitude when servicing clients (Dean, 2004). To put it another way, a high degree of service performance generation is frequently attributable to the employees' commitment to the supply of service. Within the hospitality business, it has been discovered that the quality of service they receive has a significant influence in increasing the amount of customer loyalty they exhibit (Ahmed et al., 2023). Awan and Tahir (2015) emphasized that employees who are satisfied as a result of the management commitment will conduct exceptional service behaviors. These behaviors include delivering what is promised by the hotel brand, generating a positive image, promoting the hotel services and goods, and offering services that are superior to those offered by competitors (Awan, 2022). In contrast, frontline service professionals will perform subpar job for customers if they have the perception that the nature of their employment is insulting, demeaning, or humiliating (Ackfeldt & Coote, 2005). The failure of the service will lead to undesirable consequences, such as a reduction in the confidence of customers. The other nationalities have expressed their admiration for the passion and commitment that the Filipinos who work at the front desk bring to their jobs in order to provide outstanding service to the hotel guests (Vicente, 2022). It demonstrates confidence in the hotel and contributes positively to the hotel overall development (Abdullayeva, 2014). Being able to readily adapt to change and challenge the established order of things while simultaneously being responsible and trustworthy (Brophy & Kiely, 2002).

In a local study conducted by Aguirre et al. (2023), customer service in accommodation industry in Zamboanga City reflected some Filipino trademarks like friendly, courteous, welcoming, and attentive. Accommodation in Zamboanga City received positive reviews on the quality of customer service in the city where employees always 'wear a smile' when attending their clientele. However, there was limited study conducted on the Filipino front desk workers and their remarkable qualities that make up the Filipino trademark for accommodation industry. Although previous studies represented the role of attitude and emotional labor as important aspect of customer service in accommodation industry, these studies were conducted in international setting, e.g., China, Pakistan, with different cultural reflections. This study examined the qualities of accommodation establishment in Zamboanga City through the lens of front desk officers and the customers.

### **Objectives**

This study aimed to determine the characteristics of Filipino branding in accommodation industry. This study shed light on the remarkable characteristics of Filipino accommodation services and the actions of Filipino hospitality workers. Below are the research objectives in this study.

1. Determine the Filipino brand of customers service in the accommodation industry.
2. Determine how Filipinos demonstrate Customer Service in the accommodation industry.

### **Methods**

#### **Research Design**

This study explored the Filipino branding of the customer service in the accommodation sector. To explore this concept, this study used qualitative analysis in analyzing the narratives of workers and customers of accommodation sector. This approach provided indepth perspectives on what Filipino characteristics did accommodation servers manifested especially in customer service. More broadly to say, the narratives of this study provided insights on which Filipino qualities had the potential to be promoted in larger accommodation field.

Quantitative research is an essential design to explore important initial topics e.g., Filipino branding qualities. Maxwell (2008) posits that qualitative research operates within a context of implications, views, desires, and values. It delves into the intricacies of relationships, interactions, and experiences that cannot be easily quantified or reduced to applied variables (Turner et al., 2021).

Specifically, exploratory research could provide important insights on new concepts that the researchers could introduce to the literature.

#### Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants of this study were workers from accommodation sector in Zamboanga City. Purposive sampling was employed to determine the eligibility of a front desk worker and customer to be a participant in this study. Purposive sampling is a sampling method that falls under the category of non-probability sampling. In this approach, the selection of sample elements is based on the researcher's judgment. Researchers frequently feel that by using good judgment, they may acquire a representative sample while saving time and money (Saunders et al., 2009).

In this study, purposive sampling involved the selection of workers and customers of accommodation in Zamboanga City. The workers were in the industry for at least one year. Participants of this study were Filipino front office workers (n=16) and accommodation products customers (n=16).

**Table 2. Participants of the Study**

Participants	n
Filipino Front Office Workers	16
Filipino Accommodation Products Customers	16
Total	32

#### Research Instrument

This study developed a guide question ledger for the participants. The ledger highlighted the questions to be asked in the on-on-one interview. The ledger had local dialect translations e.g., Visayan, Chavacano, to help the participants understand the questions. The guide questions were unstructured—a design which according to George (2022), is the most flexible form of interview with its flexibility can help gather deep information about the topic. In designing the guide questions, this study used process described by Sikov (2020). In developing an interview guide, the researchers should consider probing questions and follow up questions that could directly and indirectly answer the objectives (Ceneciro et al., 2023). Below are the guide questions in this study.

