



## The Quality Services to increasing visitors after New Normal in Marine Tourism Attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency

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### ABSTRACT

Visitor loyalty to tourist attractions is crucial as it maintains a stable and loyal customer base, reduces promotional costs, and increases visitor spending. Understanding factors is essential to enhancing visitor experiences and the positive reputation of tourist destinations. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing visitor loyalty to tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar after the New Normal era and the Covid-19 disaster. Specifically, the study investigates the impact of reliability, insurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness on visitor loyalty in the region. The findings suggest that while the quality of services provided by tourism attractions meets some expectations, there remains a discrepancy between visitor expectations and actual experiences. Despite this, the marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar continue to attract visitors due to their promising locations and scenic views. However, overall satisfaction with reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness is moderate, indicating there is room for improvement in service delivery at these tourism sites.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study provides a comprehensive examination of service quality at marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar following the new normal. The main focus is to explore and assess tourist loyalty to these attractions post-new normal, aiming to maintain service quality and enhance visitor loyalty. Service quality is crucial for increasing tourist interest and encouraging repeat visits (Akroush et al., 2016; Mohamad et al., 2019). Achieving high service quality requires collaboration among stakeholders in tourism development, including hospitality and tourism education institutions and local tourism departments. Strengthening cooperation between these entities is essential for improving service quality and increasing visitor numbers.

Previous research has extensively explored service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. Murali (2016) found that a 5% increase in customer loyalty could lead to a 25-80% rise in profits, with 60% of new customer sales coming from loyal customer referrals. Loyal customers are willing to pay special prices. Increased profits from customer loyalty can result from reduced marketing costs, increased sales, and lower operational expenses.

In daily life, people frequently evaluate products, both domestic and international, and often perceive foreign products as superior. However, quality is a subjective concept with varying criteria. According to Falk (2017), there are five current perspectives on quality: transcendental, value-based, and three others that explain why quality is interpreted differently by individuals in various contexts.

Evans (2016) identifies three key aspects for understanding service definitions, that are the output characteristics important to customers, the combination of customer understanding with process understanding, and the causal relationship within a process that can be manipulated or controlled. Service can be simply defined as doing something for others. It generally reflects intangible products and involves actions taken by individuals or groups for others. Service can be broadly understood as performing actions for others. In general, it reflects intangible products and involves activities conducted by individuals or groups on behalf of others. In management literature, the concept of service is defined in several ways. Firstly, service encompasses various subsectors within economic activity, such as transportation, finance, retail, personal services, health, education, and public services (Yousuf et al., 2019). This definition highlights the industrial scope of services. Secondly, service is viewed as an intangible product, where the outcome is more about the activity than the physical object (Ding & Keh, 2017). While physical products may sometimes be involved, such as food and beverages in restaurants or planes in aviation services, the primary focus remains on the activity itself rather than the tangible product.

Customer satisfaction is an evaluation of the overall service experience, from process to outcome. It reflects a customer's emotions or reactions based on whether their needs, desires, and expectations have been met. Customer satisfaction is a function of the difference between perceived performance and expectations. Expectations are shaped by past experiences, friends' opinions, and company promises (William et al., 2016). As customer experience grows, expectations evolve. Customer satisfaction depends on whether the product meets or exceeds expectations. Satisfied customers are more likely to make repeat purchases and share positive experiences with others. Aligning customer expectations with company performance is key to customer satisfaction. To achieve this, companies should promise only what they can deliver and then exceed those promises.

According to Qazi et al. (2017), customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the customer's response to the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and actual performance. Companies can gauge customer satisfaction through feedback, which helps in the development, implementation, and improvement of services. Therefore, service quality is positively related to favorable behavioral intentions and negatively related to unfavorable ones. This relationship depends on the customer's perception of service quality at both adequate and desired levels. Additionally, the experience of service issues affects the overall customer perception of service quality, which in turn influences their behavioral intentions.

Generally, there are three approaches to measuring loyalty: behavioral, attitudinal, and composite. The behavioral approach measures repeat purchase behavior as an indicator of loyalty, although it has the drawback that repeat behavior may not always reflect emotional attachment to the brand (Frasquet et al., 2017). The attitudinal approach uses attitude data to reflect emotional and psychological attachment, while the composite approach combines behavioral and attitudinal dimensions to measure loyalty, including customer product preferences and brand-switching tendencies (Zhang et al., 2018).

