Original Article

Measuring Human Resource Management Service Quality in a Philippine Government Research Institute Using the SERVQUAL Framework

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Abstract. This study measured the service quality of the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) in a Philippine Government Research Institute using the SERVQUAL framework, which evaluates five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The research employed a descriptive-quantitative design and collected 277 employee responses, exceeding the recommended sample size, to measure the gap between employees' expectations and perceptions of HRMO services. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to assess the significance of service quality gaps. The findings revealed that, across all dimensions, expectations consistently exceeded perceptions, indicating significant service quality gaps ($p < .001$). The most significant gaps were observed in reliability (0.42), responsiveness (0.40), and empathy (0.38), suggesting that employees desire more dependable, timely, and personalized HR services. Smaller but significant gaps appeared in assurance (0.33) and tangibles (0.32), showing that HR professionalism and facilities are essentially meeting expectations. Additional analyses highlighted variability in employee experiences and differences between employees whose expectations were met, unmet, or exceeded. The study concludes that while the HRMO demonstrates commendable service quality, strategic improvements in reliability, responsiveness, and empathy are essential to enhance employee satisfaction, trust, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Employee expectations and perceptions; Human Resource Management Office (HRMO); Public sector organizational effectiveness; SERVQUAL framework; Service quality assessment.

Organizations increasingly emphasize service quality not only for external stakeholders but also for employees who rely on internal support systems to perform effectively. High-quality internal services strengthen employee performance and contribute to overall organizational success. In this context, service quality refers to how well an institution meets the needs and expectations of its internal clients over time. In the Philippine public sector, research institutions depend heavily on administrative services to sustain day-to-day operations. Among these, the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) plays a critical role by managing recruitment, selection, and placement, rewards and recognition, performance management, and learning and development in accordance with Civil Service Commission guidelines. The quality of HR services directly affects employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity, which, in turn, influence institutional performance. Since employees serve as internal clients, their experiences provide an important basis for evaluating the effectiveness

of HR operations and their alignment with organizational goals. To assess service quality, this study applied the SERVQUAL framework developed by Zeithaml et al. (1988), which examines gaps between expectations and perceptions across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Although originally designed for commercial settings, SERVQUAL has been widely used in various sectors, including public institutions (Pataraia et al., 2024), education (Ismailova et al., 2025), hospitality (Laxmi, 2025; Curioso, 2025), and healthcare (Al-Balas et al., 2024). These applications demonstrate their effectiveness in diagnosing service weaknesses and guiding improvement efforts.

Despite its broad use, limited research has examined SERVQUAL in the context of internal administrative services within Philippine government research institutions. In particular, few studies have focused on how employees evaluate HR service quality in such settings. This gap highlights the need for an empirical assessment of HRMO service delivery in a Philippine government research institution. Accordingly, this study measured service quality by comparing employees' expectations and perceptions across SERVQUAL dimensions to identify areas of alignment and potential gaps. The findings of this study provide management and the HRMO with evidence-based insights into strengths and weaknesses in HR service delivery. These insights can guide targeted improvements to enhance employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. More broadly, the study contributes to the literature on public-sector service quality by demonstrating SERVQUAL's applicability to internal administrative services in Philippine government research institutions.

Methodology

Research Design
The study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the existing level of service quality of the HRMO in a Philippine government research institution. This design was appropriate because the objective was to describe and quantify employees' expectations and perceptions of HRMO services as they naturally occur, rather than to test causal relationships or manipulate variables, which are characteristic of experimental or explanatory designs. Using the SERVQUAL framework, quantitative data were gathered to identify and measure service quality gaps across five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Research Respondents
The respondents in the study were employees in a Philippine government research institution located in Nueva Ecija from various offices who had utilized HRMO services between January 2025 and September 2025. To ensure that participants could provide informed evaluations, purposive sampling was used to select employees who had direct, recent interactions with the HRMO, as identified through the office's service request monitoring records before data collection. While this approach enhanced the relevance and accuracy of the responses, it may also introduce sampling bias. Consequently, the findings primarily reflect the perceptions of active HRMO service users and may not fully represent employees with limited or no recent HRMO interactions. In addition, because the sample was drawn from a single institution, the results have limited generalizability to other public organizations or institutional contexts. The target sample size was determined using Raosoft's formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a minimum requirement of 276 respondents to ensure statistical reliability. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured for all respondents.

Research Instruments
The study used an adapted version of the SERVQUAL questionnaire developed by Zeithaml et al. (1988) to measure the gap between employees' service expectations and perceptions of the HRMO. The instrument consists of two parallel sections, Expectations and Perceptions, each containing 15 paired items across five service quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Service quality gap scores were computed by comparing perception and expectation ratings. The questionnaire was modified to reflect the context of internal HR services in a Philippine government research institution. To ensure validity and usability, a two-phase validation process was conducted. First, expert reviewers with backgrounds in human resource management and research methodology evaluated the instrument for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives, leading to revisions in item wording and structure. Second, a pilot test was administered to employees who were not included in the final sample to assess item clarity, instructions, and response scaling. Minor adjustments were made based on pilot feedback to improve comprehension and response accuracy.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, a formal request for approval was submitted. Upon approval, electronic and printed survey forms were distributed to qualified respondents. Participants were informed of the study's objectives and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. All distributed questionnaires were successfully retrieved, with data collection completed between October 10 and October 31, 2025.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including the mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize employees' expectations and perceptions for each SERVQUAL dimension. Service quality gaps were calculated by subtracting expectation scores from perception scores for each item. To test for statistically significant differences between expectations and perceptions, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed. This non-parametric test was chosen as a robust alternative to the paired-samples t-test because the distribution of difference scores deviated substantially from normality. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with guidance from a statistician to ensure accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to the ethical standards outlined in the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their identities were anonymized using coded responses to ensure confidentiality. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, methods, and limitations to ensure transparency. Ethical integrity was maintained by avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation of data. The researcher was credited as the primary author, and all contributions were acknowledged separately. All collected data, including completed questionnaires and electronic responses, were securely stored in password-protected files and will be retained for five years. After that period, they will be properly disposed of to maintain confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

A total of 277 existing employees voluntarily consented to participate in the study. Table 1 presents their distribution by employment status, length of service, and frequency of service requests with the HRMO.

