


# Service quality and tourist passenger loyalty: A basis for an action plan at Mindoro Seaports

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## Abstract

This study aimed to propose an action plan to improve service delivery and enhance tourist passenger loyalty at Mindoro Sea Ports. The researcher assessed the relationship between service quality and tourist passenger loyalty by examining five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety and assurance. The study described the demographic profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, and civil status, as well as their psychographic profile based on frequency and purpose of travel. It also evaluated tourist passenger loyalty in terms of brand image, passenger engagement, and overall loyalty. Furthermore, the study tested for significant differences in perceptions on service quality and loyalty when grouped according to demographic and psychographic variables and determined the significant relationship between service quality and tourist passenger loyalty. Based on the findings, an action plan was developed to address identified service gaps and support strategic improvements in seaport operations. The researcher used quantitative method and descriptive research design. The respondents of the study were 417 tourists visiting the seaports. The instrument was adapted from two different studies. Further, the statistical tests used in the study included the Shapiro-Wilk test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, and Mann-Whitney U-test to test significant differences; Spearman Rho was used to test relationships; and Linear Regression was employed to determine the predictor variables of service quality and tourist passenger loyalty. The study concluded that most of the respondents are young, female, and single travelers who frequently visit Mindoro Seaports primarily for leisure purposes. The respondents rated the seaport services positively, especially in terms of empathy, safety and assurance. Passenger loyalty is strongly influenced by brand image and passenger engagement. Additionally, frequent and purpose-driven travelers showed higher loyalty levels. Lastly, the study proposed a comprehensive action plan and provided relevant recommendations to enhance seaport services and promote passenger loyalty.

**Keywords:** service quality, tourist passenger loyalty, Mindoro Seaport, action plan

## **Service quality and tourist passenger loyalty: A basis for an action plan at Mindoro Seaports**

### **1. Introduction**

In the modern era of global mobility and integrated tourism systems, seaports are no longer limited to their traditional roles in freight and logistics. They have emerged as pivotal components in the broader tourism infrastructure, particularly as passenger expectations have shifted toward more efficient, comfortable, and service-oriented travel experiences. These maritime gateways serve not only as physical entry points but also as the first impression of a destination, thereby contributing directly to tourist loyalty and overall satisfaction. Prominent seaports across Europe such as those in Venice, Barcelona, and Piraeus serve as prime examples of how port facilities are increasingly being restructured to accommodate the needs of tourists. These ports now prioritize not only transportation efficiency but also the delivery of high-quality services, comfortable waiting areas, and smooth inter-modal connections. This global trend is mirrored in the Asia-Pacific region, where emerging tourist economies are investing heavily in modern port infrastructure to draw more international visitors and improve their competitiveness in the tourism sector. For archipelagic and island nations, such as Indonesia and the Philippines, seaports play a vital role in bridging remote destinations, stimulating regional tourism, and sustaining economic activity. The Philippine archipelago, consisting of over 7,000 islands, relies on a network of functional and service-oriented ports to support both domestic and foreign travel.

In this situation, service quality and tourist passenger loyalty emerge as critical variables in evaluating the effectiveness of port operations. Service Quality, operationally defined using the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et. al.,1988), comprises five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility, each representing distinct aspects of service delivery. Theoretically, it refers to the gap between passenger expectations and their perceptions of the actual service. Tourist Passenger Loyalty is defined based on Oliver's model as the passenger's behavioral intention to reuse, recommend, and remain committed to a port's services. These definitions form the foundation for evaluating seaport performance and determining strategies to enhance user satisfaction and retention. The relationship between service quality and customer loyalty is well established in transport studies. This study adopts a questionnaire adapted from Parasuraman et. al.,(1988) for measuring service quality and integrates Oliver's constructs to assess passenger loyalty. In the context of Mindoro's seaports, service reliability and responsiveness are vital, given the fluctuating nature of sea schedules and regional connectivity. Thus, understanding how each dimension contributes to loyalty will allow port authorities and tourism stakeholders to align service delivery with passenger expectations.