A high assessment of service quality leads to positive behavioral intentions, such as strengthening relationships with the company, recommending it to others, and increasing purchase frequency and volume. Conversely, negative assessments can result in negative behavioral intentions, such as reducing interaction with the company or lodging complaints (Sparks et al., 2016). This concept of loyalty emphasizes the importance of maintaining long-term relationships between companies and customers, which can potentially develop into mutually beneficial partnerships (Aripin et al., 2024).

In a highly competitive market, companies compete to satisfy customers to foster high loyalty toward their services. Huang & Sudhir (2021) state that customer loyalty is an endogenous variable caused by a combination of satisfaction, meaning that customer loyalty is a function of satisfaction. If the relationship between satisfaction and customer loyalty is positive, high satisfaction will enhance customer loyalty. Here, customer loyalty serves as Y, while customer satisfaction functions as X.

Tourist attractions are defined as anything with uniqueness, beauty, and value, encompassing natural wealth, culture, and man-made products that are targeted or visited by tourists, as stipulated in Law No. 10 of 2009 on Tourism. Based on this, tourist attractions are locations visited due to their natural beauty, cultural value, historical significance, and recreational and entertainment offerings. According to Article 7 of the Tourism Law No. 10 of 2009, a tourism business provides goods and/or services to meet tourist needs and organize tourism. A tourism entrepreneur is an individual or group engaged in tourism activities. Thus, any effort made by individuals or entrepreneurs to meet tourist needs can be classified as a tourism business. The development of tourism businesses across Indonesia is progressing, reflecting increasing interest from both domestic and international tourists. However, this development varies by region, depending on local conditions, government policies, and community attitudes towards opening and developing tourism businesses, aligned with visitor expectations. Customer satisfaction measurement models can compare the scores of each service quality determinant variable based on the five dimensions of service quality measurement: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. Research shows that in highly competitive markets, customer satisfaction is a critical variable related to loyalty.

## METHODOLOGY

This research refers to an explanatory survey study, which aims to explain the relationship between variables. Specifically, it explores the relationship between customer satisfaction (including reliability, assurance, physical evidence, empathy, and responsiveness) and its impact on customer loyalty. The study focuses on maritime tourist attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency after the New Normal period. The choice of maritime tourism as the research focus is due to its significant role in the tourism industry of Polewali Mandar Regency, with its coastline being particularly attractive and having the potential to increase tourist visits.

The research is conducted in Polewali Mandar Regency in 2024. Ideally, the study should cover all maritime tourist attractions in the regency to maximize research outcomes. However, limitations in time and budget restrict the scope to two specific locations, namely natural and artificial maritime attractions. The selected sites are Pulau Gusung Toraja and Water Boom Polman, chosen to represent both top-tier and artificial maritime attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency.

This research will use an explanatory research design, incorporating both descriptive and causal research methods. Causal research examines cause-and-effect relationships between variables to uncover facts or influences of each variable. Descriptive research, on the other hand, aims to understand the independent variables (product or service quality) and dependent variables (visitor/tourist loyalty).

The data sources for this study include primary data, collected directly by the researcher through questionnaires filled out by respondents, who are tourists who have visited maritime attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency after the New Normal period. Secondary data, obtained from relevant literature, will also be used.

Before analyzing the primary data, the research instrument and classical assumptions will be tested. Instrument testing ensures the accuracy and reliability of the research tool (questionnaire). Two types of instrument tests will be conducted: validity and reliability. Validity is assessed by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) with the table value ( $r$ ) at a significance level of 0.05. If  $r$  calculated  $> r$  table, the instrument is considered valid. Reliability is determined by comparing the Cronbach's alpha with the standard alpha value. If Cronbach's alpha  $>$  standard alpha (0.6), the instrument is considered reliable.

After collecting primary data and conducting instrument tests, data will be analyzed. Classical assumption tests will be performed to ensure the regression model is suitable for prediction, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Once assumptions are met, hypothesis testing will be carried out using descriptive quantitative analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires. Multiple linear regression analysis will be performed using responses from the completed questionnaires. This analysis aims to evaluate visitor satisfaction and loyalty after the New Normal period and to test the hypotheses proposed in the study. The method used will be multiple linear regression as outlined, with data processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows Version 27.

