



Psychology of Service and Relationship on Satisfaction and Loyalty of Diploma IV Cadets Boarded in Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran

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Abstract: Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP) Jakarta, a maritime education institution, operates a boarding school system requiring cadets to reside in dormitories, enhancing learning efficiency and soft skills development. This research investigates the impact of service quality and relationship quality on cadet satisfaction and, subsequently, on cadet loyalty, a crucial factor for institutional success and graduate quality. Employing a causal relationship method, this study distributed 93 questionnaires, each having 32 statements, to STIP Jakarta cadets. Data analysis, utilizing SmartPLS, focused on descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The study found that service and relationship quality positively affect cadet satisfaction. In addition, cadet satisfaction has a positive and significant on cadet loyalty. Relationship quality exerts a more substantial influence on satisfaction than service quality, and service quality indirectly impacts loyalty through the mediating role of satisfaction. This means that cadet satisfaction serves as a crucial link, that is, a mediator, between service aspects and cadet loyalty. The practical implication suggests that STIP Jakarta should prioritize fostering strong relationships and high satisfaction, with relationship quality particularly crucial. This study's contribution lies in providing empirical evidence within the specific context of a maritime boarding school that highlights the dominance of relationship quality in fostering cadet satisfaction and loyalty, offering insights that directly support strategic improvements in student experience management.

Keywords: loyalty; psychology; satisfaction; service

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INTRODUCTION

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP), or Maritime Education Institution, in Jakarta, is a higher education institution under the Indonesian Transportation Education and Training Agency, offering Associate Degree and Strata (A, B, C) programs in Nautical, Engineering, Maritime Telecommunications, and Management and Ports. STIP implements a boarding school system, requiring cadets to live in dormitories to enhance learning effectiveness and soft skills development. However, a preliminary study involving interviews with STIP Jakarta cadets and a recent literature review revealed a critical gap in understanding the dynamics of student satisfaction and loyalty dynamics within this context. While numerous studies have explored service quality and student satisfaction in general higher education (Asadollahi-Amin, 2020; Khan et al., 2021), and some have focused on maritime education (Kim & Hwang, 2020), few have specifically addressed the unique challenges and relational dynamics of a *boarding* maritime institution. Existing research often emphasizes the impact of facilities, lecturers, and curriculum. However, interviews with STIP Jakarta cadets highlighted the importance of the 24/7 living and learning environment, where relationships extend beyond the classroom and significantly impact overall satisfaction. While Saxer et al. (2024) acknowledge the role of student-lecturer relationships, their work does not fully capture the complexities of a boarding school setting. This gap is particularly concerning given the consistent decline in active cadets at STIP Jakarta from 2019 to 2023, underscoring the urgent need to understand and address factors influencing cadet satisfaction and loyalty.

While promoting efficiency in transportation and consumption costs, the boarding school system presents unique challenges. Teaching quality, service support, and the overall campus experience, including the intensity of dormitory life, directly affect students' satisfaction (Öberseder et al., 2017). For example, observations of cadets being sleepy or falling asleep in class suggest that the demands of the boarding system may negatively impact their well-being and academic engagement, ultimately affecting their loyalty to the institution. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing the loyalty of Diploma IV cadets boarded in STIP Jakarta. Customers experience management is crucial for higher education institutions to maintain competitiveness (Islam et al., 2018), and cadet loyalty is directly linked to educational success and STIP's goals. This research specifically focuses on the interplay of service quality, which encompasses dimensions like reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical evidence (Khan et al., 2021) and relationship quality on cadets' satisfaction and its subsequent impact on their loyalty. By analyzing the effects of service

quality, relationship quality, and cadets' satisfaction, this study expects to identify key factors contributing to increased cadet loyalty. The results will contribute to formulating appropriate policies and strategies to improve service and relationship quality at STIP Jakarta, ultimately enhancing cadet satisfaction and loyalty. This, in turn, will positively impact the quality of graduates and the reputation of STIP Jakarta as a leading maritime education institution, aligning with the broader need for higher education institutions to improve student experience and retention.

