

# THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND PERCEIVED VALUE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN TORAJA CULTURAL SITES

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Received: 02 August 2022. Approved: 07 October 2022. Published: 28 November 2022

## Abstract

*Indonesia has been blessed with cultural, natural, and historical resources, all of which offer Indonesia the opportunity to become one of the key tourist destinations in the world. Toraja, as one of the top tourist destinations in Indonesia, must be able to deal with increasing demands regarding service quality in the destination, attract tourists, and encourage repeat visits of tourists. The purpose of this study was to investigate the service quality levels in the Toraja cultural heritage sites and to establish how these might affect the perceived value of the tourists and their loyalty towards the service. The SERVQUAL model was used to measure service quality in the Toraja cultural heritage sites. A mixed methodology was used in this research. Quantitative methods used to collect data from local and foreign tourists visiting the sites during the data collection period. Qualitative methods used to collect data through semi-structured interviews. The results show service quality had a significant influence on tourists' perceived value and customer loyalty in the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. The service quality dimensions that had a significant influence on tourists' perceived value, and customer loyalty was responsiveness, empathy, and reliability. Tangibles and assurance did not have a significant influence on tourists' perceived value and customer loyalty.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage Sites, customer loyalty, perceived value, service quality, Toraja

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of international tourism over the last few decades has attracted the interest of governments, practitioners, and researchers from various countries (Aliman et al., 2014). Indonesia is a country that has been blessed with an abundance of cultural, natural, and historical resources, all of which offer the cultural and heritage tourism sector an opportunity to become one of the key tourist destinations in the world, attracting both local and foreign tourists. The cultural and heritage tourism sector achieved 2<sup>nd</sup> ranking in Southeast Asia and placed the 32<sup>nd</sup> out of 117 countries in the world, which made Indonesia have the largest rank increase (44<sup>th</sup> to 32<sup>nd</sup>) regarding tourism (WEF, 2022).

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, as the travel industry recovers after the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign tourists who visited Indonesia from Januari to June 2022 reached 743 thousand, an increase of 929,66 percent compared to the same month last year (Inasis & Novianti, 2022). Meanwhile, it is projected that as many as 550 million movement of domestic tourists will travel to destinations in the country this year (Susanti, 2022). Post covid-19 pandemic, local tourists spent 95% of direct Travel and Tourism GDP where foreign tourists spent only 5% of the GDP (WTTC, 2022). Several tourist arrivals in Indonesia require Toraja (one of the top tourist destinations in Indonesia), to be able to deal with increasing demands regarding service quality in the destination.

Toraja has been getting significant consideration from tourists and researchers over the last three to four decades (Buijs, 2006). From the mid-1900s to 1950 the Sa'dan Toraja gradually assimilated Christianity. The government has invested in sports activities to increase tourism activities in Toraja. The activities are trekking and white-water rafting through the spectacular natural landscape. Moreover, to attract positive word-of-mouth recommendations and to encourage repeat visits, the level of service provided has to match tourists' expectations. It is important to evaluate the service quality levels provided by the Toraja destination and the perceived value that tourists have regarding service quality and to determine how both service quality and perceived value can influence customer loyalty towards the Toraja destination.

A great deal of research has been conducted on tourism in Indonesia (Canny, 2013; Kambey, 2016; Nurbaeti et al., 2016; Pratminingsih et al., 2014; Riduan et al., 2015; Setiawan & Sayuti, 2017; Sukmadi et al., 2014; Wantara, 2016). However, hardly any research has been conducted on tourism in the cultural heritage context, especially regarding the Toraja destination in the Sulawesi Indonesia cultural heritage site. In addition, few studies have attempted to examine the interrelationships between service quality, perceived value, and customer loyalty in the tourism sector in developing countries (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hsieh, 2012; Kim et al., 2013). This creates a gap in understanding service quality and perceived value in the Toraja destination, both of which are critical in the tourism sector. It is important to close this gap since prior research in tourism shows that service quality can affect customer loyalty (Ivanauskiene & Volungėnaitė, 2014).