Table 1. *Frequency of Respondents' Profiles with the HRMO*

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment Status		
Contract of Service	173	62.45%
Permanent	104	37.55%
Length of Service		
Less than 1 year	33	11.90%
1-3 years	76	27.40%
4-6 years	44	15.90%
7-10 years	31	11.20%
More than 10 years	93	33.60%
Frequency of Service Requests with the HRMO		
Daily	21	7.60%
Weekly	43	15.50%
Monthly	38	13.70%
Occasionally	141	50.90%
Rarely	34	12.30%
Total	**277**	**100.00%**

The data showed that 173 respondents (62.45%) were contract-of-service employees, while the remaining 104 (37.55%) were permanent employees. In terms of their length of service, 93 or 33.60% of the respondents had been employed for more than 10 years, followed by 76 or 27.40% of the respondents with 1–3 years of service, 44 or 15.90% of the respondents with 4-6 years, 33 or 11.90% of the respondents with less than a 1 year in service, and 31 or 11.20% of the respondents with 7-10 years in service. Regarding the frequency of service requests with the HRMO, 141 respondents (50.90%) reported interacting with the office occasionally, followed by 43 (15.50%) who did so weekly, 38 (13.70%) who did so monthly, 34 (12.30%) who did so rarely, and 21 (7.60%) who did so daily. The inclusion of these demographic variables was solely to describe the profile of all respondents who voluntarily participated; however, these data were not included in or considered during hypothesis testing, as the study focused on measuring HRMO service quality based on the five SERVQUAL dimensions.

Service Quality Expectations of Employees
Expectations on Tangibles
Table 2 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (E1-E3) under the tangibles dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.80. The benchmark statement E3, which states that HR should provide precise and up-to-date printed or digital forms and information, received the highest mean score of 4.81 (SD = 0.55), indicating that employees expect clear, up-to-date information when submitting a service request to HRMO.

Table 2. *Employees' Expectations of the Tangibles of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
E1. HR should have well-organized and easily accessible physical facilities and counters.	277	4.79	0.53	Strongly Agree
E2. HR staff should present a professional appearance and wear identification when appropriate.	277	4.80	0.57	Strongly Agree
E3. HR should provide clear and up-to-date printed/digital forms and information.	277	4.81	0.55	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.80**		**Strongly Agree**

The study of Virmani et al. (2025) underscores that the effectiveness of digital HR practices depends on clarity, trust, and perceived usefulness of HR systems. When organizations provide accurate, up-to-date HR information, such as policies, forms, and procedures, employees show higher engagement and perceive greater transparency. In a Philippine government research institution context, maintaining user-friendly digital HR platforms, automating personnel transactions, and streamlining recruitment and performance management processes can reduce errors and delays, thereby improving service quality. Consistent with Virmani et al. (2025), these initiatives enhance employee satisfaction and position the HRMO as a strategic contributor to institutional effectiveness by strengthening operational efficiency and supporting a sustainable competitive advantage. Results for benchmark statements E2 and E1 further highlight the importance of professionalism and physical accessibility in HR service delivery. E2 obtained a high mean score (M = 4.80, SD = 0.57), indicating that employees value professional appearance and proper identification of HR staff as signals of trust, credibility, and approachability. This aligns with Syrigou and Williams (2023), who emphasize that visible indicators of professionalism reinforce legitimacy and confidence in HR practitioners. Meanwhile, E1 also received a high rating (M = 4.79, SD = 0.53), reflecting strong expectations for organized and accessible HR facilities. Supporting this, Shetty et al. (2024) and Rodhi (2025) note that well-designed physical environments enhance service efficiency, performance, and trust. For a Philippine government research institution, maintaining professional HR personnel and well-structured, user-friendly facilities reinforces employees' perceptions of reliability, transparency, and overall HRMO service quality.

Expectations on Reliability
Table 3 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (E4-E5) under the reliability dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.82. This implies that employees have very high expectations of the HRMO's reliability, suggesting that employees value efficiency, dependability, and accuracy in HR operations, which are essential for fostering trust and confidence in administrative services.

Table 3. *Employees' Expectations of the Reliability of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
E4. HR should process personnel transactions accurately the first time.	277	4.76	0.59	Strongly Agree
E5. HR should provide consistent and dependable services as promised.	277	4.86	0.53	Strongly Agree
E6. HR should keep records without errors and correct mistakes promptly.	277	4.83	0.54	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.82**		**Strongly Agree**

Benchmark statement E5 received the highest mean score (M = 4.86, SD = 0.53), showing that employees strongly expect HR services to be consistent and dependable as promised. Reliability is central to HR service quality because delays or unmet commitments can undermine trust and disrupt personnel processes. This is supported by Saeed et al. (2025), who found that reliable HR services strengthen e-HRM adoption and organizational outcomes, and by Jehanzeb and Bashir (2025), who emphasized that fulfilling psychological contracts enhances trust, engagement, and performance. Similarly, Rathor et al. (2025), Khanyile et al. (2025), and Chitambala and Marvin (2025) affirm that reliability is a core driver of internal service quality and that technology cannot compensate for inconsistent HR delivery, underscoring its importance to the HRMO.

Benchmark statement E6 also obtained a very high rating (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 0.54), reflecting strong expectations for error-free records and prompt correction of mistakes, which are critical for payroll, benefits, compliance, and employee trust. This aligns with Widiatmo et al. (2025) and Mushumba and Nyirenda (2024), who emphasized that the usefulness of HRIS depends on information accuracy and robust data-quality controls. In addition, benchmark statement E4 (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 0.59) highlights very high expectations for right-first-time processing of personnel transactions, thereby reducing administrative burden and reinforcing confidence in HR services. These findings are supported by Raja et al. (2024), Liao et al. (2024), Mahapatra et al. (2025), and Rana et al. (2025), collectively affirming that reliable, accurate, and error-free HR transactions are essential determinants of perceived HRMO service quality at a Philippine government research institution.

Expectations on Responsiveness
Table 4 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (E7-E9) under the responsiveness dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.73. This implies that employees have very high expectations for the HRMO's responsiveness, indicating that promptness, accessibility, and a helpful attitude are essential components of high-quality HR service at a Philippine government research institution.