Despite growing scholarly interest in transportation service quality, empirical studies specifically addressing tourist perspectives in regional Philippine seaports, particularly those in Mindoro, remain limited. Preliminary surveys and observations at Mindoro ports reveal recurring issues such as long queues, lack of seating, minimal customer service, and poor signage. Gaps in responsiveness and empathy emerged in initial data collection, highlighting the need for a more structured and context-specific evaluation using SERVQUAL. Mindoro's seaports particularly Calapan Seaport, Abra de Ilog Seaport, and Puerto Galera Seaport serve as vital transportation and tourism gateways within the MIMAROPA region and to adjacent areas such as CALABARZON. According to the Maritime Industry Authority, over 1.8 million passengers travel via Mindoro's ports annually, underscoring their importance in promoting tourism and sustaining local economies. However, unlike larger port systems equipped with institutionalized service feedback mechanisms, these ports operate with limited resources, infrastructural constraints, and inconsistencies in customer service practices. These issues highlight the need for focused research to provide localized insights and benchmark performance improvements.

This study is motivated by the need to address the specific service-related challenges at these three key

seaports in Mindoro. The scope of the research is limited to the tourist passenger experience at Calapan, Abra de Ilog, and Puerto Galera Seaports, using SERVQUAL dimensions as the primary framework for evaluating service quality. The investigation centers on the link between service performance and the loyalty of passengers, particularly their likelihood to return, recommend, and trust the port services. While the study provides valuable insights for improving customer service and enhancing passenger loyalty, its findings are limited by its geographic focus, sample size, and time frame. Operational data were gathered only during a specific period and reflect the perceptions of tourists who traveled at that time, excluding cargo users, port employees, and other stakeholder groups. Additionally, logistical constraints such as limited access to port management records and budgetary restrictions affected the breadth of the analysis. Nevertheless, this study contributes essential information that can help shape future improvements in seaport operations, enrich passenger experiences, and support tourism development initiatives within the region.

**Objectives of the Study** - The study generally assessed the relationship between service quality and tourist passenger loyalty at Mindoro Sea Ports. Specifically, it aimed to: evaluate the service quality of Mindoro Sea Ports based on five dimensions—reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety and assurance; determine tourist passenger loyalty in terms of brand image, passenger engagement, and overall passenger loyalty; examine the significant relationship between service quality and tourist passenger loyalty; and propose an action plan to improve service delivery and enhance tourist passenger loyalty at Mindoro Sea Ports.

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - This study employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationship between service quality and tourist passenger loyalty at Mindoro Sea Ports. The quantitative method was selected due to its ability to systematically gather, analyze, and interpret numerical data to determine the extent and nature of relationships between variables. In particular, the correlational aspect of the research design allowed the study to assess the strength and direction of association between the five dimensions of service quality reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, assurance, and empathy and the sub-variables of tourist passenger loyalty, namely brand image, passenger engagement, and overall loyalty. This non-experimental design was chosen as it did not involve manipulation of variables but instead focused on observing and describing existing conditions. A descriptive-correlational design is most appropriate when the objective is to identify whether and how two or more variables are related within a specific context. The use of this method ensured a realistic analysis of the natural setting of port service delivery without altering the conditions under which passengers interact with the services provided.

**Respondents of the Study** - The participants of this study were composed of tourist passengers who traveled via ferry through the major Mindoro Seaports namely Calapan Seaport, Puerto Galera Seaport, and Abra de Ilog Seaport. These individuals represent the primary users of seaport services in Mindoro and were deemed appropriate for the study because of their direct experience with port facilities, staff, and overall service quality. A total of 384 respondents participated in the study. This sample size was scientifically determined using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, considering a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. The calculation was based on the estimated population of ferry passengers traveling through the selected ports during peak seasons. To ensure that the data collected was representative and reliable, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique. The population was first grouped according to the seaport they used, and from each stratum, respondents were selected at random. This approach ensured proportional representation across the three seaports and minimized sampling bias. The researcher personally conducted the distribution of questionnaires at the port terminals during scheduled peak hours to capture passengers with varied travel purposes and demographics.