METHODS

This study seeks to understand the causal relationship between the following variables: service quality, relationship (Ngo et al., 2016) quality, cadet satisfaction, and cadet loyalty. Therefore, the research design used is causal, which is generally used when researchers want to study whether a variable affects another variable and the nature of the effect. This study uses a quantitative approach focusing on numerical and objective data. Quantitative research requires a larger sample for better generalization, and the results are based on a more representative sample.

Causal research design aims to determine cause-and-effect relationships where the researcher manipulates or controls one or more independent variables to see their impact on the dependent variable. In this context, the researcher seeks to determine whether service quality and relationship quality (independent variables) affect cadet satisfaction (intervening variable) and whether cadet satisfaction affects cadet loyalty (dependent variable). This study was conducted at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP), or Maritime Education Institution, in Jakarta, which implements a boarding school system. Samples in causal research should also be selected randomly and described in detail to ensure external validity. The population in this study were all cadets living in the STIP Jakarta dormitory, with a sample size of 93 respondents selected using the Slovin formula with a 10% error tolerance. This sample size is close to the normal curve and considered adequate.

The causal design was chosen because the researcher wanted to understand how and why service and relationship quality affect cadet satisfaction and loyalty. The basic assumption of this design is that the variables studied exist in the population, the sample taken represents the population (through probability sampling), the variables can be measured accurately, and there is control over external variables that have the potential to affect the causal relationship studied. This study aims to determine the effect of service and relationship quality on cadet satisfaction and its implications for the loyalty of Diploma IV program cadets boarded at STIP Jakarta. Data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique with the help of SmartPLS to test the causal relationship between variables. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that affect cadet loyalty and provide input for improving the quality of education at STIP Jakarta.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis in this study is based on a questionnaire on the relationship between student engagement and satisfaction in higher education (Doo & Kim, 2024). In this study, questionnaires were distributed according to the number of samples with 32 statement items: 10 items for service quality, eight items for relationship quality, 10 items for cadet satisfaction, and four items for cadet loyalty. There are five dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical aspects (Alharbi & Alshammari, 2020). Of the 93 questionnaires distributed, all were returned to the researcher. Service quality affects university student satisfaction. All questionnaires were analyzed after being selected one by one and answered thoroughly. This study uses descriptive analysis to describe respondents' answers from various developed constructs and differential statistics for hypothesis testing in the SmartPLS model. Respondents were described based on gender, age, major, study period, and other information. Respondent characteristics (n=93) based on gender are presented in Figure 1.

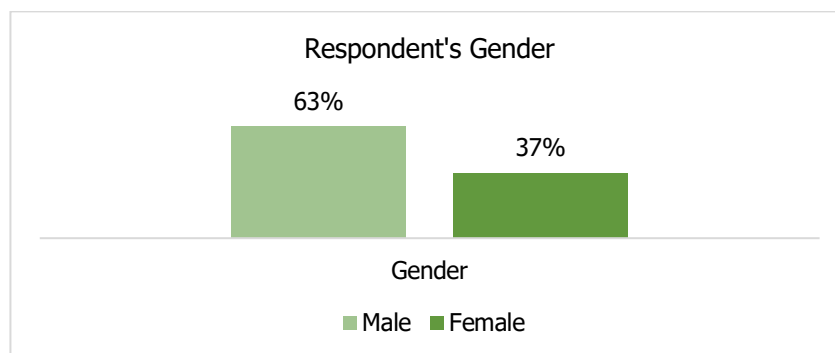


Figure 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

Figure 1 shows 59 male respondents (63%) and 34 female respondents (37%). The data shows that most of the respondents in this study were male. The quality of services higher education institutions provide affects student satisfaction (Amoako et al., 2023). There were 27 respondents aged under 20 years (29%), 67 respondents aged 20-30 years (71%), and no respondents aged 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and over 51 years (0%). The data shows that most of the respondents in this study were aged 20-30 years. There is an impact of student-teacher relationships on academic performance and satisfaction (Wang, 2019). Respondent characteristics (n=93) based on major are presented in Figure 2.

