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Determining Passenger Satisfaction on Passenger Ships: An Analysis of Excellent Service, Punctuality, and Infrastructure

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Abstract: The purpose of this literature review is to develop hypotheses regarding the influence between variables that can be used for further research in the field of marketing management. The article “Literature Review of Passenger Satisfaction Determinants: Analysis of Excellent Service, Punctuality, and Infrastructure” is a scientific article in the field of marketing management. The approach used in this literature review is descriptive qualitative. The data collection technique involves conducting a literature review or reviewing relevant previous articles. The data used in this descriptive qualitative approach were obtained from previous studies relevant to this study and sourced from academic online media such as Thomson Reuters Journal, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Scopus Emerald, Elsevier, Sage, Web of Science, Sinta Journal, DOAJ, EBSCO, Google Scholar, and digital reference books. The results of this literature review article are as follows: 1) Excellent service influences passenger satisfaction on passenger ships; 2) Punctuality influences passenger satisfaction on passenger ships; and 3) Infrastructure influences passenger satisfaction on passenger ships.

Keyword: Passenger Satisfaction, Excellent Service, Punctuality, Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Considering that Indonesia is an archipelago with more than 17,000 islands and a coastline of 81,000 km, sea transportation is one of the backbones of mobility in the country (Patuwo et al., 2020). Passenger ships are an essential form of transportation for communities, particularly in areas not yet served by air or land transportation (Usman et al., 2022).

Despite its crucial role, passenger satisfaction with passenger ship services remains a serious concern (Afandi et al., 2021). In Indonesia, passenger satisfaction with passenger ships still faces various challenges, including substandard service, lack of punctuality, and inadequate infrastructure (Pettitt, 2024).

Several studies have identified factors influencing passenger satisfaction on Indonesian passenger ships. One such study was conducted by Amanda, (2016) at PT. Pelayaran Nasional Indonesia (Pelni) in Medan. The study found that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction, accounting for 40.96%. Other influential factors include product quality (40.7%), price (33.75%), and emotional factors (24.7%).

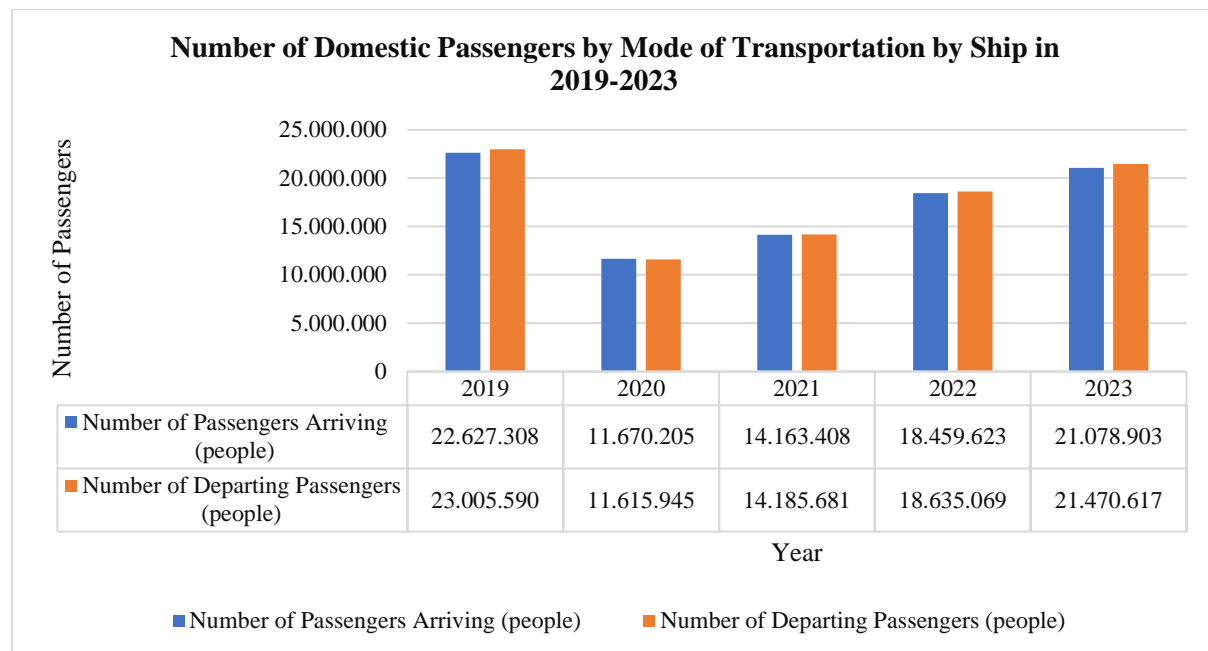


Figure 1. Number of Domestic Passengers by Mode of Transportation by Ship in 2019-2023
Source: BPS, 2025

