

Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

Service Quality Towards Cargo Shipping Service User Loyalty and Satisfaction with Trust as a Mediation

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Abstract. This study is associative explanatory research aimed at identifying and analyzing the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, trust, and customer loyalty. The population in this study consists of 150 customers of PT Pancaran Samudera Transport, all of whom were selected as the sample using a census sampling technique. Primary data were collected through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The research instrument was developed based on indicators of each studied variable: service quality, customer satisfaction, trust, and customer loyalty. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that: (1) service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, (2) service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer trust, (3) customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty, (4) customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on trust, and (5) trust has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. These findings highlight that improving service quality and customer satisfaction, both directly and through trust, can effectively strengthen customer loyalty.

Keywords: Customer Trust; Customer Satisfaction; Customer Loyalty; Service Quality.

1. Introduction

The logistics business plays a crucial role in planning, implementing, and controlling the flow of goods, services, and information from their point of origin to their final destination. This sector ensures that goods are delivered on time, in good condition, and at an efficient cost. In the modern era, the role of the logistics business is increasingly crucial in increasing efficiency, reducing operational costs, and enhancing customer satisfaction.

According to the Indonesian Logistics Association (ALI), Indonesia's logistics sector is expected to grow by 5-8% by 2023, driven by several key factors. For example, e-commerce growth is accelerating with the increasing number of internet users in Indonesia, which now



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

reaches 64.8% of the total population according to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII). This has led to a surge in demand for fast and efficient logistics services to support goods distribution. Furthermore, globalization is encouraging companies to operate in multiple countries, increasing the need for logistics systems capable of effectively managing global supply chains.

Increasingly fierce industrial competition also demands that companies optimize efficiency and reduce costs, with reliable logistics services becoming a key factor in their business strategies. Technological advances are driving innovation in this sector, such as the implementation of blockchain to increase supply chain transparency and security, as well as automation in warehousing and shipping. Meanwhile, consumer expectations for faster and more reliable logistics services continue to rise, driving companies to continuously innovate to improve their service quality.

One of the most commonly used multidimensional instruments to assess service quality from the patient or consumer perspective is the service quality gap model. (Prakash 2019) This model measures the service quality gap from six dimensions, namely tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, and access. The SERVQUAL model suggested by Parasuraman et al (1985) is a valid tool for measuring service quality in various sectors including commercial or industrial businesses, non-profit organizations, and government-owned organizations. Service quality measurement is the first step towards quality improvement and management in service systems; thus, quality assessment is becoming a focus of increasing attention. (Satar Rezaei et al. 2018).

With its increasingly strategic role, the logistics business is not only the backbone of industry but also contributes significantly to economic growth in the digital and global era. Furthermore, consumer expectations for faster and more reliable logistics services continue to rise, driving companies to continuously innovate to improve their service quality. With its increasingly strategic role, the logistics business is not only the backbone of industry but also contributes significantly to economic growth in the digital and global era.

Service quality is a key factor in building customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers who are satisfied with the speed, accuracy, and reliability of service tend to be more loyal and use the same service repeatedly. Factors such as easy delivery tracking, timeliness, security of goods, and responsiveness of customer service are important aspects that determine the user experience. The better the quality of service provided, the higher the rating.

Service performance has a significant impact in shaping consumer satisfaction. (Khoi 2019) An organization that successfully carries out its duties and responsibilities effectively tends to build strong public trust. Consistent service quality, transparency, and the ability to meet public expectations are key factors in building public satisfaction.

Service performance plays a crucial role in building and maintaining customer loyalty. Responsive, reliable, and high-quality service can increase customer satisfaction, ultimately strengthening their attachment to a brand or service provider. When customers consistently receive service that meets or even exceeds their expectations, they are more likely to



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

remain loyal and continue using that service. Furthermore, positive service experiences not only foster loyalty but can also create positive word-of-mouth, where satisfied customers recommend the service to others. Therefore, optimal service performance is a determining factor in building long-term relationships with customers and enhancing a company's competitiveness in a competitive marketplace.