Researching consumer behavior through behavioral intentions can provide a superior comprehension of customer retention in tourism destinations, especially for cultural heritage destination management (Canny, 2013). It helps to predict the behavior of domestic and foreign tourists in Indonesia. Thus, the results of this study will provide a

roadmap guideline that Toraja authorities can use to maintain the level of service quality that enhances the perceived value of the service provided and therefore encourage tourists to become loyal to the service provided. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide some useful insights regarding service quality and perceived value to the Toraja policymakers by providing them with systems and options that they can use to successfully promote Toraja as a top tourist destination in the world.

A primary aspect that determines competitiveness and business success, both in the service sector and subsectors of tourism and travel, is service quality. Improving the service quality as part of the responsibilities of the tourism business can create and maintain long-term relationships with stakeholders and customers (Setiawan & Sayuti, 2017). Service quality is the distinction between customers' expectations and perceptions of service (Zeithaml, 1988), and is an approach to building a competitive advantage (Ivanauskiene & Volungėnaitė, 2014). When the SERVQUAL concept was first introduced, the SERVQUAL dimensions were divided into 10 dimensions consisting of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, access, communication, and understanding of the customers (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Subsequently, the original ten dimensions of SERVQUAL were regrouped into five dimensions. The model is the most widely applied in available studies and it measures all aspects between the service provider and the customers' needs and desires. Therefore, the researcher decided to use SERVQUAL as the model to measure service quality in cultural heritage sites in Toraja, Indonesia.

Zeithaml (1988) indicated that consumer perceived value is characterized as the customer's general evaluation of the utility of an item based on the impression of what is gotten and what is given. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed PERVAL. The model consists of four dimensions, i.e., emotional value, social value, functional value for money and functional value for performance. The researcher used the scale by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) because it has been assessed in a pre-purchase situation, using exploratory and confirmatory analyses to measure its reliability and validity. The four dimensions help explain attitudes and behavior significantly, tested in a post-purchase situation, and are reliable and valid in this context. The PERVAL scale has a range of potential applications to measure the perceived value of customers.

Loyalty reliably measures the main value created because of the revisit intentions from the customers (Reichheld, 1994). Loyalty is viewed as a better predictor of actual behavior (Chi & Qu, 2008). Chi and Qu (2008) indicated the measurement of customer loyalty by revisiting intentions and recommendations. Cheng (2011) states customer loyalty can be classified into behavioral loyalty (a substantial element) and attitudinal loyalty (a psychological construct). Behavioral loyalty leads to actual purchase behaviors. Attitudinal loyalty will not ensure the customers buy merchandise themselves, through word-of-mouth, facilitating the creation of an encouraging image of a business to others. Attitudinal loyalty can be significant for marketing practitioners to examine the consumers in the market regarding the idea they do not decide between brands at each purchase occasion (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). The overview based on the theory of customer loyalty shows that customer loyalty consists of two dimensions i.e., behavioral and attitudinal. Thus, in this study, we shall take into account these dimensions.

Hypotheses

H<sub>1</sub>: Service Quality has a positive effect on customer perceived value in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja.

H<sub>2</sub>: Service quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja.

H<sub>3</sub>: Tourist perceived value has a positive effect on customer loyalty in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja.

**METHODOLOGY**

Research Strategy

The strategy was primarily quantitative and took the form of a survey design, to enable the researcher to access a large number of the tourists whose input would help to determine service quality level, perceived value, and loyalty in Toraja tourism. The qualitative strategy was conducted by administering semi-structured interviews to local government officials in Toraja. It helps the researcher understand how service quality and perceived value manifest themselves in Toraja tourism and how these might impact customer loyalty.

Target Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of domestic and foreign tourists who were visiting Toraja from 12<sup>th</sup> September to 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017. The sampling technique used for this study was purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). The questionnaire was administered to all tourists who were visiting the Toraja cultural heritage sites during the period when the data for this research was collected.