**Table 2. Interview Guide Question**

Objectives	Interview Questions	n
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1. Determine the Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What makes customer service in the accommodation industry very Filipino?</li> <li>b. What Filipino traits are evident among Filipino customer service crews in the accommodation industry? Elaborate in each situation.</li> </ul>	16
2. Determine how Filipinos demonstrate Customer Service in the accommodation industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In what ways do Filipino crews demonstrate their “Filipino Brand” of customer service in the accommodation industry? What sets Filipino customer service crews from other nationalities in the accommodation industry in terms of customer service?</li> <li>b.</li> </ul>	16

#### Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher made a written consent form to acquire formal permission from the participants, explaining the objective and purpose of the study. Subsequently, participants were requested to sign the consent form, indicating their willingness to engage in the interview. Prior to conducting the interviews, participants were furnished with comprehensive instructions. Individual interview schedules were then arranged, accommodating convenience and availability. One-on-one interview done in through phone calls was conducted.

The interviewers ensure that the participants could share their ideas completely. In the context of narrative interviews, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant collaborative element that exists within this methodology. Narrative itself unfolds because of the dynamic interaction, exchange, and dialogue that takes place between the interviewer and the participants involved in the study (Muylaert et al., 2014). Once the narratives were recorded, the responses obtained from participants were diligently coded to discern prevailing themes and address research questions and emerging topics. To ensure inclusivity, the responses were subsequently translated for a broader understanding and analysis.

#### Data Analysis

The primary data in this study were the narratives from the participants. Narrative itself unfolds because of the dynamic interaction, exchange, and dialogue that takes place between the

interviewer and the participants involved in the study (Lieblich, 1998). This study followed the narrative thematic analysis described by Creswell, (2017) where the researcher (a) organized and prepare the data, (b) obtain generalizations, (c) the coding, (d) develop categories or themes, and (e) interpret the data. In ensuring the validity of the results, the researcher promote transferability of the data through providing rich and thick descriptions (Muylaert et al., 2014).

## Results

Objective 1. Determine the Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry.

This study determined some characteristics of Filipino brands in accommodation customer service. The narratives provided insightful characterization of Filipino brands throughout accommodation industry in the city.

### Theme 1: Hospitality

Hospitability, friendliness, and attentiveness are essential elements of Filipino customer service. Participants emphasized that Filipino service providers prioritize understanding and fulfilling customers' preferences and concerns, going beyond their designated roles to ensure customer satisfaction. The care and consideration demonstrated towards guests, particularly senior citizens or those facing difficulties, were noted as significant attributes of Filipino customer service. Additionally, participants observed that Filipino service providers are highly relatable, approachable, and willing to assist customers, even in tasks that may be perceived as less glamorous. These traits contribute to the preference for Filipino professionals in the hospitality industry, both internationally and within the accommodation sector, such as cruise ships, hotels, resorts, and restaurants.

"I think so. That's very important. It's part of our training on how to handle customers. We are taught to be hospitable. We Filipinos are very hospitable and friendly people." [Participant 25]

"For me, Filipinos are very caring people. For example, Filipinos care for their customers, especially senior citizens. There are times that you know they can do it by themselves, but as a customer service employee, you'll do it for them. You'll ask if, 'ma'am, would you mind staying here momentarily?' or, 'is it okay, I'll do it for you.' You'll assist them because you see they struggle doing it." [Participant 4]

"Hospitality is very, very particular to Filipinos. I say, this is the thing that really, really strike the most when it comes to the brand of Filipino customer service. So, they are very, very good in the industry. This could be the reason why even in other countries,



there's a preference to Filipino crew in cruise ship, hotels, and resort, even restaurants, you would see a lot of Filipinos."

[Participant 11]

#### Theme 2: Natural Dispositions

All Participants indicated that the inherent happy and friendly nature of Filipinos, contributing to their preference in the cruise lines and other tourist industries. The natural disposition of Filipinos, combined with their proficiency in English, serves as an added value and distinguishes them in the hospitality sector. The hospitable traits of Filipinos are seen as a "ginhawa" (a positive trait) that is further refined through training. The genuine smiles, warmth, and compassionate nature displayed by Filipino service providers are recognized as distinctive characteristics of the Filipino brand of customer service. Despite potential discussions among coworkers about guests, there is a shared understanding and commitment to maintain professionalism and compassion in dealing with clients. The compassionate nature of Filipinos has emerged as a recognized trait within the Filipino brand of customer service.