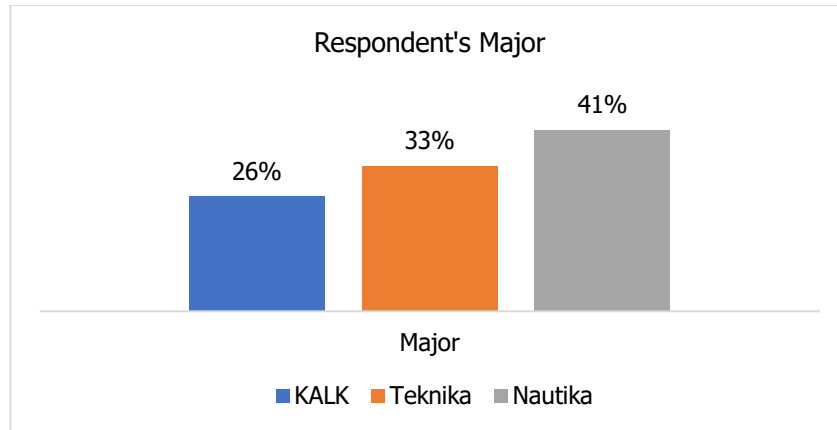


Figure 2. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Major

Figure 2 shows 39 respondents from nautical (41%), 31 respondents from engineering (33%), and 25 respondents from KALK (26%). The data shows that most of the respondents in this study were majoring in nautical. Social interactions between students, lecturers, and the wider academic community can build positive learning experiences (van der Meer et al., 2021). There were 32 second-semester respondents (33%), 24 sixth-semester respondents (25%), 16 seventh-semester respondents (17%), and 24 eighth-semester respondents (25%). The data shows that most of the respondents in this study were in the second semester. Student or learner data analysis measures service quality dimensions. The research instrument was tested on 93 respondents regarding validity and reliability. The test results ensure that this research instrument is reliable and accurate in measuring variables. SmartPLS Model Calculation is presented in Figure 3.

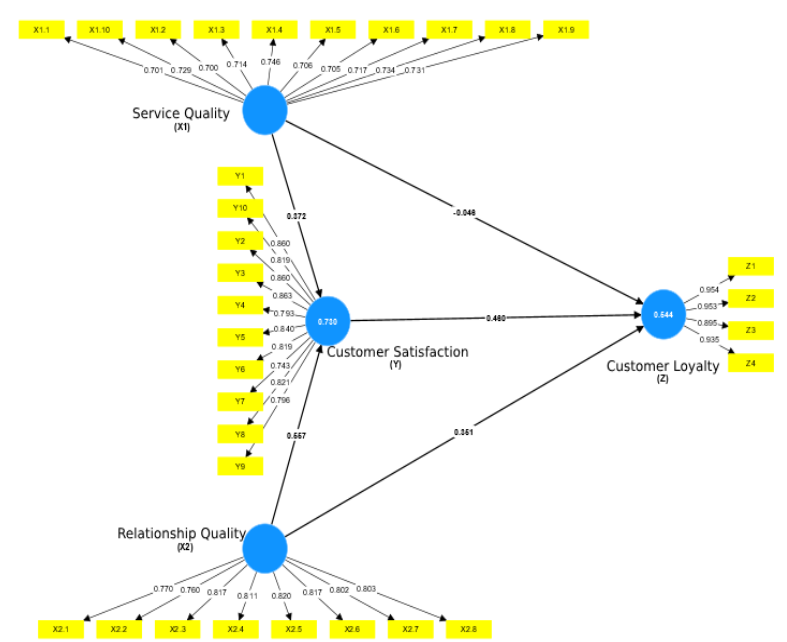


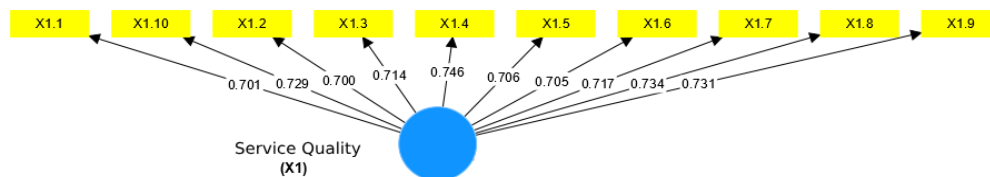
Figure 3. SmartPLS Model Calculation

Convergent Validity aims to determine the validity of each relationship between indicators and their constructs or latent variables. The results of the validity test for each research variable instrument are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity Test