Respondents were selected based on specific inclusion criteria designed to enhance the quality and relevance of the study. These qualifications were as follows: they must be legally of age (18 years old and above); they must be traveling as tourist passengers, regardless of whether the purpose was for leisure, business, or personal

reasons; they must have used the Mindoro Sea Ports at least twice in the last twelve months, to ensure familiarity with port services; and they must be willing to participate in the survey voluntarily. These qualifications ensured that only informed and experienced seaport users participated in the study, thereby contributing credible and meaningful data for the analysis of service quality and tourist passenger loyalty in Mindoro. The respondents for this study were proportionally selected from three major seaports in Mindoro namely Calapan, Abra de Ilog, and Puerto Galera based on their respective passenger volumes. Passenger data was sourced from official maritime transport records. Using proportional allocation, 384 tourist passengers were surveyed in total, with the highest number (275) from Calapan due to its larger share of total traffic (71.72%). Abra de Ilog contributed 59 respondents (15.33%), and Puerto Galera contributed 50 (12.95%).

**Data Collection Instrument** - This study utilized an adapted questionnaire as its primary research instrument to assess tourist passenger perceptions of service quality and its impact on passenger loyalty in Mindoro Seaports namely Calapan Seaport, Puerto Galera Seaport, and Abra de Ilog Seaport. The instrument was adapted from previously validated studies by Yu et. al.,(2024), “Service Quality and Customer Loyalty in Philippine Ferry Terminals,” and Hife et. al.,(2022), “Passenger Experience and Satisfaction in Regional Port Facilities.” The original questionnaires were modified to suit the contextual realities and operational environment of Mindoro’s seaports while preserving the integrity of the original constructs.

The questionnaire was divided into three (3) major parts. Part I introduced the purpose of the research, presented an informed consent form, and outlined the participants' rights and responsibilities. This section emphasized the confidentiality of responses, the voluntary nature of participation, and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. It also included qualifier questions to confirm that respondents were legally of age, traveling as tourist passengers, had utilized Mindoro Sea Ports at least twice, and consented to participate. Part II focused on the demographic profile of the respondents. It included variables such as age, sex, civil status, and frequency of travel using Mindoro Seaports. These demographic indicators were intended to aid in the contextual analysis of the passengers' responses and preferences. Part III contained the core items measuring the study’s main variables: service quality, brand image, passenger engagement, and passenger loyalty. Service quality was further divided into five key dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety and assurance. A four-point Likert scale was used to assess each item, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), to capture the intensity of respondent perceptions in a simplified yet measurable format.

To ensure the content validity of the adapted instrument, it underwent expert validation by a panel consisting of a tourism and hospitality academic, a port operations professional, and a statistician with expertise in quantitative research design. The experts assessed the instrument in terms of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study’s objectives. Based on their feedback, minor modifications were made to ensure that the items were culturally and operationally applicable to the target research setting.

**Table 1**

*Reliability Testing Result*

Indicators	No of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Remarks
Reliability	7	0.926	Excellent
Responsiveness	5	0.846	Good
Empathy	6	0.896	Good
Tangibility	12	0.951	Excellent
Safety and Assurance	7	0.950	Excellent
Brand Image	4	0.956	Excellent
Passenger Engagement	7	0.949	Excellent
Overall Passenger Loyalty	8	0.968	Excellent

*Legend > 0.9 =Excellent; >0.8=Good;>0.7=Acceptable;>0.6=Questionable;>0.5=Poor;<0.5=Unacceptable*

A pilot test was also administered to forty (40) tourist passengers who had traveled through one of the targeted seaports at least twice. The pilot testing aimed to determine the internal consistency of each indicator through Cronbach’s Alpha reliability testing. The results of the reliability test are summarized in the table above.