"Here in the Philippines, well, we are naturally a happy and friendly people. That is why, most of the cruise lines or other tourist industries outside, they prefer Filipino crew because of our friendliness and disposition, aside from our competence in speaking English." [Participant 23]

"Even with my coworkers, we tend to talk about someone. For example, about our client or guest. Sometimes, even if we want to address them, but you'll choose not to. But yes of course, we always ensure quality, we are compassionate to them."

[Participant 31]

"Because of our positive attitude and good dispositions, we are known internationally as one of the best service providers."

[Participant 3]

#### Theme 3: Effective Training and Service Oriented

One respondent highlighted the important role of customer service representatives in addressing guest concerns and finding solutions to issues, even when there are discrepancies in the provided information. Filipino customer service representatives undergo training, often in the context of their roles as hospitality, management, or tourism graduates, which equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge. The organic accommodation attitudes of Filipinos and their welcoming attitude towards learning contribute to their ability to quickly grasp the rudiments of customer service. The natural caring nature and hospitality

embedded within Filipino culture serve as added value, distinguishing them in the field. The combination of training and inherent traits sets Filipino customer service representatives apart, allowing them to effectively handle customer concerns and provide exceptional service.

“Let’s talk about the roles as customer service representatives. These crews are trained. I’m sure a lot of them studied well. I mean, maybe hospitality management graduates or management graduates or tourism graduates. So, it’s part of their training.”

[Participant 18]

Objective 2. Determine how Filipinos demonstrate Customer Service in the accommodation industry.

This study highlighted some significant actions that Filipino demonstrate in customer service. These actions manifest specific Filipino actions that made remarkable perspectives to Filipino brands.

#### Theme 1: Filipino Dedication

All Thirty-two (32) respondents stated the exceptional customer service provided by Filipino professionals in the accommodation sector and dedication to going the extra mile to satisfy customer needs is evident, surpassing the expectations of traditional service standards. Front office receptionists play a crucial role in attending to customers and ensuring their comfort during their stay. “Filipino workers go an extra mile in accommodation by satisfying the needs of the clientele. It’s not just the usual service. For example, I’ll ask, ‘hotel for whom? Check-in?’ It’s like automatic, especially if the dial service is not available. So, some arrives with no prior notice, we always thought, oh it’s up to us.” [Participant 16]

#### Theme 2: Filipino Warmth

Regardless of personal mood or circumstances, maintaining a positive and compassionate attitude is emphasized, reflecting the core principles of hospitality management. Filipino customer service is characterized by its warmth, evident in the language used and the genuine care exhibited towards guests. This warmth extends to understanding and catering to customers’ specific requirements, providing a welcoming and comfortable environment. The Filipino brand of customer service is marked by a unique blend of sympathy and care that distinguishes it within the industry.

“Based on my experience, something that is very, very Filipino in accommodation is ‘Filipino warmth’. When you say warmth, it’s the way they speak, it’s the language you’ll use. It’s being caring, it’s

like you are very sympathetic so they can understand what you are saying.” [Participant 27]

“You are the customer that needs, you go to the hotel, you check in. The customer service will check your status first, your situation, whether you need something or the like. If they feel you came from a travel, warmth means they will welcome you, they will make you feel at ease.” [Participant 30]

“My role is front office receptionist. Our task is to attend the customers, of course to make them feel comfortable in our hotel and attend to their concerns. It’s our main task as front office receptionist.” [Participant 23]

### Theme 3: Friendly

The research findings highlight the contrast between customer service experiences in China and the Philippines, specifically in the context of hotel check-ins. Participants noted that hotels in China often lacked friendliness, with staff members exhibiting unfriendly behavior and even showing signs of annoyance. In contrast, Filipino customer service representatives are trained to prioritize friendliness and approachability, considering the customer's needs as paramount. The inherent trait of Filipinos to be naturally friendly and wear a smile is particularly valued in the service industry.

“There was one time when we were in China, I am somehow disappointed on all the check-in hotels. Their workers were ‘masusungit’ (unfriendly). I don’t know why they were like that. When we check-in, it’s like dawn, a lot of us. You cannot find any smile or whatsoever. They were splashing (nagdadabog). For Filipino setting, they should not be like that because if not, I don’t know. When they are not going to be friendly, people will say customer is always right.” [Participant 1]

“It is very important to be friendly most of the time. It is very annoying when you approach an employee, and they ignore you or raise voice.” [Participant 19]

### Theme 4: Tactful and Circumspect

Customers and representatives expressed a preference for avoiding confrontations or complaints, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a positive and accommodating approach. This suggests that being non-confrontational is a significant trait among Filipino customer service representatives, aligning with their goal of providing exceptional service.