Table 4. *Employees' Expectations of the Responsiveness of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
E7. HR should respond quickly to employee requests and inquiries.	277	4.77	0.58	Strongly Agree
E8. HR staff should be willing to help employees with personnel matters.	277	4.64	0.78	Strongly Agree
E9. HR should promptly notify employees of the status of their requests.	277	4.77	0.64	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.73**		**Strongly Agree**

Benchmark statements E7 and E9, which address HR's quick response to employee requests and prompt notification of request status, both received high mean scores of 4.77 (SD = 0.58) and 4.77 (SD = 0.64), indicating that employees at a Philippine government research institution place substantial value on timely communication, with slightly greater variability in perceptions of status updates. These results underscore responsiveness and timely feedback as core dimensions of HR service quality, since delays or poor communication can disrupt planning and weaken trust. This is supported by Saeed et al. (2025), who identified responsiveness as a key mechanism through which e-HRM enhances job and organizational performance, as well as by Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) and Höllig et al. (2025), who emphasized that fast responses signal care, professionalism, and assurance. Advances in HR technology further reinforce this expectation, as Jiang et al. (2025) demonstrated that automation and AI-driven tools can reduce response times and improve the consistency of status updates, helping HRMO at a Philippine government research institution better meet employee expectations.

Benchmark statement E8, which focused on HR staff's willingness to help employees, obtained a high mean score of 4.64 (SD = 0.78), reflecting the strong importance employees place on helpfulness, alongside greater variation in experiences. This suggests that while approachability and support are central to HR service quality, perceptions may differ depending on interaction quality and service consistency. This aligns with Widyarini and Rakhman (2025), who found that a service-oriented HR mindset enhances motivation, satisfaction, and performance, and with Arokiasamy et al. (2025) and Brown et al. (2025), who showed that proactive HR assistance strengthens perceived organizational support and internal service exchanges. Consistent with Zhou et al. (2025), these findings highlight that digital HR systems alone are insufficient; employees must also perceive HR staff as genuinely helpful and responsive, underscoring the continued importance of the human element in sustaining trust, engagement, and overall HR service quality at a Philippine government research institution.

Expectations on Assurance
Table 5 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (E10-E12) under the assurance dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.86. This implies that employees place the most significant importance on HR's ability to inspire confidence, demonstrate competence, and provide reliable, accurate information. The exceptionally high mean indicates that assurance, manifested through knowledge, professionalism, and credibility, is a critical component of perceived HR service quality. Employees expect HR staff to possess the expertise to handle personnel matters correctly, maintain confidentiality, and communicate policies and procedures clearly and with authority.

Table 5. *Employees' Expectations of the Assurance of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
E10. HR staff should be knowledgeable about HR policies and procedures.	277	4.85	0.51	Strongly Agree
E11. HR staff should be courteous and inspire confidence in employees.	277	4.83	0.54	Strongly Agree
E12. HR should handle confidential matters professionally and maintain privacy.	277	4.90	0.44	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.86**		**Strongly Agree**

Benchmark statement E12 received the highest mean score (*M* = 4.90, *SD* = 0.44), highlighting confidentiality and professional discretion as the most critical aspects of HR services at a Philippine government research institution. The high mean and low variability reflect a strong shared expectation that HR must safeguard sensitive information to maintain trust, morale, and organizational credibility, consistent with findings by Idowu and David Oluremi (2025) and supported by Oglesby et al. (2025), Zhong and Feng (2025), and Abraha (2025), who emphasize ethical governance, trust-based labor relations, and legal compliance. Benchmark statement E10 also received a very high rating (*M* = 4.85, *SD* = 0.51), indicating that employees strongly value HR staff's knowledge of policies and procedures, especially in a digitally transforming environment. Studies by Mahmoud et al. (2025), Dang et al. (2025), Zervas and Stiakakis (2025), Zhao et al. (2025), and Tanyag (2025) show that knowledgeable HR personnel enable accurate, efficient, and strategically aligned HR services. Lastly, benchmark statement E11 (*M* = 4.83, *SD* = 0.54) emphasizes the importance of courteous and confidence-inspiring HR behavior, aligning with Ha and Diem (2025) and Van et al. (2025), who found that professionalism and credible conduct strengthen trust, encourage employee voice, and enhance confidence in HR services at a Philippine government research institution.

Expectations on Empathy
Table 6 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (E13-E15) under the empathy dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.71. This implies that employees place considerable value on HR's ability to understand their needs, show genuine concern, and provide personalized support when handling their concerns or transactions. The high composite mean reflects that empathy is viewed as an essential component of HR service quality, as employees expect HR personnel to demonstrate patience, compassion, and individualized attention, especially when dealing with sensitive or complex issues.

Table 6. *Employees' Expectations of the Empathy of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
E13. HR should give individualized attention to employee concerns.	277	4.63	0.73	Strongly Agree
E14. HR should understand employees' specific needs and circumstances.	277	4.70	0.65	Strongly Agree
E15. HR should show genuine interest in resolving employees' problems.	277	4.79	0.57	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.71**		**Strongly Agree**

Benchmark statement E15 recorded a high mean score (*M* = 4.79, *SD* = 0.57), indicating that employees at a Philippine government research institution highly value HR's genuine concern for resolving their problems, particularly those affecting their welfare and working conditions. This reflects expectations of sincerity and empathy beyond routine transactions and is supported by studies showing that empathetic HR behavior enhances engagement, psychological safety, teamwork, productivity, perceived organizational support, trust, retention, and morale (Ma et al., 2024; Amissah-Wilson & Segbenya, 2025; McManus et al., 2025; Muss et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). For the Philippine government research institution HRMO, authentic concern thus has both relational and strategic value in strengthening engagement and workforce stability. Benchmark statements E14 (M = 4.70, SD = 0.65) and E13 (M = 4.63, SD = 0.73) further highlight the importance of empathy, which involves understanding employees' specific needs and providing individualized attention. Although both scored highly, their greater variability suggests inconsistent personalized HR services, indicating room for improvement. Research shows that recognizing individual circumstances and offering tailored support enhances perceived organizational support, well-being, engagement, and performance while reducing stress (Wang et al., 2025; Cai et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2025; Opoku & Boateng, 2024). Additional evidence links individualized and employee-centered HR support to psychological safety, innovation, and emerging HR priorities (Ma et al., 2024; Pauli & Dudek, 2025; Diep & Horváthová, 2025), underscoring its importance in sustaining trust and positive employee–HRMO relations at a Philippine government research institution.

Service Quality Perceptions of Employees
Perceptions on Tangibles
Table 7 shows that, overall, employees agreed with all three benchmark statements (P1-P3) under the tangibles dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.48. This generally implies that HR's physical facilities, equipment, and appearance meet expectations, though slightly below the ideal "strongly agree" level. The result suggests that while HR's physical environment, counter organization, and staff's professional appearance are viewed positively, there may still be minor areas for improvement to fully align service delivery with employee expectations.