	Customer Satisfaction (Y)	Relationship Quality (X2)	Service Quality (X1)	Customer Loyalty (Z)	Result
X1.1			0.701		Valid
X1.1			0.729		Valid
0					
X1.2			0.7		Valid
X1.3			0.714		Valid
X1.4			0.746		Valid
X1.5			0.706		Valid
X1.6			0.705		Valid
X1.7			0.717		Valid
X1.8			0.734		Valid
X1.9			0.731		Valid
X2.1		0.77			Valid
X2.2		0.76			Valid
X2.3		0.817			Valid
X2.4		0.811			Valid
X2.5		0.82			Valid
X2.6		0.817			Valid
X2.7		0.802			Valid
X2.8		0.803			Valid
Y1	0.86				Valid
Y10	0.819				Valid
Y2	0.86				Valid
Y3	0.863				Valid
Y4	0.793				Valid
Y5	0.84				Valid
Y6	0.819				Valid
Y7	0.743				Valid
Y8	0.821				Valid
Y9	0.796				Valid
Z1				0.954	Valid
Z2				0.953	Valid
Z3				0.895	Valid
Z4				0.935	Valid

With the outer loading criteria $r > 0.7$ (processed by SmartPLS 4.0), the validity test results of each statement item for each research variable show that all items from the value results table are at a value of more than 0.7 and are declared valid. The results of the validity test of the service quality variable (X1) can be seen in Figure 4, where there are no indicators with a value below 0.7, so all indicators are used.

**Figure 4.** Validity Test Results of Service Quality

All indicators in the Service Quality (X1) in this study have a value greater than 0.70, so it has a high level of validity and is declared valid. The highest indicator/outer loading value is X1.8 (Consumer confidence in service quality), with a value of 0.734. The lowest indicator/outer loading value is X1.2 (Employee knowledge in answering customer questions), with a value of 0.700. Assessing how the quality of various aspects of service, such as facilities, faculty, administration, or student support, affects students' perceptions of the institution (Chen, 2020).

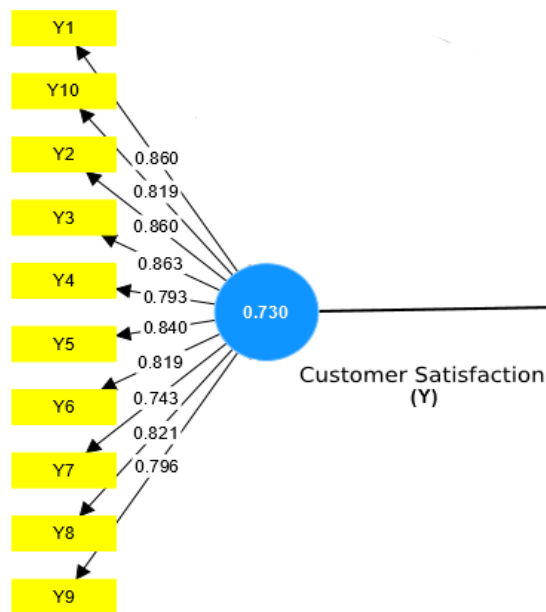


Figure 5. Validity Test Results of Customer Satisfaction

According to Figure 5, all indicators in the Customer Satisfaction (Y) in this study have a value greater than 0.70, so it has a high level of validity and is declared valid. The highest indicator/outer loading value is Y3 (cadets pay dormitory fees according to the quality of dormitory service needs), with a value of 0,863. The lowest indicator/outer loading value is Y7 (cadets are proud to attend STIP), with a value of 0,743. Knowledge management plays a role in increasing student satisfaction and loyalty (Iqbal et al., 2019). The results of the validity test of customer loyalty (Z) are displayed in Figure 6, where there are no indicators with a value below 0.7, so all indicators are used.