Data Sources

Primary data for this study was obtained from both questionnaires and semi structured interviews. The questionnaire was administered to local and foreign tourists who visited the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. The interviews were conducted with local government officials, visitors, tour guides, a non-profit organization that works for Toraja tourism development named Swiss Contact, and one of the owners of the cultural heritage sites in Toraja. Secondary data was obtained from Toraja tourism annual reports of and literature related to tourism.

Measurement Scale

Scale measurements for the questionnaires were adapted and modified from various authors (See Table 1). The scales were slightly modified to suit the Indonesian cultural context.

**Table 1.** Measurement Scales and Their Sources

Measurement Scale	Source
Service Quality	Parasuraman et al (1985)
Perceived Value	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
Customer Loyalty	Cheng (2011)

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

The service quality scale consists of five dimensions, i.e., reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. The perceived value scale consists of four dimensions, i.e., emotional value, social value, functional value for money, and functional value for performance. The customer loyalty scale consists of two dimensions, i.e., behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. The questionnaire included four parts which were as follows: part I contained respondent information such as gender, age, nation, marital status, occupation, and the range of monthly income. Part II on service quality, part III on perceived value, and part IV on customer loyalty. It consisted of 39 items as follows: service quality (23 questions), tourist perceived value (8 questions), and customer loyalty (8 questions). Items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree (1)’ to ‘strongly agree (5)’ (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

#### Data Processing and Analysis

Data were input into Statistical Process for Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software for analysis. Multiple linear regression has been chosen to enable the researcher to analyze the proportion of variation in one dependent variable accounted for by more than one independent variable involved in the study (Greener, 2008). Data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through coding to reduce the data collected.

#### Validity and Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha presents a faster and comparable method to measure a questionnaire’s reliability (Hof, 2012). There are different reports about the acceptable values of alpha, from 0,70 to 0,95. The overall Cronbach’s alpha for the service quality construct was 0,87. However, two of the dimensions of service quality, i.e., tangibles and assurance had a Cronbach’s alpha that was lower than 0,7. Emotional value is a dimension of perceived value also had a Cronbach’s alpha value that was lower than 0,70. Social value and functional value for money, both of which are dimensions of perceived value were eliminated from further analysis because many respondents did not answer the questions on these dimensions thus resulting in very low Cronbach alpha values. The data result is shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** The Cronbach’s Alpha Value per Dimension

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach’ Alpha</b>
Reliability	0,78
Tangibles	0,61
Responsiveness	0,76
Empathy	0,74
Assurance	0,64
Service Quality Construct	0,87
Emotional Value	0,64
Functional Value for Money	0,56
Functional Value for Performance	0,74
Attitudinal Loyalty	0,73
Behavioural Loyalty	0,84

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings on the Demographic Profile of Respondents

Toraja is in the south Sulawesi province, approximately 300 km north of Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi. Torajans are an ethnic group with around 450.000 populations (BPS Kabupaten Toraja Utara, 2017). Toraja tourism is well-known for its funeral ceremonies, burial sites carved into rocky cliffs, and traditional houses named Tongkonan that demonstrate beautiful wood carvings. The research was focused on the five major cultural heritage sites in Toraja such as Loko Mata (a Stone-carved burial site), Kete' Kesu (traditional houses of Toraja), Lolai (spectacular natural landscape) Bori' (Megalith stones) and Londa (Cave burial site). Following the result of the research, the tourists who visited the Toraja heritage sites were from different nationalities. Five major nationalities visited the sites. They were Indonesian, Dutch, French, German and Australian.