Table 7. *Employees' Perceptions of the Tangibles of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P1. HR has well-organized and easily accessible physical facilities and counters.	277	4.51	0.74	Strongly Agree
P2. HR staff present a professional appearance and wear identification when appropriate.	277	4.58	0.69	Strongly Agree
P3. HR provides clear and up-to-date printed/digital forms and information.	277	4.36	0.85	Agree
Composite Mean		**4.48**		**Agree**

Benchmark statement P2 received the highest mean score (*M* = 4.58, *SD* = 0.69), indicating strong employee agreement that HR staff at a Philippine government research institution present a professional appearance and wear identification when appropriate. This underscores the importance of visible professionalism as a cue to trust, credibility, and approachability, although some variability suggests inconsistent practice. Prior studies support this finding: Khorasani et al. (2025) and Kim et al. (2025) demonstrated that professional attire enhances perceptions of authority, competence, and trust in service-oriented roles, whereas Quach et al. (2017) emphasized that staff appearance serves as a visible signal that shapes first impressions and perceived professionalism. In the Philippine government research institution HRMO, professional attire and visible identification therefore function as integral components of service quality rather than mere aesthetic considerations.

Benchmark statement P1 also received a high rating (*M* = 4.51, *SD* = 0.74), indicating that employees generally perceive HR's physical facilities and counters as well-organized and accessible. However, there is some variation in experience. This suggests that orderly layouts and accessible service points support efficient transactions and reduce confusion. Consistent with this, Shetty et al. (2025) and Oyedeji et al. (2025) found that well-designed physical environments positively influence satisfaction, productivity, and perceived support. The application of a Philippine government research institution, an organized HR space, not only enhances operational efficiency but also signals institutional care and reliability. Finally, benchmark statement P3 obtained a slightly lower but still positive mean score (*M* = 4.36, *SD* = 0.85), indicating general agreement that HR provides precise and up-to-date printed or digital information, with room for improvement. The higher variability suggests differences in access or consistency of information delivery. Research by Saeed et al. (2025), Shamila and Hasarindi (2025), Rana et al. (2025), De Alwis et al. (2022), Zervas and Triantari (2025), and Mascariñas et al. (2025) consistently highlights information quality, accuracy, relevance, and timeliness as critical to effective e-HRM and positive employee perceptions. For the Philippine government research institution HRMO, maintaining clear, current, and accessible HR information is essential to strengthening transparency, encouraging HR system use, and reinforcing overall service quality.

Perceptions on Reliability
Table 8 shows that overall, the employees agreed with all three benchmark statements (P4-P6) under the reliability dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.39. This implies that employees generally perceive HR services as reliable, though with some room for improvement. The composite mean indicates that HR generally delivers services in line with expectations, but there may be occasional lapses or areas for improvement in reliability. The result suggests that while employees are satisfied with the overall consistency of HR services, there is still room to improve HR's ability to meet all expectations.

Table 8. *Employees' Perceptions of the Reliability of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P4. HR processes personnel transactions accurately the first time.	277	4.35	0.80	Agree
P5. HR provides consistent and dependable services as promised.	277	4.45	0.79	Agree
P6. HR keeps records without errors and corrects mistakes promptly.	277	4.36	0.83	Agree
Composite Mean		**4.39**		**Agree**

Benchmark statement P5, which stated that HR provides consistent and dependable services as promised, obtained a mean score of 4.45 (*SD* = 0.79), indicating general reliability. The high score reflects HR's ability to

consistently deliver services in accordance with policies and procedures, reinforcing trust and confidence among employees. The relatively higher standard deviation suggests some variability, as occasional delays or inconsistencies may affect perceptions of reliability. The literature underscores the importance of dependability in internal service settings: Ibrahim et al. (2024) emphasized that reliability is a core determinant of internal customer satisfaction, and Akbar et al. (2025) highlighted trust, consistency, and delivery accuracy as essential components of perceived quality. For a Philippine government research institution, maintaining consistent service delivery strengthens employees' trust in HRMO and reinforces its competence and professionalism.

Benchmark statement P6, regarding error-free record-keeping and prompt correction of mistakes, obtained a mean score of 4.36 (*SD* = 0.83), suggesting that employees generally perceive HR records as accurate but see room for improvement. Research supports the importance of precise documentation: Mushumba and Nyirenda (2024) found that HRIS reduces data-entry errors, while Chowdhury and Ahmed (2025) emphasized the use of standardized processes to minimize human error. Shamila and Hasarindi (2025) also noted that information quality, accuracy, timeliness, and reliability predict HRIS usage and satisfaction. For a Philippine government research institution, maintaining accurate, updated records is critical for compliance, operational efficiency, and employee confidence in digital HR platforms. Finally, benchmark statement P4, which indicated that HR processes personnel transactions accurately the first time, obtained a mean score of 4.35 (*SD* = 0.80), reflecting general agreement that HR is effective but with room for improvement. Employees expect error-free processing of leave requests, payroll adjustments, recruitment documents, and other administrative tasks. Research emphasizes first-time accuracy as essential for HR service quality: Saeed et al. (2025) found that HR service quality mediates the effect of e-HRM on job and organizational performance, while Malaluan (2025) and Santos-Suñga and Moreno (2024) showed that HRIS automation reduces errors and improves consistency. For a Philippine government research institution, ensuring accuracy from the start enhances workflow efficiency, reduces rework, and strengthens trust in HR services.

Perceptions on Responsiveness
Table 9 shows that, overall, employees agreed with all three benchmark statements (P7-P9) under the responsiveness dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.33. This implies that employees generally perceive HR as responsive to their needs and inquiries, though there is room for improvement. The composite mean suggests that while HR is generally prompt and attentive in addressing employee requests, notifications, and follow-ups, there are occasions when responsiveness may not fully meet employee expectations.