These results confirm the instrument's strong internal reliability, with most constructs falling under the "Excellent" category ( $\alpha \geq 0.90$ ) and others under "Good" ( $\alpha \geq 0.80$ ), thus affirming its appropriateness for use in the main study.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The researcher employed a hybrid approach in collecting data for this study, utilizing both printed questionnaires and an online platform via Google Forms. This method was chosen to ensure maximum reach and response rate among tourist passengers traveling via ferry through the Mindoro Seaports, particularly at Abra de Ilog Seaport, Calapan Seaport, and Puerto Galera (Balatero) Seaport. The data collection process followed a systematic procedure, beginning with the development and validation of the research instrument. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from validated instruments previously employed in similar research. The adaptation process involved face and content validation conducted by a panel of academic experts in tourism and statistics. The questionnaire was evaluated in terms of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Following validation, a pilot test was conducted involving forty (40) tourist passengers who were not part of the main sample. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha revealed coefficients above the acceptable threshold, confirming the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items.

Upon approval from port management, printed questionnaires were distributed in high-traffic areas of the selected seaports. These areas included check-in counters, waiting lounges, and ticketing zones. The researcher personally approached potential respondents, explained the purpose of the study, and provided instructions for accomplishing the form. Respondents were given adequate time to answer the survey before collection. Simultaneously, Google Forms was used as an alternative means of data gathering. QR codes linked to the online version of the survey were strategically placed at key points within the ports, allowing passengers to access the questionnaire using their mobile devices. This version was designed to be concise, user-friendly, and identical in structure and content to the printed version. Both formats featured a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), covering variables related to service quality such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, safety, and assurance as well as indicators of passenger loyalty including brand image, engagement, and overall loyalty. To enrich the quantitative data, the researcher employed triangulation through field observations and informal interviews with selected passengers. Observations focused on staff behavior, facility conditions, and general port services. Informal interviews provided additional context regarding passengers' perceptions and experiences. Data collection was conducted over a four-week period to ensure diversity and capture different waves of tourist traffic across the three seaports.

**Data Analysis** - To perform data analysis, the following statistical tools were used. Weighted mean and ranking were used to assess the service quality of Mindoro Sea Ports in terms of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety and assurance and determine the tourist passengers loyalty in terms of brand image, passenger engagement, over-all passenger loyalty. The result of Shapiro-Wilk Test revealed that p-values of the main variable was less than 0.05 which means that the data set is not normally distributed. Therefore, Spearman rho Correlation was used to test the significant relationship of the treated variables. In addition, post hoc test was also conducted. The following Likert Scale was used in assessing the variables: 3.50-4.00=strongly agree; 2.50-3.49=agree; 1.5-2.49=disagree; and 1.00-1.4=strongly disagree. All data were treated using a statistical software known as JAMOV version 2.6 to further interpret the result of the study using an alpha level of 0.05 and 0.01.

**Ethical Consideration** - This study strictly adhered to ethical principles in conducting research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study, their right to voluntarily participate or withdraw at any point, and the measures taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The printed and online questionnaires both contained a consent statement which participants had to affirm before answering. The privacy of the respondents was protected in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality. The Google Forms platform

automatically anonymized the data, while printed responses were securely stored and encoded without recording any names or contact information. Furthermore, the researcher sought formal approval from the original authors of the questionnaire used in this study. Proper acknowledgment and citation were made, and the adapted version retained the structure and intent of the original instrument while aligning with the context of the Mindoro Seaports. Approval to conduct the survey was also obtained from the management of the selected seaports. All interactions with participants were conducted respectfully, ensuring that their rights and well-being were prioritized. The research complied with institutional ethical standards and was carried out with the utmost integrity to ensure reliable and responsible research output.

### 3. Results and discussion

**Table 2**

*Summary Table of Service Quality*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Reliability	3.43	Agree	2
Responsiveness	3.40	Agree	4
Empathy	3.46	Agree	1
Tangibility	3.33	Agree	5
Safety and Assurance	3.41	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.41	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49=Agree; 1.50-2.49=Disagree; 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree*

Table 2 shows the overall service quality at the port, as perceived by the respondents, is reflected through five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety and assurance. Among these, empathy emerged as the highest-rated indicator with a weighted mean of 3.46, interpreted as agree, and ranked 1st. This was followed by reliability (3.43, agree, rank 2) and safety and assurance (3.41, agree, rank 3). All dimensions were rated within the agree range, indicating general satisfaction among passengers with the port's service quality, though no dimension reached the strongly agree level. The overall composite mean is 3.41, which also falls under the agree category.