The highest number of tourists was from Indonesia (248 Respondents or 61,8%). Local tourists came from diverse cities in Indonesia, such as Makassar with 34 respondents (8,5%), Jakarta with 23 respondents (5,7%), Papua with 18 respondents (4,5%) and 12 respondents from Surabaya (3,0%). The "other city" category were 161 respondents (40,1%), including Indonesian tourists from the cities of Lombok, Bali, Samarinda, Medan, Solo, Tarakan, Sidrap, Enrekang, Palembang, Bone, Semarang, Manado, Pekanbaru, Mamasa, Yogyakarta, Pare-pare, Pinrang, Malang, Soroako, Banjarmasin, Watampone, Palu, Kendari, Bandung, Madiun, Mamuju, Wajo, Maros, dan Watampone. On the other hand, there were 153 respondents (38,2%) from other nationalities. The majority of international tourists with 41 respondents (10,2) were Dutch, followed by the French with 24 respondents (6,0%), German with 12 respondents (3%) and lastly 2 respondents from Australia (0,7%). The "other nationality" category comprised about 18,2% of the international respondents all of whom came from nationalities such as Spanish, Swiss, Belgian, Czech, Austrian, American, British, Ireland, Japanese, Norwegian, and Danish. From the findings, it concludes that the main international tourists were European.

### Tourists' Perceptions of Service Quality in cultural heritage sites in Toraja

The first minor question of the research focused on the perception of tourists regarding service quality in the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. Minor research question 1 was: "How do tourists perceive service quality in cultural heritage sites in Toraja? Descriptive statistics were used to answer the means for each of the five service quality dimensions, i.e., reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. See Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Tourists' Perceptions of Service Quality in Cultural Heritage Sites in Toraja

SERVQUAL Dimension	Indicator	Service Quality Attributes	Mean	Overall Mean
Reliability	Reliability_1	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja provide the right service to me (e.g., explaining to me about the archaeological sites).	3,6509	3,6558
	Reliability_2	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja provide the service without much delay.	3,7855	

<b>SERVQUAL Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Service Quality Attributes</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Overall Mean</b>
Tangibles	Reliability_3	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja provide service at the time they promise to do so.	3,8030	3,5601
	Reliability_4	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja inform me about the opening hours of the Cultural Heritage sites.	3,3840	
	Tangibles_1	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are neatly dressed.	3,6608	
	Tangibles_2	The public facilities that are provided by the cultural heritage sites of Toraja (e.g. the public toilets) are clean.	3,0200	
	Tangibles_3	There is adequate parking space for tourists at the cultural heritage sites of Toraja.	4,0499	
Responsiveness	Tangibles_4	The cultural heritage sites of Toraja are clean.	3,8279	3,9863
	Tangibles_5	The flyers and maps provided by the employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are visually appealing.	3,2419	
	Responsiveness_1	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are helpful.	3,9776	
	Responsiveness_2	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are never too busy to respond to my needs.	3,9551	
Empathy	Responsiveness_3	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja attend to my needs in a quick manner.	4,0998	3,9193
	Responsiveness_4	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are willing to solve any problems that I may have related to the tour.	3,9127	
	Empathy_1	The management of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja has a mechanism for receiving tourists' complaints (e.g., suggestion box or a company website where tourists can lodge their complaints about the service).	3,3167	
	Empathy_2	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are polite to the tourists.	4,0798	
	Empathy_3	The opening hours of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are convenient for me as a tourist.	4,0175	
	Empathy_4	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja pay attention to my needs.	4,0274	
Assurance	Empathy_5	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are friendly to me.	4,1696	3,5841
	Empathy_6	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja understand my specific needs.	3,8778	
	Assurance_1	The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja have adequate knowledge about their work.	3,7332	
	Assurance_2	I am provided with detailed information about the history of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja.	3,6733	
	Assurance_3	The tour guides of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are all dressed in uniform.	2,7781	
	Assurance_4	The behavior of the employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja enables me to have confidence in them.	4,1521	

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

We can see from Table 3 above that responsiveness with a mean score of 3.98 was the dimension that had the highest mean score among all the dimensions of service quality. It is supported by the statement of Responsiveness\_3 that “The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja quickly attend to my needs.” Thus, tourists experienced a quick response from the employees when visiting the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. According to Table 3 above, the empathy dimension had the second highest mean score (3,91) when it came to the service quality in Toraja tourism. It is supported by the statement of Empathy\_5 that “The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja are friendly to me”. It means that tourists appreciated the friendly environment during their visits to the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. As indicated in Table 3, the reliability dimension was viewed positively by tourists, based on the mean score findings for this dimension which is 3,65. It is supported by the statement that points to the aspect of Reliability\_3 that “The employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja provide service at the time they promise to do so” Therefore, the reliability dimension shown in this feature leads to the positive perception of the tourists.