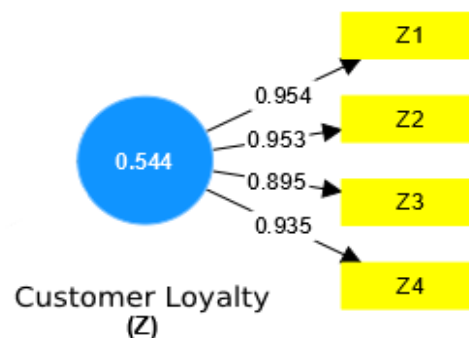


Figure 6. Validity Test Results of Customer Loyalty

According to Figure 6, all indicators in customer loyalty (Z) in this study have a value greater than 0.70, so it has a high level of validity and is declared valid.

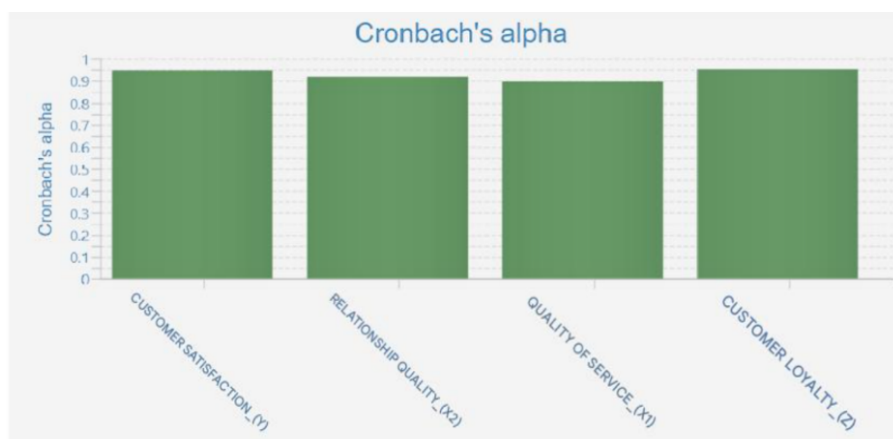


Figure 7. Reliability Test

These values exceed the recommended minimum limit for reliability (0.7), and some even approach or exceed 0.9. Bootstrapping was tested using the results of processing outer loadings and outer weights. Conceptual and quantitative approaches can be used to analyze service quality factors influencing student loyalty (Lee et al., 2018). Based on the results of SmartPLS bootstrapping on Outer Loadings (Estimated relationships in reflective measurement models), all indicators have a p-value <0.05. So, all indicators based on the outer loading value are significant. Also, all indicators have been convergently valid based on the bootstrapping assessment of the outer loading.