Figure 1 shows the number of domestic passengers who used sea transportation in Indonesia from 2019 to 2023, comparing arrivals and departures each year. The data illustrates the changing usage of passenger ships over the last five years, reflecting influences such as the impact of the pandemic, economic recovery, and improvements in sea transportation services.

Before the pandemic hit in 2019, the number of domestic passengers using sea transportation was very high. A total of 22,627,308 passengers arrived, and 23,005,590 passengers departed. This made 2019 the peak year for passenger mobility by ship during the observed period. These figures indicate the Indonesian people's high dependence on sea transportation, especially for inter-island travel.

However, in 2020, there was a drastic decline due to the pandemic. The number of arriving passengers dropped to 11,670,205, and the number of departing passengers fell to 11,615,945. This over 50% decline reflects the direct impact of mobility restrictions and public concerns about the virus's spread. 2020 marked the lowest point in the domestic sea travel trend.

Starting in 2021, however, the trend showed signs of gradual recovery. The number of arriving passengers increased to 14,163,408, while the number of departing passengers increased to 14,185,681. This growth continued in 2022, with 18,459,623 arriving passengers and 18,635,069 departing passengers. This recovery is attributed to the easing of travel restrictions, the national vaccination program, and the implementation of health protocols in shipping services.

By 2023, the number of passengers had nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels, with arrivals reaching 21,078,903 and departures reaching 21,470,617. These figures suggest that public confidence in sea transportation is recovering and indicate the sector's potential for future growth. Additionally, the number of arriving and departing passengers was relatively consistent each year, indicating balanced and evenly distributed passenger mobility.

Overall, this graph shows a positive recovery trend in sea transportation use in Indonesia. However, improvements in service quality, punctuality, and the infrastructure of ships and ports are necessary to maintain and enhance this trend and enhance passenger satisfaction.

Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem above, the following research questions were formulated to be used as hypotheses for further research: 1) Does excellent service affect passenger satisfaction?; 2) Does punctuality affect passenger satisfaction?; and 3) Does infrastructure affect passenger satisfaction?.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to investigate and understand the characteristics related to factors that influence passenger satisfaction on passenger ships comprehensively. Descriptive qualitative data collection and analysis allow researchers to tailor their approach to the needs of the study and the characteristics of the subjects being studied.

The data used in this study were obtained from previous studies related to passenger satisfaction, excellent service, punctuality, and infrastructure. The data were obtained from electronic sources published no more than eight years ago. The technique used in this literature review is SALSA (Search, Appraisal, Synthesis, and Analysis). By utilizing previous research, the researcher can develop stronger, evidence-based arguments and contribute to a broader understanding of the factors influencing passenger satisfaction on passenger ships, (Susanto et al., 2024).

This study uses data from various leading academic journals, including Thomson Reuters Journal, Springer, Taylor & Francis, Scopus, Emerald, Sage, WoS, Sinta Journal, DOAJ, and EBSCO, as well as platforms such as Publish or Perish and Google Scholar. By using these sources, researchers can ensure that the data they collect is valid and accountable. The use of multiple sources also enables researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of passenger satisfaction from various perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following are the findings of the study, taking into account the context and problem formulation:

Passenger Satisfaction

Passenger satisfaction refers to the pleasure or disappointment passengers experience when comparing their expectations with their actual experience using sea transportation services. Satisfaction is influenced by service quality, comfort, safety, price, and the overall experience during the voyage (Novani & Widadgo, 2022).

Indicators or dimensions found in passenger ship satisfaction variables include: 1) Overall Satisfaction: This measures how satisfied passengers are with their overall travel experience. This can be measured through surveys that ask passengers about their satisfaction with various aspects of the trip; 2) Intention to Use Again: This measures how likely passengers are to use the same service in the future. Satisfied passengers tend to have a higher intention to return; 3) Recommendations to Others: This measures the extent to which passengers recommend the ship service to friends or family. Positive recommendations indicate a high level of satisfaction; 4) Positive feedback: This measures the amount of positive feedback received from passengers, whether through surveys, social media, or review platforms. Positive feedback reflects passenger satisfaction (Novianty et al., 2021).