## RESULTS

This study obtained data, which was then detailed for each variable as follows:

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents regarding the reliability variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
X1	-(-)	11(15)	104(67)	30(25)	5(2,5)	150(100)
X2	3(15)	103(64)	14(7,0)	28(29)	6(3,0)	150(100)
X3	3(15)	109(64,5)	24(12)	19(19,5)	5(25)	150(100)

The measurement of visitor satisfaction in the reliability variable is divided into three intervals: low, moderate, and high satisfaction. Low satisfaction is defined as a response score between 255-595, moderate satisfaction between 560-935, and high satisfaction between 936-1275. Data analysis shows varied responses for each indicator in the reliability variable, indicating diverse visitor feedback. The overall score for the reliability variable is 1688, which falls into the moderate satisfaction range of 1201-1800. Thus, visitor satisfaction at the marine tourism attraction on Gusung Toraja Island in Polewali Mandar is at a moderate level. The impact of reliability on visitor loyalty is evidenced by a t-value of 9487 for X1 (reliability), which is greater than the t-table value of 1984, with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance level is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , X1 (reliability) has a significant effect on visitor loyalty.

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents regarding the assurance variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

X 1	10(5,0)	13(6,5)	11(15,5)	102(71,0)	4(2,0)	150(100)
X 2	-	107(63,5)	22(21,0)	17(135)	3(1,5)	150(100)
X 3	1 (0,5)	9 (4,5)	114(82,0)	24 (12)	2(1,0)	150 (100)
X 4	1(0,5)	17(8,5)	115(77,5)	14(12)	3(1,5)	150 (100)

Based on the data analysis, it is found that respondents' responses to each indicator in the assurance variable vary. This indicates that visitor responses also vary. The overall response value for the assurance variable is 2448, which falls within the interval of 2401-3000. Thus, the level of visitor satisfaction with the marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency, consisting of Pulau Gusung Toraja and Water Boom Polman, with respect to the assurance variable, is still at a moderate level of satisfaction. The effect of assurance on visitor loyalty can be seen from the t-value for X2 (assurance variable), which is  $2583 > t\text{-table } 0.011$  with a significance level of 0.030. Since the significance level of  $0.011 < 0.05$ , it means that X2 (assurance variable) has a significant effect on visitor loyalty.

**Table 3.** Distribution of respondents regarding the physical evidence variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
X 1	4(2,0)	11(5,5)	148(74)	35(17,7)	2(1)	150(100)
X 2	-	8.40(4,0)	43(21,5)	145(72,5)	4(2)	150(100)
X 3	-	6.30(3,0)	49(24,5)	143(71,5)	2(1)	150(100)
X 4	4(2,0)	134(67,0)	42(21,0)	18( 9)	2(1)	150(100)
X 5	4(2,0)	137(68,5)	33(16,5)	26(13)	-	150(100)

Based on the data analysis, it is found that respondents' responses to each indicator in the physical evidence variable vary. This indicates that visitor responses also vary. The overall response value for the physical evidence variable is 3067, which falls within the interval of 3202-4000. Therefore, the level of visitor satisfaction with marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency, Sulawesi Barat, based on the physical evidence variable, remains at a moderate level of satisfaction. The effect of physical evidence on visitor loyalty can be seen from the t-value for X3 (physical evidence variable), which is  $0.000 > t\text{-table } 9847$  with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance level of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , it means that X3 (physical evidence variable) has a significant effect on visitor loyalty.

**Table 4.** Distribution of respondents regarding the empathy variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
X 1						
X 2	3(1,5)	12(6)	112(81)	19(9,5)	4(2)	150(100)
X 3	1(0,5)	14(7)	10(20)	111(70,5)	4(2)	150(100)

Based on the data analysis, it is found that respondents' responses to each indicator in the empathy variable vary. This indicates that customer responses also vary. The overall response value for the empathy variable is 1847, which falls within the interval of 1801-2400. Therefore, the level of visitor satisfaction with marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency, Sulawesi Barat, based on the empathy variable, remains at a moderate level of customer satisfaction. The effect of empathy on customer loyalty can be seen from the t-value for X4 (empathy variable), which is  $0.101 > t\text{-table } 0.128$  with a significance level of 0.00. Since the significance level of  $0.101 < 0.05$ , it means that X4 (empathy variable) has a significant effect on customer loyalty. Visitors to marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar feel that the service has not yet achieved effective communication, personal attention, and understanding of individual visitor needs. This aspect highlights the service providers' ability to build relationships with customers while delivering service. According to visitors, the service procedures at marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar still do not meet their expectations. In-depth exploration reveals that some visitors complain when seeking service for grievances. Information needed by visitors is only provided if specifically requested, particularly regarding service delays. Additionally, individual attention to visitors is rare unless there is a personal relationship with the staff. Hospitality and politeness are also noted to be lacking, as staff usually do not greet visitors upon arrival or provide information about the available facilities at the marine tourism attractions.