Table 9. *Employees' Perceptions of the Responsiveness of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P7. HR responds quickly to employee requests and inquiries.	277	4.38	0.84	Agree
P8. HR staff is willing to help employees with personnel matters.	277	4.34	0.84	Agree
P9. HR promptly notifies employees of the status of their requests.	277	4.26	0.92	Agree
Composite Mean		**4.33**		**Agree**

Benchmark statement P7 (M = 4.38, SD = 0.84) indicates that employees generally agree that the Philippine government research institution HRMO responds quickly to requests and inquiries, highlighting responsiveness as a valued aspect of HR service quality. Prompt communication helps employees navigate personnel processes efficiently, reduces uncertainty, and builds confidence in HR operations. However, the higher SD reflects variability in experiences due to factors such as workload, request complexity, staffing, or delays in digital communication. Research consistently underscores the importance of responsiveness, with Saeed et al. (2025) linking it to improved job and organizational performance through e-HRM, Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) noting its positive effect on employee performance, and Zhou et al. (2025) showing that responsive HR support during digital transitions enhances engagement and proactive behavior. Benchmark statements P8 (M = 4.34, SD = 0.84) and P9 (M = 4.26, SD = 0.92) further indicate that employees perceive HR staff as generally helpful and reasonably timely in providing updates, though there is noticeable variation across experiences. Helpfulness and timely communication strengthen perceived organizational support, trust, and satisfaction, as supported by Al-Taie and Khattak (2024), Liu et al. (2022), Mascarenhas et al. (2022), and Bui et al. (2016), who emphasized the positive effects of supportive HR practices on engagement, commitment, and motivation. In addition, Saeed et al. (2025), Shukla (2025), and Zhou et al. (2025) highlight that responsiveness and timely updates, particularly through digital HR systems, enhance efficiency, trust, and proactive behavior. For a Philippine government research institution, effectively leveraging HRIS platforms, automated notifications, and online tracking can help reduce variability,

improve communication consistency, and reinforce HRMO's image as a responsive and supportive service provider.

Perceptions on Assurance

Table 10 shows that, overall, employees strongly agreed with all three benchmark statements (P10-P12) under the assurance dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.53. This implies that employees generally perceive HR staff as highly competent, trustworthy, and able to provide accurate and reliable information. The high composite mean reflects that assurance, demonstrated through HR's knowledge, professionalism, and credibility, is a key factor in shaping employee confidence and satisfaction with HR services. Employees recognize the importance of HR staff's expertise and their ability to handle sensitive matters effectively, thereby reinforcing trust in the HR function and the organization.

Table 10. *Employees' Perceptions of the Assurance of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P10. HR staff are knowledgeable about HR policies and procedures.	277	4.48	0.79	Agree
P11. HR staff are courteous and inspire confidence in employees.	277	4.54	0.72	Strongly Agree
P12. HR handles confidential matters professionally and maintains privacy.	277	4.56	0.73	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean		**4.53**		**Strongly Agree**

Benchmark statement P12, which addressed HR's professional handling of confidential matters, received a high mean score ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.73$), indicating strong employee trust in HR's ability to safeguard sensitive information. This reflects confidence in HR's professionalism and discretion, with minor variation in experiences. Research highlights the growing importance of confidentiality amid digitalization and the use of AI in HR, which heightens legal and data privacy concerns (Starecek et al., 2025; Almarinez, 2025). For a Philippine government research institution, these results show that HRMO's ethical stewardship and reliability in confidentiality are well recognized and should be continuously reinforced, especially in digital systems. Benchmark statement P11 also obtained a high rating ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 0.72$), showing that employees strongly agree that HR staff is courteous and confidence-inspiring. Such behavior fosters positive experiences and strengthens trust, which prior studies link to innovation, fairness, job satisfaction, and engagement (Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska, 2019; Revillod, 2025; Haryadi et al., 2025). This underscores the role of professionalism and respect in sustaining a supportive organizational culture at a Philippine government research institution. Benchmark statement P10, which focused on HR staff's knowledge of policies and procedures, had a mean score of 4.48 (SD = 0.79), indicating perceived competence despite some variation in experience. The findings emphasize the need for accurate guidance, effective problem resolution, and consistent policy application. Supporting research underscores the importance of HR competence, ethical capability, and continuous skill development to meet evolving organizational and technological demands (Ha & Diem, 2025; Iqbal et al., 2023; Starecek et al., 2025), confirming that HRMO staff knowledge is a key determinant of service quality and employee confidence.

Perceptions on Empathy

Table 11 shows that, overall, employees agreed with all three benchmark statements (P13-P15) under the empathy dimension, with a composite mean score of 4.33. This implies that employees generally perceive HR as attentive and considerate of their individual needs, though there is less consensus compared to other service quality dimensions. The composite mean indicates that, while HR is perceived as understanding and supportive, some employees may feel that personalized attention or responsiveness to unique circumstances could be improved.

Table 11. *Employees' Perceptions of the Empathy of HRMO*

Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
P13. HR gives individualized attention to employee concerns.	277	4.31	0.88	Agree
P14. HR understands employees' specific needs and circumstances.	277	4.30	0.87	Agree
P15. HR shows genuine interest in resolving employees' problems.	277	4.37	0.86	Agree
Composite Mean		**4.33**		**Agree**

Benchmark statement P15 ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.86$) indicates that employees perceive the HRMO demonstrates sincere effort in addressing their concerns, and that employees view HR staff as attentive and committed to helping them navigate personnel-related issues. However, the relatively higher standard deviation indicates some variability in experiences, implying that while many employees feel genuinely supported by HRMO, others may have encountered inconsistencies in responsiveness or the degree of support provided. Viot and Benraiss-Noailles (2024) demonstrated that employees' belief that the organization values their well-being significantly improves

well-being and positive organizational intentions. In the context of a Philippine government research institution, when HR staff show genuine interest in resolving employee problems, they signal organizational care and reinforce employees' belief that the institute supports them.

Benchmark statements P13 (*M* = 4.31, *SD* = 0.88) and P14 (*M* = 4.40, *SD* = 0.787 further show that employees agree that HR staff provide personalized support and are attentive to individual situations. Zhou et al. (2025) found that employees who perceive strong support from HR tend to show higher engagement and proactive behavior. Saeed et al. (2025) found that HR service quality mediates the relationship between e-HRM and both job and organizational performance, emphasizing that high-quality HR services must align with employees' needs and perceptions. Similarly, Agha et al. (2025) found that HRM practices positively influence innovation through human capital development. This means that HR is not merely completing transactions; it responds in ways that reflect what employees value and require. In the case of a Philippine government research institution, this means that HRMO's ability to provide individualized assistance can meaningfully influence employees' sense of support and engagement. Together, these findings confirm that in an institution where roles vary widely, HR's capacity to consider individual circumstances becomes essential in delivering effective and supportive services.