Passenger ship satisfaction variables are relevant to previous studies that have been researched by: (Jaya Sakti et al., 2021), (Nissa & Awan, 2022), (Rumsowek et al., 2021).

Excellent Service

Excellent service is the highest level of service, provided in a timely, accurate, friendly, and professional manner with the aim of meeting or exceeding customer expectations. In the context of sea transportation, excellent service includes friendly crew members, clear communication, clean facilities, and proper complaint handling (Wang et al., 2024).

Indicators or dimensions found in the excellent service variable include: 1) Service quality: It measures the attitude and behavior of staff when providing services to passengers, including friendliness, politeness, and professionalism. Good service quality can increase passenger satisfaction; 2) Responsiveness: This measures the speed and effectiveness with which staff respond to passenger requests and complaints. Passengers appreciate a fast response to their needs; 3) Availability of Information: This measures how well information about services, schedules, and procedures is communicated to passengers. Clear and accurate information helps passengers feel more comfortable and informed; 4) Complaint Handling: This measures how effectively the company handles complaints and issues faced by passengers. Effective complaint handling can increase satisfaction even when problems occur (Wirtz, 2020).

The excellent service variable is relevant to previous research conducted by: (Yoon & Cha, 2020), (Afandi et al., 2021), (Yuliantini et al., 2022).

Punctuality

Punctuality refers to a shipping operator's ability to adhere to promised or announced ship departure and arrival times. Punctuality is an important indicator of reliability and professionalism, greatly influencing passenger satisfaction with sea transportation service (Wei et al., 2023).

Indicators or dimensions found in the time accuracy variable include: 1) Departure Schedule Accuracy: This measures how often ships depart according to the predetermined schedule. This is very important for passengers with travel plans; 2) Arrival Schedule Accuracy: Measures how often ships arrive at the port according to the predetermined schedule. Arrival punctuality also affects passenger satisfaction; 3) Communication of Schedule Changes: This measures how well the company informs passengers about changes to departure or arrival schedules. Effective communication can minimize passenger inconvenience; 4) Frequency of Delays: This measures how often delays occur in departure or arrival schedules. A low frequency of delays indicates good punctuality performance (Chu et al., 2024).

The time accuracy variable is relevant to previous research conducted by: (Liu et al., 2025), (Widiyanto et al., 2021), (Marzialia et al., 2022).

Infrastructure

Passenger ship infrastructure includes all physical facilities that support a smooth and comfortable journey, such as docks, passenger terminals, access routes to the port, boarding facilities, and the ship itself. Modern, adequate infrastructure improves service efficiency and creates a more positive travel experience for passenger (Pettitt, 2024).

Indicators or dimensions found in the infrastructure variable include: 1) Ship Facilities: It measures the quality of the facilities available on board, such as seating comfort, cleanliness, and toilet facilities. Good facilities can enhance the passenger experience; 2) Ship cleanliness: It measures the level of cleanliness on board, including public areas and restrooms. Good cleanliness creates a comfortable environment for passengers; 3) Port Accessibility: This measures the ease of accessing the port, including transportation to and from the port and parking facilities. Good accessibility affects passenger comfort; 4) Security and Safety: This category measures the level of security and safety on board and at the port, including the

presence of clear safety procedures and security personnel. Passengers who feel safe tend to be more satisfied (Ali et al., 2024).

The infrastructure variable is relevant to previous research that has been studied by: (Satriawan et al., 2024), (Palembangan, 2021), (Nechaev et al., 2021).

Previous Research

Based on the above findings and previous studies, the research discussion is formulated as follows:

Table 1. Results of Previous Relevant Research

No	Author (Year)	Research Results	Similarities With This Article	Differences With This Article
1	(Tarigan & Ulimaz, 2020)	Variables of Excellent Service Affect Passenger Satisfaction on the Batam-Tanjung Pinang Ferry Route	This article has similarities in examining the variable of Excellent Service as the independent variable and examining the variable of Passenger Satisfaction as the dependent variable.	Another difference is the object of research conducted on the Batam-Tanjung Pinang Ferry Passenger Ship.
2	(Jaya Sakti et al., 2021)	-The variable of punctuality affects passenger satisfaction on the Bakauheni Roro Ferry -The variable of safety of goods affects passenger satisfaction on the Bakauheni Roro Ferry	This article has similarities in examining the variable of Punctuality as the independent variable and examining the variable of Passenger Satisfaction as the dependent variable.	Another difference is the object of research conducted on the Bakauheni Roro Ferry Passenger Ship.
3	(Fahri, 2022)	Infrastructure variables affect passenger satisfaction at local ports in Ternate, North Maluku	This article has similarities in examining the Infrastructure variable as the independent variable and examining the Passenger Satisfaction variable as the dependent variable.	Another difference is the research object conducted at the Local Port in Ternate, North Maluku.