**Table 5.** Distribution of respondents regarding the responsiveness variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
X 1	2(1,0)	15(7,5)	18(14,0)	114(77)	1(0,5)	150(100)
X 2	2(1,0)	20 (10,0)	22(21,0)	115((67,5)	1(0,5)	150(100)
X 3	3(1,5)	18(9,0)	108(79,0)	18(9,0)	3(1,5)	150(100)

Based on the data analysis, responses to each indicator in the responsiveness variable vary, indicating varied customer feedback. The overall response value for the responsiveness variable is 2050, placing it in the interval of 1601-2400. This suggests that the level of satisfaction among visitors to marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency, Sulawesi Barat, based on the responsiveness variable, remains at a moderate level. The effect of responsiveness on visitor loyalty can be observed from the t-value for X5 (responsiveness), which is  $0.062 > t\text{-table } 3.511$  with a significance level of 0.062. Since the significance level of  $0.062 < 0.05$ , it means that X5 (responsiveness) has a significant effect on customer loyalty.

**Table 6.** Distribution of respondents regarding the loyalty variable

Indicator	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Y 1	1(0,5)	10(5,0)	109(74,5)	21(15,5)	9(4,5)	150(100)
Y 2	1(0,5)	104(62)	23(21,5)	14(12)	8(4)	150(100)
Y 3	1(0,5)	4(2,0)	112(76,0)	27(18,5)	6(3)	150(100)
Y 4	1(0,5)	105(62,5)	15(17,5)	10(15)	9(4,5)	150(100)

## DISCUSSION

Visitors to marine attractions in Polewali Mandar, particularly Pulau Gusung Toraja and Water Boom Polman, expect prompt, accurate, and satisfying service. Hypothesis testing reveals a gap between visitor expectations and the quality of service received, indicating that current service levels do not meet visitor expectations. Service providers are also falling short of expectations. Deeper investigation shows that visitors feel neglected during service and report inadequate facilities and supplies. Visitors expect that the cost of their experience should align with the quality of service provided or the established standards. Complaints are particularly focused on incomplete facilities, such as inadequate restrooms and trash bins, and uncomfortable rest areas. To address these issues, improvements are needed in service provision to ensure that visitors are satisfied and their expectations are met. Enhancements should focus on fulfilling promised services and providing high-quality experiences to ensure that marine attractions in Polewali Mandar meet visitor expectations effectively.

The gap between visitor expectations and the quality of service received at marine attractions in Polewali Mandar, particularly at Pulau Gusung Toraja and Water Boom Polman, highlights significant shortcomings in service provision. Visitors expect a level of service that aligns with the cost of their experience and established standards, yet current services are failing to meet these expectations. This discrepancy is evident in the reported neglect during service interactions, where visitors feel their needs and concerns are not adequately addressed. This situation suggests that service providers may lack proper training or resources to deliver the expected level of service, resulting in dissatisfaction among visitors.

Further investigation into specific areas of concern reveals that facilities and supplies are a major source of complaints. Visitors have reported issues with the availability and condition of restrooms, trash bins, and rest areas, which are essential for a comfortable and enjoyable experience. The inadequacy of these facilities not only detracts from the overall visitor experience but also reflects poorly on the management and maintenance of the attractions. Addressing these issues requires a focused effort on improving infrastructure, ensuring regular maintenance, and providing adequate supplies to meet visitor needs (Leung et al., 2018). Enhancing these facilities is crucial to improving the overall quality of service and meeting visitor expectations (Moore et al., 2015).

To effectively bridge the gap between expectations and service quality, comprehensive improvements are necessary (Tripathi & Siddiqui, 2020). Service providers must prioritize fulfilling promised services and delivering high-quality experiences. This involves not only upgrading facilities but also investing in staff training and development to ensure that visitors feel valued and attended to during their visit. Additionally, regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should be implemented to continuously monitor and address any emerging issues. By focusing on these areas, marine attractions in Polewali Mandar can enhance visitor satisfaction, build a positive reputation, and ultimately attract more visitors, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector in the region.