As indicated in Table 3, the assurance dimension was positively perceived by the tourists in the cultural heritage sites of Toraja, having a mean score of 3,58. The statement that contributes to the highest mean score under the assurance category was on Assurance\_4 “The behavior of the employees of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja enables me to have confidence in them”. As indicated in Table 3 above, the dimension of service quality that has the lowest mean value was tangibles. The statement was “The public facilities that are provided by the cultural heritage sites of Toraja (e.g. the public toilets) are clean”. It was due to unhygienic public toilets and the lack of cleanliness for cultural heritage sites like in Toraja. To sum up, according to the findings, all the five dimensions of service quality named reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance were positively perceived by the tourists who visited the cultural heritage sites in Toraja. Tourists have the most positive perceptions regarding responsiveness, empathy, reliability, assurance, and tangibles. The overall perception of the tourists regarding service quality in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja is positive. The finding provides an answer to minor research question 1 of this study.

#### Findings on the Relationship between Service Quality and Perceived Value

The first research hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) states that “service quality has a positive effect on customer perceived value in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja” which shows a perfect positive correlation and a value -1,0 indicates. There is a perfect negative correlation. Cohen, as cited in Pallant (2007), suggests about the interpretation values between 0 and 1: that  $r = 0,10$  to  $0,29$  has a small positive correlation;  $r = 0,30$  to  $0,49$  has a medium strength of positive correlation; and  $r = 0,50$  to  $1,0$  has a large positive correlation.

**Table 4.** The Relationship between Service Quality and Perceived Value

Dimension	Reliability	Tangibles	Responsiveness	Empathy	Assurance	Emotional Value	Functional Performance
Reliability	1	0,58	0,70	0,59	0,55	0,28	0,53
Tangibles	0,58	1	0,58	0,49	0,51	0,20	0,35
Responsiveness	0,70	0,58	1	0,68	0,52	0,32	0,52

Dimension	Reliability	Tangibles	Responsiveness	Empathy	Assurance	Emotional Value	Functional Performance
Empathy	0,59	0,49	0,68	1	0,54	0,35	0,51
Assurance	0,55	0,51	0,52	0,54	1	0,30	0,46
Emotional Value	0,28	0,20	0,32	0,35	0,30	1	0,54
Functional Performance	0,53	0,35	0,52	0,51	0,46	0,54	1

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

As shown in Table 4 above, there was a strong positive relationship between reliability and functional performance value ( $r=0,53$ ), responsiveness and functional performance value ( $r=0,52$ ), empathy and functional performance value ( $r=0,51$ ) and a moderate positive relationship between tangibles and functional performance value ( $r=0,35$ ) and between assurance and functional performance value ( $r=0,46$ ). Also, there was a moderate positive relationship between reliability and emotional value ( $r=0,28$ ), tangibles and emotional value ( $r=0,23$ ), responsiveness and emotional value ( $r=0,32$ ), empathy and emotional value ( $r=0,35$ ), and between assurance and emotional value ( $r=0,38$ ). To sum up, all five service quality dimensions had a positive relationship with the two dimensions of perceived value. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 ( $H_1$ ) states that service quality has a positive effect on perceived value in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja” was accepted.

**Findings on the relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty**

To examine the second research hypothesis ( $H_2$ ), stated “Service quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja”, a correlation test was used. The test is to find the relationship between the five service quality dimensions, such as reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and customer loyalty. The results are demonstrated in Table 5 below. Based on the data that showed below, there was a moderate positive relationship between reliability and customer loyalty ( $r=0,308$ ), tangibles and customer loyalty ( $r=0,172$ ), responsiveness and customer loyalty ( $r=0,360$ ), empathy and customer loyalty ( $r=0,319$ ) and between assurance and customer loyalty ( $r=0,245$ ). Thus, all five dimensions of service quality as an independent variable had a positive relationship with the dependent variable of customer loyalty would increase and vice versa. As indicated in these results, the second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ), stated “Service quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja” was accepted.