“When it comes to customer service, like me, I don’t like the clientele to be complainer. The main trait of Filipino customer service representative is being circumspect and tactful because even if I like to [confront], I am not going to.” [Participant 14]

#### Theme 5: Articulate

Fifteen (15) respondents emphasize the significance of going the extra mile and exerting additional efforts as essential elements of the Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation sector. Participants noted that providing thorough explanations and assistance, even beyond the scope of their responsibilities, is crucial in ensuring guest satisfaction. Filipino service representatives are willing to take on additional tasks, such as presenting information or performing duties outside their job description, to address guests' needs effectively.

"There are some guests that they have difficulty in understanding. Like, you'll need to put extra effort to explain. You need to explain, or even do something that is not your work anymore." [Participant 9]

#### Discussion

Objective 1. Determine the Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry.

This study explored some characteristics of customer service in accommodation industry that represent Filipino brands. These characteristics signified more generalized perspectives on how Filipinos served their clientele and customers. These branding concepts became popular not only in the country, but also internationally. As one participant said, "because of our positive attitude and good dispositions, we are known internationally as one of the best service providers" [Participant 3]. Numerous studies have underscored the significance of employee customer orientation in the context of fostering customer satisfaction (Babakus & Yavas, 2012; Coelho et al., 2010).

Filipinos are known for their hospitality because of how they treat their visitors. Renowned for its reputation of "Filipino Hospitality," it is anticipated that there will be an increase in tourist arrivals to the Philippines in the forthcoming months and years. Consequently, this surge in economic activity is likely to attract foreign business travelers, consultants, and other personnel who will necessitate temporary accommodation (Santos Knight Frank, 2022).

The success of the hospitality industry is contingent upon the presence of actively involved and customer-centric or service-oriented personnel (Wang, 2019; Yang, 2020). Engaged employees exhibit a notable level of passion, energy, enthusiasm, and motivation towards their work, demonstrating engagement to their work roles (Karatepe et al., 2021; Rabiul & Yean, 2021). In this study, Filipino workers in accommodation industry manifest some

important Filipino brands that represent quality of services in accommodation. For instance, “Filipinos care for their customers, especially senior citizens. There are times that you know they can do it by themselves, but as a customer service employee, you’ll do it for them.” [Participant 4].

One study conducted in Baler, Northern Philippines indicated that accommodation establishments in the area “maintained good customer service” (Ricardo, 2023). Work theory posits that the successful execution of any job requires the active involvement of individuals who possess a high level of expertise and proficiency in their specific fields of study or practice (Mitchell et al., 2020; Hajiali et al., 2022). Specifically, Filipino workers in this study presented remarkable Filipino brand like being positive and having natural dispositions. One worker in this study said that “we are naturally a happy and friendly people” [Participant 23].

An employee who prioritizes client happiness should possess sufficient competencies and exhibit positive attitudes, enabling them to actively strive towards meeting the needs and expectations of customers (Thevanes et al., 2022). As one worker stressed out, “It’s part of our training on how to handle customers. We are taught to be hospitable” [participant 25]. Creating a work environment that prioritizes communication, training, and teamwork has been found to have a significant impact on the establishment and sustenance of a customer-centric culture (Ueno, 2012). This culture, in turn, plays a crucial role in enhancing service quality and elevating customer satisfaction levels (Koutroumanis et al., 2015). Along with that, one participant ensured that the accommodation workers were competent enough because “these crews are trained. I’m sure a lot of them studied well” [Participant 18].

Accommodation industry in Zamboanga City manifested some characteristics that represent the Filipino brand for hospitality and customer service. Some of these characteristics include Filipino hospitality (being caring, attentive), natural disposition (smiling, positive attitude, friendly), and service oriented (being proactive to work). One participant expressed positivity that these qualities “could be the reason why even in other countries, there’s a preference to Filipino crew in cruise ship, hotels, and resort, even restaurants, you would see a lot of Filipinos” [Participant 11].

Filipino workers were heavily marketed as hardworking and friendly people. These qualities showed on that characteristics of customer services in accommodation that represent Filipino trademarks. Because of the training and proactive human resource management in accommodation industry, Filipino workers grew

competent and proactive individuals that their customers were able to notice.

**Objective 2. Determine how Filipinos demonstrate Customer Service in the accommodation industry.**

In the previous section, it was described that accommodation industry manifested some remarkable Filipino trademarks e.g., hospitality, natural disposition, and service oriented. This study further broken down these trademarks into more tangible concepts and actions. Specifically, some accommodation workers perceived themselves as dedicated, tactful, friendly, and articulate individuals. Customers also observed these qualities as well.