Gap Analysis
In Terms of Tangibles
Table 12 shows that the mean expectation score of 4.80 (*SD* = 0.48) exceeds the mean perception score of 4.48 (SD = 0.66), yielding a mean difference of 0.32. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (9609), with *p* < .001, indicates a significant gap between employees' expectations and their experiences regarding the HRMO's tangible elements.

Table 12. *Comparison Between Expectations and Perceptions on Tangibles of HRMO*

Tangibles	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Wilcoxon *W*	*p-value*	Interpretation
Expectation	277	4.80	0.48	0.32	9609	< .001	Significant Difference
Perception	277	4.48	0.66				

At a Philippine government research institution, employees place high expectations on the tangible aspects of HR services, including the cleanliness and organization of facilities, the availability of clear signage and documents, and the professional appearance of HR staff. While overall perceptions are positive, a significant gap remains, indicating that aspects such as the physical environment, workspace layout, information visibility, and material service cues do not consistently meet expectations. This suggests opportunities to modernize facilities, improve organization, enhance information accessibility, and strengthen staff professionalism. Research supports this interpretation: Saeed et al. (2025) highlight that HR service quality, including the accessibility and relevance of information, mediates employees' perceptions of HR effectiveness. Although their focus is on digital systems, the principle applies to physical resources as well. Similarly, Negt and Haunschild (2024) note that gaps between HR research and practice often arise from issues in accessibility, visibility, and information dissemination, which, in the context of a Philippine government research institution, suggests that shortcomings in tangible resources may lower perceived service quality even when HR functions are performed adequately.

Table 13. *Expectation vs. Perception Results for Tangibles*

Expectation Vs Perception	Tangibles	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive Difference	123	44%
Zero Difference	133	48%
Negative Difference	21	8%

The data show that 48% of employees (133 respondents) perceived no gap between their expectations and the HRMO's tangible elements, indicating that nearly half of the workforce finds a Philippine government research institution's HR facilities, equipment, and visual cues adequately professional and accessible. However, 44% (123 respondents) reported a positive gap, signaling unmet expectations for more organized, modern, or visually improved facilities, such as clearer signage, better service counters, or more accessible forms. In comparison, only 8% (21 respondents) experienced a negative gap, suggesting that for a small group, the HRMO exceeded expectations. These patterns indicate that although the HRMO maintains a generally acceptable physical environment, there are opportunities to enhance signage, accessibility, document systems, and the overall appearance of the workspace to better meet employee expectations. Research supports the impact of tangible elements on perceived service quality: Shetty et al. (2025) emphasize that workspace layout, accessibility, and

design significantly influence staff satisfaction, while Saeed et al. (2025) note that tangible cues, such as organized facilities, visible information, and professional counters, signal HR competence and strengthen employees' trust and confidence. Improving these aspects at a Philippine government research institution can enhance comfort, efficiency, and overall perceptions of HR service quality.

In Terms of Reliability

Table 14 shows that the mean expectation score of 4.81 (*SD* = 0.51) is considerably higher than the mean perception score of 4.39 (*SD* = 0.74), yielding a mean difference of 0.42. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test with 10350 observations and *p* < .001 confirms that this difference is statistically significant. This indicates a clear gap between employees' expectations and their experience of the HRMO's reliability at a Philippine government research institution.

Table 14. *Comparison Between Expectations and Perceptions on the Reliability of HRMO*

Reliability	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Wilcoxon *W*	*p-value*	Interpretation
Expectation	277	4.81	0.51	0.42	10350	< .001	Significant Difference
Perception	277	4.39	0.74				

Employees at a Philippine government research institution expect HR services to be accurate, consistent, and dependable, including accurate document processing, error-free recordkeeping, timely updates, and the fulfillment of commitments. However, perceptions indicate that while HRMO generally performs well, these reliability standards are not always fully met, with occasional delays, inconsistencies, or lapses in follow-up noted. The moderate standard deviations suggest variability in experiences: some employees receive consistently dependable service, while others encounter inconsistencies influenced by transaction type, HR workload, or process complexity. This gap aligns with research emphasizing that HR performance is judged on speed, competence, helpfulness, and alignment with expectations (Saeed et al., 2025) and that perceived inconsistency can reduce employee support and extra-role behaviors (Pace et al., 2021). Additionally, Wang et al. (2022) highlight that digital HRM maturity is critical for consistent service delivery, suggesting that ongoing transitions to digital workflows at a Philippine government research institution may contribute to perceived reliability gaps and underscore the need for standardized procedures, improved tracking, and enhanced communication.

Table 15. *Expectation vs. Perception Results for Reliability*

Expectation Vs Perception	Reliability	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive Difference	133	48%
Zero Difference	130	47%
Negative Difference	14	5%

The data reveal that 48% of employees (133 respondents) perceived a positive gap in HR reliability, indicating that their expectations for accurate, consistent, and dependable services were not fully met. In comparison, 47% (130 respondents) reported no gap, and 5% (14 respondents) reported that HR services exceeded expectations. This aligns with the computed mean difference, indicating that reliability is the most significant service gap among the five SERVQUAL dimensions, highlighting it as a critical area for improvement. Although many employees view HRMO as generally competent, inconsistencies in transaction processing, record maintenance, and service delivery undermine confidence and satisfaction. Research supports the importance of reliability in HR service quality: Saeed et al. (2025) note that reliability is essential for effective e-HRM and organizational performance, while Kumar et al. (2025) emphasize that HRIS adoption enhances consistency and dependability. For a Philippine government research institution, addressing this gap through standardized procedures, improved record-keeping, effective digital systems, and monitoring mechanisms will strengthen HRMO's credibility, reinforce employee trust, and support overall organizational performance.

In Terms of Responsiveness

Table 16 shows that the mean expectation score of 4.72 (*SD* = 0.58) exceeds the mean perception score of 4.32 (*SD* = 0.79), yielding a mean difference of 0.40. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (10058, *p* < .001) indicates a significant gap between employees' expectations and perceptions regarding HRMO's responsiveness. This suggests that, while employees expect HR to respond promptly to requests and inquiries and to provide timely updates, their perceptions indicate these expectations are not consistently met. The relatively higher standard deviation in perceptions reflects variability in employees' experiences, likely influenced by workload fluctuations, the complexity of inquiries, or the availability of HR staff. This gap emphasizes the importance of HRMO enhancing

timely communication, attentiveness, and follow-up practices to meet employee expectations for responsive service.