The top-rated dimension, empathy, reflects the respondents' appreciation for the human-centered approach of port staff. It indicates that passengers felt genuinely cared for, with their individual needs considered throughout their travel experience. This suggests that front-line employees have been successful in demonstrating warmth, attentiveness, and respectful treatment particularly for passengers with special needs, cultural differences, and unique travel preferences. The prominence of empathy also aligns with the growing trend in service industries where emotional intelligence and personalized customer care are emphasized. The high rating of empathy may be a reflection of passengers' direct interactions with staff members who go beyond standard service procedures to ensure comfort, inclusivity, and understanding.

Meanwhile, the three lowest-rated service quality dimensions were tangibility (3.33, agree, rank 5), responsiveness (3.40, agree, rank 4), and safety and assurance (3.41, agree, rank 3). Although all fall under the "agree" interpretation, their relatively lower scores suggest areas for improvement. Tangibility, ranked the lowest, implies that physical aspects of the port such as facilities, signage, cleanliness, and equipment may not fully meet passenger expectations. These physical elements are crucial because they form the first impression and shape the perceived quality and professionalism of the port services. Despite the efforts in staff behavior and service consistency, any shortcomings in infrastructure or visible service elements could diminish the overall experience.

According to Parasuraman et. al.,(2018), tangibles are a critical element of the SERVQUAL model as they serve as visual cues of quality. Even if intangible services are delivered well, any perceived inadequacy in tangible components can negatively impact overall service perception. This is particularly true in transportation settings, where passengers expect convenience, modernity, and hygiene to align with safety and efficiency. Inadequate physical conditions may signal neglect, thus weakening passengers' trust and satisfaction.

**Table 3***Summary Table on Impact of Tourist Passenger Loyalty*

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Brand Image	3.27	Agree	3
Passenger Engagement	3.42	Agree	1
Overall Passenger Loyalty	3.38	Agree	2
Composite Mean	3.36	Agree	

*Legend: 3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.49=Agree; 1.50-2.49=Disagree; 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 shows the summary of various indicators on tourist passenger loyalty. The indicator “passenger engagement” emerged as the highest-ranked factor, with a weighted mean of 3.42, verbally interpreted as agree, and ranked 1st.

This was followed by “overall passenger loyalty,” with a weighted mean of 3.38, ranked 2nd. The lowest-ranked indicator is “brand image,” with a weighted mean of 3.27, also interpreted as agree, and ranked 3rd. The composite mean of 3.36 indicates that, in general, the respondents agreed with the factors that influence tourist passenger loyalty.

The highest-ranked indicator, “passenger engagement,” highlights the importance of passengers feeling personally connected and involved with the seaport. A weighted mean of 3.42 reflects a strong emotional bond, where passengers take pride in using the local seaport and enjoy interactions with other passengers. This sense of engagement leads to enhanced loyalty, as passengers who feel an emotional connection are more likely to recommend the seaport to others and return for future travels. The analysis suggests that fostering passenger engagement is critical in building long-term loyalty, as it creates an atmosphere where passengers feel valued and integral to the seaport experience.

In contrast, the lowest-ranked indicator, “brand image,” with a weighted mean of 3.27, suggests that while the seaport maintains a generally positive image, it may not have achieved the strong, distinct identity necessary to inspire the highest level of loyalty among passengers. Passengers perceive the seaport favorably, but it may not be their first choice when compared to other seaports. The analysis suggests that strengthening the seaport's brand image could be an effective strategy to enhance passenger loyalty further. A competitive and unique brand image can reinforce the seaport's position as the preferred travel hub, ensuring passengers think of it first when making travel decisions. The seaport could benefit from increasing its brand visibility and distinctiveness, establishing itself as the top choice for passengers.

Table 4 shows the correlation analysis between the dimensions of service quality and the indicators of tourist passenger loyalty, namely brand image, passenger engagement, and overall passenger loyalty. As shown, all computed Pearson *r*-values indicate a strong positive correlation, with corresponding *p*-values of less than 0.001, signifying highly significant relationships across all service quality variables.