**Table 5.** The Relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty

Dimension	Reliability	Tangibles	Responsiveness	Empathy	Assurance	Customer Loyalty
Reliability	1	0,579	0,698	0,591	0,555	0,308
Tangibles	0,579	1	0,576	0,490	0,511	0,172
Responsiveness	0,698	0,576	1	0,675	0,520	0,360
Empathy	0,591	0,490	0,675	1	0,549	0,319
Assurance	0,555	0,511	0,520	0,549	1	0,245
Customer Loyalty	0,308	0,172	0,360	0,319	0,245	1

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

Findings on the Relationship between Perceived Value and Customer Loyalty

To examine the third research hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>), stated “Tourist perceived value has a positive effect on customer loyalty in Toraja Heritage tourism”, using a correlation test to distinguish the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty. The data results were shown in Table 6 below. There was a strong positive relationship between tourists’ perceived value and attitudinal loyalty (r=0,567) and a moderate positive relationship between tourists’ perceived value on behavioral loyalty (r=0,401). Therefore, the perceived value had a positive relationship with the dimension of customer loyalty which is attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. It means that tourists’ perceived value rises, customer loyalty would increase, and vice versa. Based on this result, the third hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>), stated “Tourist perceived value has a positive effect on customer loyalty in Toraja Heritage tourism”, was accepted.

**Table 6.** The Relationship between Perceived Value and Customer Loyalty

Dimension	Attitudinal Loyalty	Behavioral Loyalty	Perceived Value
Attitudinal Loyalty	1	0,413	0,567
Behavioral Loyalty	0,413	1	0,401
Perceived Value	0,567	0,401	1

Source: Primary Data from the Database of Researcher, 2017

Findings from the Interviews

The researcher interviewed the secretary of Toraja Government officials and also tourist from Belgium. The interview findings from the government officials show that the government has played a vital role to promote tourism in Toraja. The following quotes was obtained from JS, the Secretary of Toraja Tourism Ministry:

*“Yes, just as we have a clinic in Kete Kesu, whenever there is a particular incident, the tourists will be taken to the nearest health center. We are making arrangements on how life insurance will be made. It is available for tourists here because it is one indicator of healthy tourism. It must be owned by every region because it is a major cause of tourist attraction. We are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bumi Putera (National Insurance) and we recently signed a mutual agreement already (JS, the Secretary of Toraja Tourism Ministry)”.*

The above statements are clear indications that the Toraja Government is committed to the improvement of the service quality of its tourism sector. Moreover, the findings from the tourists show that tourists positively perceive service quality in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja judging by their experiences during visitation to the cultural heritage sites. The following quotes from two tourists further illustrate this:

*“The people are friendly, even friendlier. Though the people in Java are also friendly and were breath-taking between the north with nature. However, in Toraja, it is quite different from all we have ever seen. It is very unique (International tourist from Belgium).”*

The researcher also held informal interviews with several respondents who had visited Toraja about their intention to revisit Toraja. Most of them spoke about the lower quality of the transportation and the length of time that they have to spend to visit and experience the tourism features in Toraja. In addition, they also mentioned that there are many places that they have not visited yet. Therefore, these testimonies support the findings from the questionnaire showing that the tangibles dimension of service quality had the lowest influence on customer loyalty compared to the other dimensions. Moreover, the relationship between perceived value and customer loyalty was weak due to the small intention of tourists to revisit Toraja. The main findings from the research and their discussion are below:

1. Generally, tourists who visited cultural heritage sites in Toraja had positive perceptions about the service quality offered by Toraja tourism. The tourists' perceptions, regarding service quality in the cultural heritage sites in Toraja, were derived from all the five dimensions of service quality, i.e., responsiveness, empathy, reliability, tangibles, and assurance. However, responsiveness was the most positively perceived, followed by empathy, reliability, tangibles, and assurance. These findings support the work of (Marinković et al., 2013) found in their study that the important dimensions of service quality that are associated with travel services were responsiveness, reliability, empathy, and tangibles.