The concept of customer orientation among employees is characterized as the overall dedication of employees towards ensuring customer satisfaction (Kelley, 1992). In the context of customer and employee interactions, fostering positive service encounters because such encounters play a pivotal role in augmenting customer satisfaction levels and subsequently influencing the frequency of customer visits (Mathe et al., 2016). One customer in this study reflected on her experience during her visit in China revealing “I am somehow disappointed on all the check-in hotels [when I was in China]. Their workers were ‘masusungit’ (unfriendly). I don’t know why they were like that” [Participant 1]. One also expressed that “it is very important to be friendly most of the time. It is very annoying when you approach an employee, and they ignore you or raise voice” [Participant 19].

In some instance, employees need to have emotional labor—which involves managing their emotions to create a visible display of facial and bodily expressions (Hochschild, 2022; Steinberg & Figart, 1999). Managing emotions is an element of organizational regulations because organizational decisionmakers and staff members feel that expressing and repressing certain emotions aids in performance (Xu et al., 2020). Hospitality and tourism literature indicated that emotional intelligence can be linked to practice of deep acting (Kim et al., 2012), a psychological process that entails the genuine experience and internalization of anticipated emotions (Grandey, 2000).

In this study, customer service in accommodation industry demonstrated emotional labor. For instance, one “the main trait of Filipino customer service representative is being circumspect and tactful because even if I like to [confront], I am not going to” [Participant 14]. This was an important concept that represents how friendly and understanding Filipinos are. Individual exhibit a positivity for actively participating in favorable social exchanges with customers, which includes demonstrating genuine care,

voluntarily assisting customers, and being regarded as competent peers due to their ability to comprehend and interpret social cues, such as emotional expressions and behaviors, when speaking (Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

In order to ensure the right mindset, it is imperative that the employee is adequately equipped in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects for effective customer service (Opatha, 2019). According to Durak and Saritepeci (2019), individuals who exhibit high levels of conscientiousness demonstrate traits such as trustworthiness, commitment, punctuality, and strong organizational skills. Workers in accommodation industry could have that high level of conscientiousness which reflects their willingness to serve and be competent. As one worker expressed, “our task is to attend the customers, of course to make them feel comfortable in our hotel and attend to their concerns” [Participant 23] manifesting attentiveness to one’s role in the industry. Such “to serve” mindset is a prevalent character of Filipino workers not only in accommodation industry but for other industries also (Reyes, 2022; Too & Adenya, 2022). One front desk officer also said, “For example, I’ll ask, ‘hotel for whom? Check-in?’ It’s like automatic, especially if the dial service is not available. So, some arrives with no prior notice, we always thought, oh it’s up to us” [Participant 16].

There were major characters that Filipino workers in accommodation industry demonstrated. Some of the character include dedication, Filipino warmth, friendly, tactful, and articulate. These characteristics were emotion-oriented where they sympathize to their customers’ emotions, like those coming from long flights. One worker explained this as “there are some guests that they have difficulty in understanding... you’ll need to put extra effort to explain”. Most of them see customers are not only guests but also their close friends that they need to serve.

This was their way to show their hospitality, natural disposition, and dedication to work. Such qualities became renowned even internationally representing general Filipino workforces.

### **Conclusion**

Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry is characterized by hospitality, a positive and friendly attitude, being proactive and service-oriented, and a strong emphasis on customer satisfaction. These qualities are highly regarded and have gained popularity not only within the Philippines but also internationally. Filipino workers in the accommodation industry are known for their caring and attentive nature, making visitors feel welcomed and valued.

One key aspect of Filipino customer service in the accommodation industry is the emotional labor displayed by the workers. They manage their emotions skillfully, engaging in deep acting, which involves genuinely experiencing and internalizing anticipated emotions to create a positive and friendly atmosphere for customers. This emotional intelligence and deep acting contribute to favorable social exchanges with customers, making them feel cared for and understood.

The success of the hospitality industry in the Philippines is dependent on engaged and customer-centric personnel who are passionate about their work. The proactive human resource management and training in the accommodation industry contribute to the competence and effectiveness of Filipino workers in delivering quality services to customers. Filipino workers in the accommodation industry excel in customer service by demonstrating emotional labor, conscientiousness, warmth, friendliness, and a genuine dedication to making customers feel valued and comfortable. These characteristics contribute to the overall positive experience customers have with Filipino hospitality and further establish the Filipino brand of customer service in the accommodation industry as one that is widely respected and appreciated.

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