Specifically, safety and assurance exhibited the strongest correlation with all three indicators of loyalty: brand image ( $r = 0.697$ ), passenger engagement ( $r = 0.726$ ), and overall passenger loyalty ( $r = 0.710$ ). This finding underscores the vital role of safety-related factors in fostering trust and commitment among passengers. The perception of a secure facility enhances customer confidence, which in turn reinforces brand attachment and loyalty behaviors.

The dimension of reliability also showed strong correlations, notably with passenger engagement ( $r = 0.700$ ) and overall passenger loyalty ( $r = 0.663$ ). This indicates that consistent and dependable service delivery builds affective commitment and a sense of pride and satisfaction among passengers. Furthermore, tangibility and empathy both recorded *r*-values above 0.64 across all loyalty indicators, signifying the importance of well-maintained physical facilities and emotionally intelligent service personnel in driving positive passenger experiences.

**Table 4***Relationship Between Service Quality and Tourist Passenger Loyalty*

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Reliability</b>			
Brand Image	0.656**	<.001	Highly Significant
Passenger Engagement	0.700**	<.001	Significant
Overall Passenger Loyalty	0.663**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Responsiveness</b>			
Brand Image	0.622**	<.001	Significant
Passenger Engagement	0.610**	<.001	Highly Significant
Overall Passenger Loyalty	0.588**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Empathy</b>			
Brand Image	0.672**	<.001	Highly Significant
Passenger Engagement	0.646**	<.001	Highly Significant
Overall Passenger Loyalty	0.670**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Tangibility</b>			
Brand Image	0.672**	<.001	Highly Significant
Passenger Engagement	0.646**	<.001	Highly Significant
Overall Passenger Loyalty	0.670**	<.001	Highly Significant
<b>Safety and Assurance</b>			
Brand Image	0.697**	<.001	Highly Significant
Passenger Engagement	0.726**	<.001	Highly Significant
Overall Passenger Loyalty	0.710**	<.001	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value<0.01

Lastly, responsiveness, while slightly lower in r-values (e.g.,  $r = 0.588$  with overall loyalty), still exhibited statistically significant and positive relationships with all loyalty indicators. This suggests that the promptness and willingness of service personnel to assist passengers are critical, albeit secondary to safety, empathy, and reliability, in cultivating loyalty.

**Table 5***Proposed Action Plan to Enhance the Service Quality and Tourist Passenger Loyalty at Mindoro Seaports*

Key Result Area	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Strategies	Timeline	Expected Outcome
Reliability	Improve Consistency in schedule and service delivery	95% adherence to announced departure and arrival times	Implement real-time tracking systems and pro-active scheduling reviews	1Q	Increased trust and predictability among passengers
Responsiveness	Enhance staff attentiveness and quick resolution of inquiries and complaints	90% customer issue resolution within 24 hours	Train front-liners in rapid response protocols and customer service workshops	2Q	Boost in passenger satisfaction and reduced complaints
Tangibility	Upgrade physical facilities and cleanliness standards	100% compliance with cleanliness audits and visual inspections	Renovate waiting areas, improve signage and enhance visual branding	3Q	More appealing and professional environment, improving first impressions
Empathy	Foster personalized service and attention to diverse passenger needs	85% of surveyed passengers feel "personally attended to"	Establish a feedback system for special needs and train staff in inclusive service delivery	2Q	Stronger emotional connection and positive travel experience
Safety and Assurance	Strengthen confidence in port safety and employee competence	100% safety drill compliance and emergency preparedness certification	Regular safety audits, drills, and staff certifications	Ongoing	Heightened sense of security and reliability in port services



Brand Awareness	Increase public recognition and visibility of port branding	20% increase in recognition scores from passenger surveys	Launch social media campaigns and develop community engagement partnerships	3Q	Stronger brand presence and recall in tourism markets
Passenger Engagement	Boost passenger interaction and involvement in port involvements	75% participation in feedback program and surveys	Initiate monthly suggestion drives and conduct interactive community events	4Q	Improved services aligned with passenger expectations
Overall Tourist Passenger Loyalty	Increase repeat patronage and positive recommendations	30% rise in returning passengers and referrals	Offer loyalty perks (discounts, VIP lanes) and monitor follow up survey data	4Q	Sustainable growth in passenger base through loyalty and advocacy