In terms of assurance, marine attractions in Polewali Mandar are evaluated based on staff knowledge, IJHESS, Vol. 6, No. 3, July 2024, pp. 858-866

competence, courtesy, reliability, and the safety and security provided to visitors. Visitors have expressed dissatisfaction with the staff's ability to meet these expectations. Common issues include frequent mistakes in recording food and beverage orders, leading to discrepancies and delays. This problem is partly due to the use of basic paper instead of comprehensive order slips, which often results in mix-ups. Additionally, visitors find the ordering process for food and beverages and the availability of facilities insecure, as transactions are conducted verbally rather than in writing. This lack of documentation contributes to a perceived lack of safety and reliability. Parking attendants also face criticism for managing vehicles in an unorganized and exposed area, leading to concerns about vehicle security. To address these issues, it is recommended to employ reliable and skilled staff who can minimize errors and handle complaints effectively. Improving the patience, attentiveness, and courtesy of staff can further enhance visitor confidence and satisfaction. Implementing these changes will help marine attractions in Polewali Mandar provide a more secure and dependable service.

Assurance in the context of marine attractions in Polewali Mandar is a critical aspect that encompasses the knowledge, competence, courtesy, reliability, and safety provided by staff to visitors. Visitors' dissatisfaction with these areas underscores significant shortcomings in the current service delivery. The frequent mistakes in recording food and beverage orders, primarily due to the use of basic paper instead of structured order slips, illustrate a clear gap in the reliability and competence of staff. These errors not only lead to discrepancies and delays but also erode visitor trust and confidence in the service provided. To mitigate these issues, it is essential to adopt more systematic and reliable order-taking methods, such as digital systems or comprehensive order slips, to ensure accuracy and efficiency (Barua & Kanjiraparambil, 2023).

The verbal nature of food and beverage transactions and the inadequacy of facilities further contribute to a sense of insecurity and unreliability among visitors. Without proper documentation, there is a higher risk of misunderstandings and mistakes, making visitors feel uncertain about the safety and accuracy of their orders. This lack of formal procedure can lead to dissatisfaction and a negative perception of the service quality. Ensuring written documentation for transactions can significantly enhance the perceived reliability and security of the service. Moreover, clear and organized processes for order-taking and facility management are vital to fostering a sense of trust and dependability (Pitkänen, 2024).

Parking management also plays a crucial role in visitor assurance, and current practices in Polewali Mandar have drawn criticism for their disorganization and exposure. Visitors are concerned about the security of their vehicles, which reflects poorly on the overall management of the attractions. To address this, employing trained and reliable parking attendants who can manage vehicles in a secure and organized manner is essential. Enhancing staff patience, attentiveness, and courtesy can also greatly improve visitor experiences and satisfaction. By implementing these changes, marine attractions in Polewali Mandar can provide a more secure, dependable, and satisfying service, ultimately boosting visitor confidence and contributing to the growth and success of the tourism sector in the region.

The physical facilities, equipment, and amenities available to visitors are often found to be inadequate and fall short of expectations. Despite this, visitors continue to frequent the marine attractions in Polewali Mandar due to their generally appealing locations and significant development potential. Visitors expect that each marine attraction should be well-equipped with comprehensive facilities. However, feedback indicates that most attractions in Polewali Mandar lack essential amenities such as toilets, parking areas, waste bins, and dining facilities that meet tourism standards. Many visitors find that the available facilities do not meet their needs, leading to discomfort during their visits. While some attractions are managed and developed by the local tourism office and have shown improvement, providing complete facilities such as clean toilets, waste bins, and comfortable resting areas, there are still gaps. The personnel at these attractions often lack sufficient expertise and knowledge in tourism, which affects overall satisfaction. A few marine attractions have made significant strides by offering well-equipped accommodations, including hotels, lodgings, and cafes. However, issues remain with the placement and arrangement of facilities, such as reception areas, toilets, and waste bins. Service quality also fails to meet tourism standards due to insufficiently trained staff. Additionally, the availability of clean water is a major concern, particularly at the Gusung Toraja marine attraction in Polewali Mandar. To enhance visitor satisfaction, it is crucial to improve both the quality of facilities and the expertise of the staff.

The marine attractions in Polewali Mandar are currently lacking in their ability to establish good communication, personal attention, and understanding of individual visitor needs. This suggests that staff at these attractions struggle to build strong relationships with visitors during their service interactions. Visitor feedback indicates that service procedures at these attractions do not meet their expectations. Many visitors report dissatisfaction when seeking assistance or addressing complaints. Information provided to visitors is often limited and only given when specifically requested, particularly regarding delays. Personal attention is infrequent, generally occurring only if visitors have a personal connection with the staff. Additionally, staff's friendliness and politeness are perceived as lacking, with staff often failing to greet visitors upon arrival or provide information about available facilities. Improving these aspects—effective communication, personal

attention, and overall service quality—will be essential for enhancing visitor satisfaction at marine attractions in Polewali Mandar.