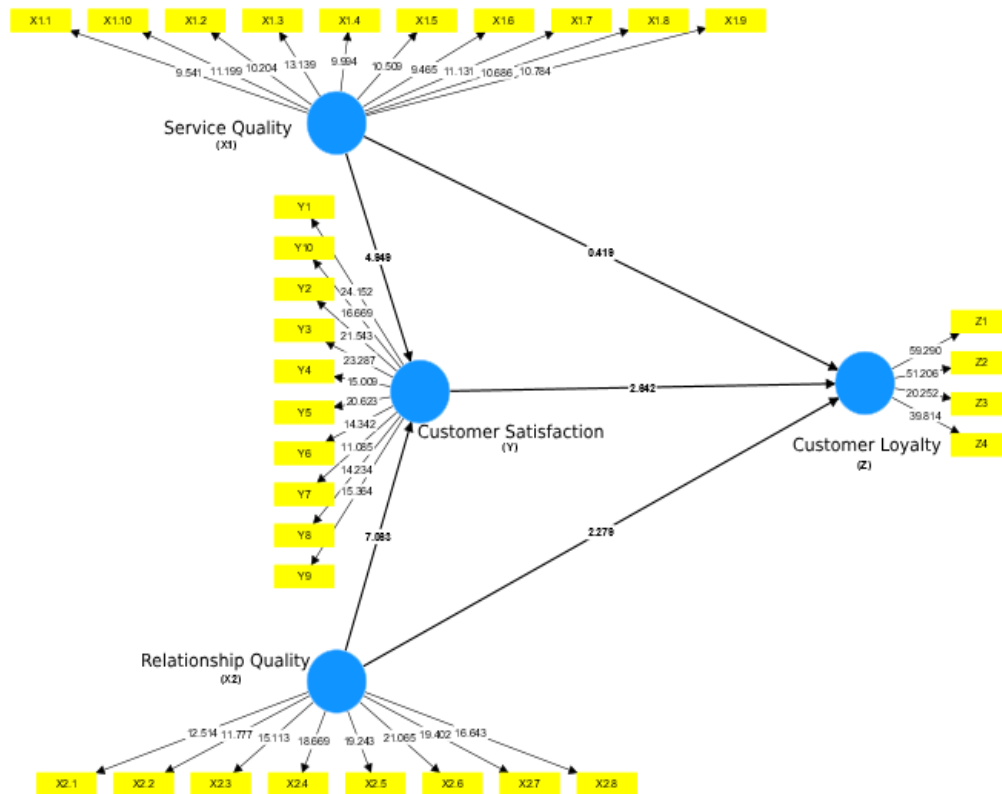


Figure 8. SmartPLS Bootstrapping Result

In SmartPLS, testing the relationship between variables X1, X2, and Y affecting variable Z is done using simulation with regression method on the sample. This test aims to determine the direction and how much effect the independent variable has on the dependent variable, p-value <0.05. The results of the regression test from the SmartPLS analysis are presented in Figure 9.

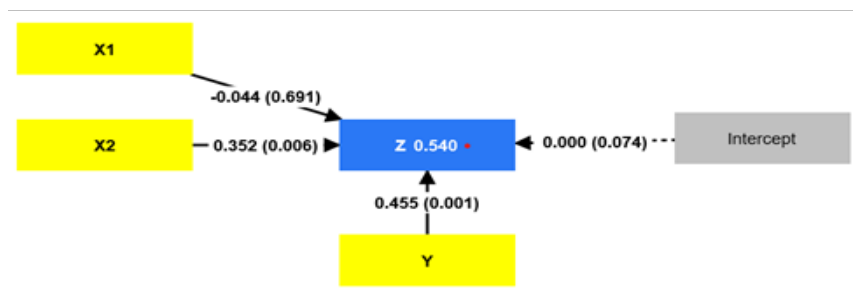


Figure 9. Regression Results of X1, X2, and Y on Z

The Service Quality variable (X1) with a p-value of 0.691 (with the criteria of p-value <0.05) has no effect and is negative on the Customer Loyalty variable (Z). In contrast, the Relationship Quality variable (X2) with a p-value of 0.006 and the Customer Satisfaction variable with a p-value of 0.001 has an effect, are positive and significant on the Customer Loyalty variable (Z). Combining quality academic and non-academic services is the key to creating a positive student experience (Chen, 2020). Regression on collinearity statistics is presented in Figure 10.

	VIF
X2	1.832
X1	1.832

Figure 10. Regression Results on Collinearity Statistics

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value is not more than ten, so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity. So, its predictive power is reliable and stable for a variable strongly correlated with other variables in the model. The results of the SmartPLS bootstrapping analysis are presented in Figure 10.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O /STDEV)	P values
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (Y) → CUSTOMER LOYALTY (Z)	0.460	0.457	0.174	2.642	0.008
RELATIONSHIP QUALITY (X2) → CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (Y)	0.557	0.553	0.079	7.063	0.000
RELATIONSHIP QUALITY (X2) → CUSTOMER LOYALTY (Z)	0.351	0.345	0.154	2.279	0.023
SERVICE QUALITY (X1) → CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (Y)	0.372	0.376	0.075	4.949	0.000
SERVICE QUALITY (X1) → CUSTOMER LOYALTY (Z)	-0.046	-0.038	0.111	0.419	0.676