Table 5 shows the proposed action plan designed to enhance the service quality and promote tourist passenger loyalty at Mindoro Seaports. This plan is grounded in the findings discussed in tables 1 to 11, which assessed the perceptions of tourist passengers on the dimensions of service quality includes tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, alongside sub-variables such as brand awareness, passenger engagement, and passenger loyalty. The data revealed specific service gaps including inadequacies in port facilities, inconsistencies in staff responsiveness, limited promotional visibility, and a lack of active passenger involvement. In response, the proposed activities and strategies were developed to directly address these gaps and to improve both the functional and emotional components of the passenger experience. The plan also seeks to support sustainable improvements in operational efficiency, enhance brand perception, and strengthen the emotional connection between passengers and the port. Each objective, activity, and expected outcome outlined in the action plan serves to reinforce the goal of transforming Mindoro Seaports into a more reliable, engaging, and passenger-centric gateway, ultimately contributing to increased tourist satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

#### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

Mindoro Seaports are generally rated positively across all service quality dimensions, with safety and assurance receiving the highest evaluations. This affirms that passengers feel secure and confident when utilizing the port's facilities, underscoring the importance of maintaining high safety standards and continuously enhancing service reliability. Tourist passenger loyalty is strongly influenced by factors such as brand image and passenger engagement. Ports that offer consistent, pleasant, and personalized experiences foster stronger loyalty among passengers, emphasizing the value of emotional connection and active customer involvement in service design and delivery. A significant positive correlation was found among all five service quality dimensions and the indicators of tourist passenger loyalty. This supports the conclusion that improving service aspects such as reliability, empathy, and tangibility directly enhances brand image, passenger engagement, and overall loyalty. In response to the findings, a comprehensive Action Plan was proposed to improve the delivery of port services and enhance passenger loyalty. This plan focuses on strengthening key service quality dimensions, promoting brand awareness, increasing passenger engagement, and reinforcing safety and reliability ultimately contributing to a sustainable, customer-oriented seaport operation.

Mindoro Seaports may tailor their marketing efforts to specifically target this demographic. Special promotions, such as discounts or loyalty programs for frequent travelers, and leisure-oriented services (e.g., themed events or entertainment offerings), could further engage this group and enhance their overall experience at the seaport. By focusing on this key customer base, the port can maximize passenger engagement and loyalty. Seaports may continue to invest in improving security infrastructure, such as enhanced surveillance systems, better-trained safety personnel, and efficient emergency response mechanisms. Ensuring reliable and consistent services, especially regarding passenger safety, will help strengthen trust and maintain the port's positive image. Seaport management may focus on strengthening its brand identity by communicating clearly the values and promises of the seaport. Engaging with passengers through digital platforms, social media, and personalized

communication can significantly enhance the emotional connection with the port. Seaports may design specialized packages or incentives tailored to the needs of these groups. For instance, providing business lounges, priority boarding services, and exclusive offers for business or educational travelers will improve their overall experience and make the seaport more appealing for these specific customer segments. This approach can contribute to sustained loyalty among high-frequency travelers. Seaports may prioritize continuous improvement across all five service quality dimensions namely reliability, responsiveness, empathy, tangibility, and safety. This can be achieved through regular staff training, infrastructure upgrades, and the introduction of advanced technologies to facilitate smoother operations. A consistent focus on service excellence will contribute to an enhanced passenger experience, thereby fostering greater loyalty and satisfaction. The tourism industry may adopt the proposed Service Quality Improvement Framework. This framework emphasizes key areas such as safety assurance, customer care, service reliability, and staff training. The implementation of this framework should involve setting up systematic feedback mechanisms to continuously assess passenger satisfaction, upgrading facilities, and fostering clear communication to reinforce the port's brand image. Monitoring and adapting services to meet passenger needs will ensure that the seaport maintains long-term passenger loyalty and remains competitive in the tourism sector.

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