Effective communication and personal attention are pivotal in establishing a positive visitor experience at marine attractions in Polewali Mandar. The current service approach, however, falls short in these areas, leading to widespread dissatisfaction. Visitors have reported that their interactions with staff are often impersonal and transactional, lacking the warmth and engagement necessary to build strong relationships. The limited information provided and the reactive nature of assistance suggest that staff are not proactively addressing visitor needs. For instance, information about delays is only given upon request, which can cause frustration and a sense of neglect among visitors. To improve communication, staff should be trained to offer comprehensive and timely information proactively, ensuring that visitors feel well-informed and valued throughout their visit (Saunders et al., 2019).

Personal attention and friendliness are also critical components of a satisfactory visitor experience (Moore et al., 2015), yet these are areas where marine attractions in Polewali Mandar are notably deficient. The infrequency of personal attention, except for those with personal connections to the staff, and the perceived lack of friendliness and politeness create an unwelcoming atmosphere. Greeting visitors upon arrival, providing information about available facilities, and maintaining a friendly demeanor are simple yet effective ways to enhance the visitor experience. Staff training programs focused on customer service skills, including effective communication, active listening, and empathy, can help bridge the gap between visitor expectations and the current service quality. By prioritizing these aspects, marine attractions in Polewali Mandar can significantly improve visitor satisfaction, fostering a more welcoming and enjoyable environment for all visitors.

At the marine attractions in Polewali Mandar, staff responsiveness and their willingness to assist visitors fall short of expectations. Visitors expect immediate solutions to complaints, such as delays in food and drink orders, but often find the service disappointing. Observations reveal that staff are frequently late in delivering services, such as food and drink orders, and there is a shortage of staff during peak times, causing delays and frustration among visitors. The speed of service, including the processing of payments, is also inadequate. Visitors often face delays due to the lack of modern payment systems and efficient billing procedures. Additionally, new tourism ventures face challenges, including funding issues and slow development due to local government and community-related obstacles. Local communities often focus on beauty and hospitality but may lack understanding of other essential aspects such as cleanliness, tidiness, comfort, and safety.

Despite these issues, there are several marine attractions in Polewali Mandar that have been developed by the local government and show progress compared to those that have not been managed. However, many attractions still lack adequate management and development. To address these issues, it is crucial for the Polewali Mandar government to improve and complete the facilities at these marine attractions. This includes utilizing attractive natural resources, employing skilled professionals in tourism, and providing formal and informal training to enhance the quality of human resources in the tourism sector. Enhancing these aspects will better satisfy visitors and leverage the region's unique potential and beautiful landscapes.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study reveal several key findings related to service quality at marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency. Firstly, despite a gap between visitors' expectations and the quality of services received, the attractions remain appealing due to their potential and scenic beauty. Secondly, the assurance variable is rated at a moderate satisfaction level, with visitors expressing uncertainty regarding the assurance aspects. Thirdly, tangible evidence also shows moderate satisfaction, as facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, and trash bins do not meet visitors' expectations. Fourthly, empathy remains a concern, with visitors feeling that the service, especially at natural attractions, has not adequately addressed individual needs. Finally, responsiveness indicates that service is still lacking, particularly in handling complaints and understanding the diverse needs of visitors. Overall, the combination of all variables—reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness—affects visitor loyalty. Although there have been efforts to improve, many aspects still require enhancement to increase overall visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

## RECOMMENDATION

Marine tourism attractions in Polewali Mandar Regency should focus on several key areas to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Firstly, it is essential to continuously upgrade and improve physical facilities to meet modern standards and provide visitors with up-to-date services. Secondly, maintaining professional service quality in accordance with tourism procedures is crucial, which requires employing knowledgeable and skilled personnel. Additionally, safety considerations must be prioritized to ensure a secure environment for visitors at both natural and man-made attractions. Regular training for all staff is recommended to ensure they can deliver high-quality service that meets established standards. Furthermore, employing qualified personnel with appropriate education in tourism is important for maintaining service standards. Finally, addressing these five aspects—physical facilities, service quality, safety, staff training, and qualified

personnel—will significantly impact visitor loyalty and attraction performance. Even with vigorous promotions, visitors are unlikely to return if these elements are lacking. Adhering to health protocols and the Cleanliness, Health, Safety, and Environmental Sustainability (CHSE) standards will contribute to a comfortable, safe, and clean environment, ensuring that service quality remains high even beyond the New Normal period.

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