Table 16. *Comparison Between Expectations and Perceptions of the Responsiveness of HRMO*

Responsiveness	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Wilcoxon W	p-value	Interpretation
Expectation	277	4.72	0.58	0.40	10058	< .001	Significant Difference
Perception	277	4.32	0.79				

Research supports the critical role of responsiveness in HR service quality. Saeed et al. (2025) found that HR service quality mediates the impact of e-HRM on employee and organizational performance, with responsiveness as a key dimension alongside reliability, empathy, and assurance. High responsiveness in HR, such as quickly addressing requests and providing timely updates, directly influences employees' perceptions of HR effectiveness and satisfaction. Alharbi et al. (2022) highlighted that Responsiveness is one of the five core SERVQUAL dimensions (Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness) used to assess service quality. Theoretical frameworks from service quality research consistently demonstrate that gaps in responsiveness reduce overall perceived service quality and can affect trust and engagement in service contexts, including internal HR services. For HRMO at a Philippine government research institution, addressing this responsiveness gap could involve implementing request-tracking systems, establishing service-level response times, and providing proactive updates. Doing so would improve employees' perceptions of attentiveness, strengthen trust in HR services, and enhance the HRMO's overall internal service quality.

Table 17. *Expectation vs. Perception Results for Responsiveness*

Expectation Vs Perception	Responsiveness	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive Difference	125	45%
Zero Difference	126	45%
Negative Difference	26	9%

The data indicate that 45% of employees (125 respondents) perceived a positive gap in HR responsiveness, suggesting that while HRMO generally provides adequate assistance, response times and follow-up communications could be improved; another 45% (126 respondents) reported no gap, and 9% (26 respondents) experienced HR services exceeding expectations. This aligns with the computed mean difference in Table 16, highlighting a statistically significant gap in responsiveness. Employees want faster responses, timely updates, and proactive assistance, particularly for urgent personnel matters, which can be addressed through stronger communication channels, ticketing or feedback systems, and standard response-time benchmarks. Research underscores the importance of responsiveness: Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) found that timely HR responses significantly affect employee performance, whereas Zhou et al. (2025) demonstrated that engagement and proactivity are shaped by how effectively HR communicates and supports staff during organizational change. For a Philippine government research institution, enhancing responsiveness ensures employees perceive HRMO as accessible, dependable, and employee-centered, sustaining trust and satisfaction in internal service quality.

In Terms of Assurance
Table 18 indicates that the mean expectation score of 4.86 (*SD* = 0.46) exceeds the mean perception score of 4.53 (SD = 0.68), yielding a mean difference of 0.33. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (7212, *p* < .001) confirms a statistically significant gap between employees' expectations and perceptions regarding HRMO's assurance.

Table 18. *Comparison Between Expectations and Perceptions on Assurance of HRMO*

Assurance	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Wilcoxon W	p-value	Interpretation
Expectation	277	4.86	0.46	0.33	7212	< .001	Significant difference
Perception	277	4.53	0.68				

The data indicate a perceived gap in HR staff's ability to consistently convey competence, credibility, and trustworthiness. Although employees expect HR personnel to handle matters accurately, maintain confidentiality, and inspire confidence through professional knowledge and behavior, perception scores suggest these expectations are not always fully met. While the HRMO demonstrates professionalism and competence, there remains room to strengthen the consistent projection of reliability, expertise, and credibility across employee interactions. Assurance, as a service quality dimension, reflects employees' trust in HR's competence and

credibility, and perceived shortfalls point to areas that need reinforcement. Rana et al. (2025) showed that service quality, information quality, and system quality in e-HRM significantly influence user satisfaction, implying that gaps in these areas translate into assurance gaps. Similarly, Lee and Park (2024) found that employees' perceptions of HRM practices shape organizational trust and satisfaction, while Hijazi (2025) highlighted that higher perceived organizational support fosters psychological safety and positive outcomes. For the Philippine government research institution HRMO, addressing this assurance gap through enhanced staff training, reinforced confidentiality practices, and consistently professional behavior can strengthen employee trust, confidence, and perceptions of HR competence.

Table 19. *Expectation vs. Perception Results for Assurance*

Expectation Vs Perception	Assurance	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive Difference	108	39%
Zero Difference	154	56%
Negative Difference	15	5%

The results show that 56% of respondents (154) reported no gap, indicating that most employees perceive HR staff's professionalism, courtesy, and knowledge as meeting expectations. In comparison, 39% (108) indicated a positive gap, suggesting some desired higher levels of confidence or expertise, and 5% (15) experienced HR exceeding expectations. This aligns with the significant mean difference reported in Table 18, indicating opportunities to enhance assurance through sustained staff development. Assurance reflects employees' perception of HR competence, credibility, and trustworthiness, which are generally strong in HRMO but can be further reinforced through training, mentoring, professional certifications, and participatory HR practices. Research supports this: Ha and Diem (2025) found HR professionalism mediates change-leadership effectiveness and organizational commitment; Saeed et al. (2025) emphasized competence, helpfulness, and responsiveness as core HR service quality dimensions; Oglesby et al. (2025) highlighted that credibility and trustworthiness influence organizational trust; and Oluwafemi and Ogundana (2025) showed co-created HR systems improve perceptions of competence and trust. For the Philippine government research institution HRMO, investing in these areas can strengthen assurance, foster employee confidence, and enhance engagement and satisfaction.

In Terms of Empathy
Table 20 shows that the mean expectation score of 4.71 (*SD* = 0.60) exceeds the mean perception score of 4.33 (SD = 0.81), yielding a mean difference of 0.38. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test (equivalent to 8123; *p* < .001) indicates a significant gap between employees' expectations and perceptions of HRMO's empathy. This suggests that employees perceive HR staff's ability to consistently demonstrate understanding, individualized attention, and genuine concern for their specific needs and circumstances as insufficient relative to expectations. While employees expect HR personnel to be attentive, supportive, and considerate of personal situations, their perceptions reveal that these expectations are not fully met in practice. The relatively higher standard deviation indicates variability in experiences, which may be influenced by factors such as the complexity of employee concerns, HR staff workload, or differences in individual interactions.