Figure 11. SmartPLS bootstrapping analysis

This study analyzes the effect of service quality (X1) and relationship quality (X2) on customer satisfaction (Y) and customer loyalty (Z). The analysis results show that service quality has a parameter coefficient of 0.372 on customer satisfaction, which means there is a positive and significant effect between the two. Thus, a one-unit increase in service quality will increase customer satisfaction by 37.2%. This result is supported by previous research showing that service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the relationship quality has a parameter coefficient of 0.557 on customer satisfaction, indicating a positive and significant effect. This means that a one-unit increase in relationship quality will increase customer satisfaction by 55.7%. Other studies have also found that service quality and customer satisfaction positively affect customer loyalty (Wijaya & Putra, 2023). However, service quality does not directly affect customer loyalty, with a parameter coefficient of -0.046. On the other hand, relationship quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with a parameter coefficient of 0.351. This means that a one-unit increase in relationship quality will increase customer loyalty by 35.1%. This result is consistent with research that found that service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty (Septyarani & Nurhadi, 2023).

In addition, customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, with a coefficient of 0.460. This means that a one-unit increase in customer satisfaction will increase customer loyalty by 46.0%. Further analysis shows that service quality positively affects customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, with a parameter coefficient of 0.171. Likewise, relationship quality positively affects customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.256. This shows that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and relationship quality on customer loyalty. This finding is supported by research stating that customer satisfaction is a partial mediating variable in bridging the effect of service quality on customer loyalty (Dam & Dam, 2021). The R Square value for the effect of service quality and relationship quality on customer satisfaction is 0.730, which means that the two variables explain 73.0% of the variation in customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the R Square value for the effect of service quality, relationship quality, and customer satisfaction on customer loyalty is 0.544, indicating that the three variables can explain 54.4% of the variation in customer loyalty.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to academic research in several key areas. This study confirms that service and relationship quality enhance cadet satisfaction and loyalty. It reinforces the conceptual framework that positions satisfaction as a mediator between service quality and loyalty. This research adds valuable insights to maritime education management by providing empirical evidence on the factors influencing cadet satisfaction and loyalty. It is a foundational reference for future studies in vocational maritime education and similar institutions. The study offers a fresh perspective on how interpersonal relationships within an academic setting—particularly in a discipline-based institution like STIP Jakarta—substantially impact loyalty rather than service quality. This enriches the existing literature on student loyalty in higher education. These findings open avenues for further exploration, such as investigating additional factors that may enhance cadet satisfaction and loyalty, including organizational culture, leadership styles, or technology-driven learning experiences. Future research could also apply this model to other maritime education institutions to assess the consistency of these results across different contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that service quality and relationship quality positively and significantly affect STIP Jakarta cadet satisfaction, which, in turn, positively influences cadet loyalty, with relationship quality exerting a more substantial effect and service quality indirectly impacting loyalty through satisfaction as a mediator; these factors explain a significant portion of the variance in both satisfaction and loyalty. The practical impact of these findings is that STIP Jakarta should prioritize fostering strong, positive relationships between cadets and faculty/staff, as well as among cadets themselves, through initiatives like mentorship programs, increased informal interaction opportunities, and staff training on rapport-building, while also continuing to improve service quality in areas like dormitory facilities and academic support. By implementing these strategies, STIP Jakarta can realistically expect increased cadet retention, improved academic performance, better graduate quality, and an enhanced institutional reputation, ultimately creating a more supportive and engaging environment that fosters academic success and strong cadet loyalty, benefiting the institution and its graduates. Overall, this study provides practical recommendations for STIP Jakarta and makes a substantial academic contribution by advancing theoretical and empirical discussions on satisfaction and loyalty within maritime education and academic management.

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