2. Service quality had a strong positive and significant influence on the tourists' perceived value of the cultural heritage sites in Toraja. The service quality influence on tourists' perceived value was dominated by the four dimensions of service quality, i.e., reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. This finding is supported by the research conducted by Hsieh (2012). His study found that service quality had a direct positive effect on tourists' perceived value in the sense that when tourists feel that they are receiving a higher quality of service in the Penghu Ocean Firework Festival. In addition, the finding from the work of Wantara (2016) argues that the service quality proved to provide a significant positive effect on perceived value they would like to spend money, time, and their physical spirit for an activity. The tangibles dimension of service quality did not have a significant influence on perceived value. It could be due to the results derived from the analysis of the data from a questionnaire that the cultural heritage sites of Toraja lacked proper hygiene in the public toilets and were perceived to be an unclean environment for cultural heritage sites like that of Toraja.

3. Service quality had a positive and significant influence on tourists' customer loyalty to cultural heritage sites in Toraja. These findings support the work (Kim et al., 2013) who argue that service quality had a significant effect on customer loyalty in the case study of Orlando tourism. In addition, because service quality analysis enhances the customer loyalty concept, service quality can be considered one of the most generally analyzed customer loyalty determinants (Ivanauskiene & Volungėnaitė, 2014). However, the relationship, though significant, was weak. The influence was determined by reliability, tangibles, and responsiveness had a significant influence on customer loyalty. It could be because of the direct experiences that tourists perceived during their visitation were the quick response, and the ability to offer the appropriate service at the right time to the tourists. Furthermore, the good memories that the tourists had during their visitation in

Toraja supported the tangibles dimension. The remaining two dimensions of service quality namely, empathy and assurance, did not have a significant influence on customer loyalty.

4. Tourists' perceived value had a strong positive and significant influence on customer loyalty of the cultural heritage sites of Toraja. According to consumer research (Murphy et al., 2000) perceived value is thought to be a significant determinant of whether a tourist would intend to return and revisit a destination. In this research, we found that perceived value had a more significant influence on attitudinal loyalty than behavioral loyalty. Thus, the attitudinal loyalty of the tourists showed by their willingness to recommend Toraja as the tourist's destination to their families and friends. On the other hand, the tendency to revisit the destination as the behavioral loyalty was low. It could be because tourists' perceived value regarding infrastructure was low and affected their behavioral loyalty towards Toraja. The results from the interview show that tourists mentioned the poor quality of transportation, roads, and length as being a barrier to revisiting Toraja in the future. Tourists, therefore, have a low intention of revisiting Toraja. Therefore, all the parties must work together to accomplish good service quality and understand the customer's perspective. A core service is important. All other processes are essential to bringing value fulfillment (Grönroos, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Service quality plays a significant role in determining tourists' perceived value and loyalty to cultural heritage sites in Toraja. And responsiveness is the most significant dimension in determining service quality in cultural heritage sites in Toraja. In addition, service quality is most significant in explaining the attitudinal loyalty to cultural heritage sites in Toraja, due to the intention of the tourists through the word of mouth to encourage other people to visit Toraja. Furthermore, there are significant differences among different age groups and occupations regarding service quality.

The researcher has come up with a conceptual model that can be applied by future researchers who intend to research a related topic. In addition, the research contributes to existing literature relating to service quality and customer loyalty in the tourism sector, especially in Indonesia and other developing countries. In the tourism industry, everyday activities are important to customers, for example, giving service at the right time, ensuring that maintenance is done properly, getting service failures recovered promptly, and getting nice and professional attention from service employees must be successfully supported by the firm, either alone or with network partners. Thus, all the parties must work together to accomplish good service quality and be able to understand that from the customer's perspective, not only a core service is important but also all other processes which are essential to bringing value fulfillment.

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