Discussion

Based on the problem statement, previous research, and literature review above, the discussion in this study is as follows:

1. The Effect of Excellent Service on Passenger Satisfaction

Based on a literature review and relevant previous studies, it can be stated that excellent service affects passenger satisfaction on passenger ships.

To influence passenger satisfaction through excellent service, passenger ship service providers or shipping companies must do the following: 1) Service quality: Service quality includes the politeness of staff, clarity of procedures, and comfort during the service process, from ticket booking to departure and arrival at the destination; 2) Responsiveness: The ability of staff to respond to passengers' needs and questions quickly and accurately; 3) Availability of Information: Easily accessible and accurate information regarding departure schedules, route changes, ticket prices, and passenger boarding and disembarking procedures is very

important; and 4) Complaint Handling: Proper complaint handling creates the impression that the company cares and is responsible for the comfort and experience of passengers.

If passenger ship service providers or shipping companies can provide quality service, responsiveness, availability of information, and complaint handling, this will have an impact on passenger satisfaction, which includes: 1) Overall Satisfaction: When passengers receive service that meets or exceeds their expectations, they will experience a high level of overall satisfaction; 2) Intention to Use Again: Satisfied passengers are more likely to choose the same shipping service for their next trip because they feel they have had a pleasant and problem-free experience; 3) Recommendations to Others: Satisfied passengers usually share their positive experiences with friends, family, or the community through social media or direct communication; and 4) Positive Feedback: Satisfied passengers tend to provide constructive feedback through surveys, social media, or direct contact.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by (Octavines et al., 2023), which states that there is a relationship between excellent service and passenger satisfaction.

2. The Effect of Punctuality on Passenger Satisfaction

Based on a literature review and relevant previous studies, it can be stated that punctuality affects passenger satisfaction.

To influence passenger satisfaction through punctuality, passenger ship service providers or shipping companies must do the following: 1) Departure Schedule Punctuality: Departures according to the predetermined schedule reflect professionalism and good operational management; 2) Arrival Schedule Punctuality: Ships arriving at the destination port at the promised time will increase passenger satisfaction, especially for those who have follow-up activities, such as land transportation schedules, work, or other important appointments; 3) Communication of Schedule Changes: Good communication can minimize disappointment and increase trust; and 4) Frequency of Delays: The more frequent the delays, the greater the potential for a decline in passenger satisfaction.

If passenger ship service providers or shipping companies can provide departure schedule accuracy, arrival schedule accuracy, schedule change communication, and delay frequency, this will have an impact on passenger satisfaction, which includes: 1) Overall Satisfaction: When departure and arrival times are as expected, passengers will feel satisfied because their trip runs smoothly and is predictable; 2) Intention to Use Again: Passengers are more likely to choose a service provider that has proven to be consistent in maintaining punctuality; 3) Recommendations to Others: Timely service is often the main point passengers mention to relatives or the general public. These positive recommendations serve as highly effective promotion and enhance the company's image in the public eye; and 4) Positive Feedback: Passengers who are satisfied with timely service are more likely to provide testimonials or constructive feedback through social media, customer surveys, or official communication channels.

The findings of this study align with previous research conducted by (Jaya Sakti et al., 2021), which stated that there is a significant influence between punctuality and passenger satisfaction.

3. The Influence of Infrastructure on Passenger Ship Passenger Satisfaction

Based on a literature review and relevant previous studies, it can be stated that infrastructure affects passenger satisfaction on passenger ships.