Table 20. *Comparison Between Expectations and Perceptions on Empathy of HRMO*

Empathy	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Wilcoxon *W*	*p-value*	Interpretation
Expectation	277	4.71	0.60	0.38	8123	< .001	Significant Difference
Perception	277	4.33	0.81				

Empathy is a critical dimension of service quality, especially in internal HR service delivery. Muss et al. (2025) emphasize that empathetic leadership positively influences interpersonal relationships, trust, employee well-being, and performance. Although this research focuses on leadership, HR personnel often act as internal leaders or facilitators of employee support. Demonstrating empathy enhances employees' perceptions of HR as understanding and supportive. Maiti et al. (2025) developed empathy-based training programs for HR teams, demonstrating that structured training can enhance HR staff's capacity to support employees with complex emotional or cultural needs. This reinforces the idea that empathy is a trainable skill that can help close the gap in HRMO's service quality. Singh and Singh (2025) found that emotional intelligence, which includes empathy, is crucial for managing remote or hybrid workforces. HR staff are expected to apply empathy consistently across contexts, and gaps in perceived empathy may reflect challenges in applying emotional intelligence in daily interactions. Implications for HRMO at a Philippine government research institution: to enhance the empathy

dimension of service quality, HRMO can provide targeted empathy and emotional intelligence training for HR personnel to improve their understanding of employee needs and circumstances. Develop standardized procedures for personalized follow-up to ensure consistent attention to individual employee concerns. Implement feedback mechanisms to monitor employees' experiences of support, allowing HR to adjust services in real time. Strengthening empathy in HR interactions can increase employees' perceived support, trust, and overall satisfaction, reinforcing HRMO as an employee-centered, responsive, and caring internal service provider.

Table 21. *Expectation vs. Perception Results for Empathy*

	Empathy	
Expectation Vs Perception	**Frequency (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
Positive Difference	110	40%
Zero Difference	142	51%
Negative Difference	25	9%

The table shows that 51% of respondents (142) reported no gap between expectations and perceptions under the Empathy dimension, indicating that HRMO generally meets employees' expectations in understanding individual needs and addressing concerns. Meanwhile, 40% (110) indicated a positive gap, suggesting that some employees expected greater personalized care and attentiveness, while 9% (25) reported that HR exceeded expectations in empathy and responsiveness. These findings, consistent with the significant mean difference reported in Table 20, highlight opportunities to strengthen individualized attention, empathetic communication, and proactive follow-up. Research supports the importance of empathy in HR service: Muss et al. (2025) found empathetic leadership enhances trust, well-being, and performance; Zhao et al. (2025) reported that perceived HR support, including empathy during digital transitions, predicts engagement and proactivity; and Verma and Upahaya (2025) emphasized emotional intelligence as key to effective HRM. For the Philippine government research institution HRMO, providing empathy and EI training, standardizing personalized follow-ups, and implementing feedback mechanisms can bridge the empathy gap, improve employee satisfaction and trust, and reinforce HRMO's role as a supportive, employee-centered service provider.

SERVQUAL Dimension Rankings

Table 22 shows that, among the SERVQUAL dimensions, reliability recorded the largest gap (mean difference = 0.42) between employee expectations and perceptions, indicating that staff perceives that HRMO needs to enhance the accuracy, consistency, and dependability of its personnel services. Responsiveness (mean gap = 0.40) was close behind, highlighting that timely communication, prompt action, and follow-up remain areas of concern. Empathy (mean gap = 0.38) ranked third, indicating a need for more individualized attention and genuine concern for employees' specific needs.

Table 22. *Ranking of Service Quality Gaps Across SERVQUAL Dimensions*

SERVQUAL Dimension	Expectation (SD)	Perception (SD)	Mean Difference	Rank (by Gap)
Reliability	4.81	4.39	0.42	1
Responsiveness	4.72	4.32	0.40	2
Empathy	4.71	4.33	0.38	3
Assurance	4.86	4.53	0.33	4
Tangibles	4.80	4.80	0.32	5

Assurance (mean gap = 0.33) and tangibles (mean gap = 0.32) showed minor differences, suggesting that employees generally perceive HRMO staff as professional, competent, and courteous, and that the physical facilities and visible resources meet basic expectations. This ranking underscores that employees' primary expectations focus on operational efficiency, particularly in the reliability and responsiveness of HR services. These dimensions represent the most significant opportunities for HRMO to strengthen service trustworthiness, employee confidence, and overall satisfaction. By addressing these gaps, HRMO can ensure more consistent, dependable, and timely support for all personnel matters. Saeed et al. (2025) found that HR service quality (HRSQ) mediates the relationship between e-HRM and both job and organizational performance. Their model emphasizes key service quality attributes, including service delivery speed, competence, and helpfulness. The dimensions of responsiveness and reliability directly map to these attributes, suggesting that gaps in these areas can significantly affect both employee perceptions and organizational outcomes. Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) highlighted that internal service quality (ISQ) dimensions, particularly responsiveness and assurance, have a measurable impact on employee performance. This reinforces the conclusion that reliability and responsiveness are critical internal service quality dimensions for HR, and that inconsistencies or perceived shortfalls in these areas can undermine

employees' trust in HR services. Together, these findings suggest that HRMO should prioritize improving operational efficiency, including accurate record-keeping, prompt responses, and consistent follow-through, as these are the aspects most closely linked to employee satisfaction and perceived organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study assessed the service quality of the HRMO at a Philippine government research institution using the SERVQUAL framework. Across all five dimensions, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles, employees' expectations exceeded their perceptions, indicating service quality gaps. The largest gaps were observed in reliability, responsiveness, and empathy, suggesting the greatest need for improvement in consistent processes, timely responses, and personalized support. Smaller gaps in assurance and tangibles indicate that employees generally perceive HR staff as professional and facilities as well-maintained.

Based on these findings, the study recommends prioritized interventions: for Reliability, standardize procedures, implement tracking systems, and ensure consistency in service delivery. For Responsiveness, improve communication channels, clarify response timelines, and provide timely assistance. For Empathy, offer personalized guidance, train staff in emotional intelligence, and enhance understanding of employee needs. For Assurance and Tangibles, maintain professional conduct, uphold staff competence, and ensure organized, well-equipped facilities. Improving these areas is expected to enhance employee satisfaction, trust, and productivity, thereby strengthening overall HRMO effectiveness and contributing to a more efficient organizational environment.

The study also provides academic and practical value. It demonstrates that SERVQUAL can be effectively applied to evaluate internal administrative services in public-sector research institutions and provides evidence-based insights to enhance HR service delivery. Limitations include its focus on HRMO users, which may limit generalizability to other offices or institutions, and its reliance on self-reported perceptions that individual experiences may influence. Future research may extend to other departments, explore links between HR service quality and employee performance or retention, or use qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups to gain deeper insights.

Contributions of Authors

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