To influence passenger satisfaction on passenger ships through infrastructure, passenger ship service providers or shipping companies must do the following: 1) Ship Facilities: Complete and well-functioning facilities demonstrate the company's commitment to

providing the best service; 2) Ship Cleanliness: Ship cleanliness is a fundamental aspect that cannot be ignored. A clean interior and exterior, free from unpleasant odors, and good waste management will create a pleasant and healthy atmosphere for passengers; 3) Port Accessibility: Easy access to and from the port, such as the availability of public transportation, parking, comfortable pedestrian paths, and supporting facilities at the port terminal, greatly influence passengers' initial and final experiences; and 4) Safety and Security: Safety infrastructure such as fire extinguishers, life jackets, emergency evacuation systems, and the presence of safety officers on standby will make passengers feel safe while on board.

If passenger ship service providers or shipping companies can provide ship facilities, ship cleanliness, port accessibility, and safety and security, this will have an impact on passenger satisfaction, which includes: 1) Overall Satisfaction: Adequate infrastructure will enhance passenger comfort, safety, and ease of access to and enjoyment of services; 2) Intention to Use Again: Positive experiences gained through infrastructure facilities and services will build a good perception and encourage passengers to use the same shipping company's services again in the future; 3) Recommendations to Others: Passengers who are satisfied with ship and port infrastructure are more likely to recommend the service to friends, family, or colleagues; and 4) Positive Feedback: Satisfaction with infrastructure will encourage passengers to provide positive reviews or feedback, either directly through satisfaction surveys or indirectly through social media or travel apps. This feedback serves as a source for evaluating and continuously improving service quality.

The results of this study align with previous research conducted by (Fahri, 2022), which stated that there is an influence between infrastructure and passenger satisfaction on passenger ships.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is determined based on the problem formulation, research objectives, and previous studies relevant to the literature review in this study:

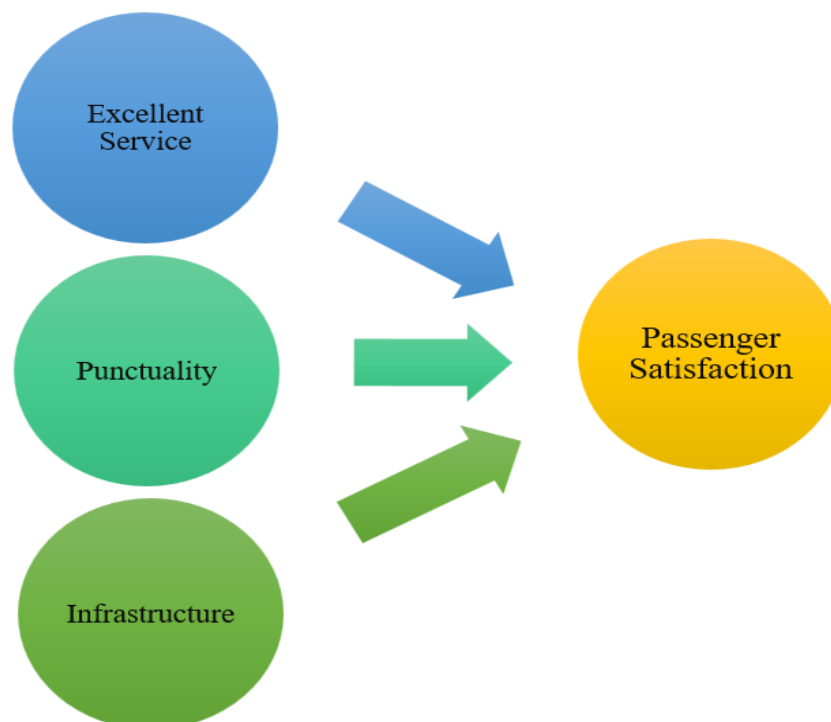


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Based on Figure 2 above, excellent service, punctuality, and infrastructure affect passenger satisfaction. However, in addition to excellent service, punctuality, and infrastructure, there are other variables that affect passenger satisfaction, including:

- 1) Ticket Price: (Sihombing et al., 2023) (Ricardianto et al., 2023), (Ricardianto et al., 2023), (Simarmata & Keke, 2016).
- 2) Safety: (Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022), (Iacus et al., 2020), (Heryandri, 2018), (Ma et al., 2024).
- 3) Check-in process: (Hartono et al., 2020), (Novita et al., 2020), (Hendiyana et al., 2022), (Hardianika, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the problem formulation, results, and discussion above, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

1. Excellent service affects passenger satisfaction on passenger ships;
2. Punctuality affects passenger satisfaction on passenger ships;
3. Infrastructure affects passenger satisfaction on passenger ships.

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