Research on the role of service performance in customer satisfaction and loyalty remains controversial. Previous research has shown that service quality has a positive and significant effect on satisfaction and has a similar impact on customer loyalty. (Ali et al. 2021) However, this finding differs from research conducted by Nguyen et al (2021), which revealed that not all dimensions of service quality have a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, in this study, trust is proposed as a mediator.

Maintaining customer trust in the cargo business is a key factor in ensuring the company's sustainability and growth in a highly competitive industry. Customer trust not only determines loyalty but also contributes to a company's reputation and competitiveness. (Hidayat and Idrus 2023) In the cargo business, customers rely on service providers to ensure their goods are delivered safely, on time, and in good condition. Therefore, consistency in service, transparency in the shipping process, and responsiveness to customer complaints or issues are crucial.

Additionally, the use of technology such as real-time tracking systems and effective communication can increase customers' sense of security and certainty. When customer trust is maintained, they are more likely to make repeat transactions and recommend the service to others.(Iglesias et al. 2020; Ricadonna, Saifullah, and Prasetyoningrum 2021). Conversely, losing trust can have a negative impact, reducing customer loyalty and even damaging the company's image.(Leninkumar 2017). Thus, building and maintaining user trust should be a top priority for cargo companies in their efforts to create long-term relationships and increase competitiveness in the market.

2. Research Methods

The type of research used is associative explanatory research, which aims to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2012). This research aims to "explain" the hypothesis testing with the intention of justifying or strengthening the hypothesis in the hope of strengthening the theory used as the "foundation". In this case, it is to test the influence of service quality, service user satisfaction, service user loyalty and trust.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Analysis of the Influence between Variables

This section presents the results of testing the research hypothesis proposed in the previous chapter. To determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or not, compare the calculated t value with the t table value. If the calculated t value is greater than the t table value, the

Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

hypothesis is accepted. The t table value for a 5% significance level is 1.96. For more details, see the section below.

The results of testing the influence of each research variable can be presented as follows:

Table Path Coefficients

| | | | Standard | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|--------------|----------|
| | Original | Sample | deviation | T statistics | |
| | sample (O) | mean (M) | (STDEV) | (O/STDEV) | P values |
| Service user satisfaction -> Service | | | | | |
| user loyalty | 0.181 | 0.182 | 0.074 | 2,456 | 0.014 |
| User satisfaction -> Trust | 0.183 | 0.186 | 0.089 | 2,050 | 0.040 |
| Service quality -> User loyalty | 0.228 | 0.225 | 0.071 | 3,230 | 0.001 |
| Quality of service -> Trust | 0.528 | 0.529 | 0.071 | 7,466 | 0.000 |
| Trust -> Service user loyalty | 0.517 | 0.518 | 0.065 | 7,961 | 0.000 |

Source: Primary data processing with Smart PLS 4.1.0 (2025)

Based on the results of data processing with PLS above, the results of testing each hypothesis proposed in the previous chapter can be presented as follows:

a) Hypothesis Testing 1:

H1:There is a relationship between service quality and the level of user loyalty.

In testing hypothesis 1, the original sample estimate value of the influence of service quality on service user loyalty was obtained at 0.228. This value proves that service quality has a positive effect on service user loyalty, the results of which are also strengthened by the results of the t-test obtained with a calculated t value (3.230) > t table (1.96) and p (0.001) < 0.05, so it can be said that there is a positive and significant influence of service quality on service user loyalty. Thus, the first hypothesis which states that "There is a relationship between service quality and the level of service user loyalty." can be accepted.

b) Hypothesis Testing 2:

H2:There is a relationship between service quality and trust

In testing hypothesis 2, the original sample estimate value for the influence of service quality on trust was 0.528. This value proves that service quality has a positive influence on trust, the results of which are also strengthened by the results of the t-test which obtained a calculated t value (7.466) > t table (1.96) and p (0.000) < 0.05, so it can be said that there is a significant influence of service quality on trust. Thus, the second hypothesis which states that "There is a relationship between service quality and trust" can be accepted.

c) Hypothesis Testing 3:

H3:There is a relationship between user satisfaction and loyalty.

In testing hypothesis 3, the original sample estimate value was obtained at 0.181. This value proves that service user satisfaction has a positive effect on service user loyalty. This is also reinforced by the results of the t-test which obtained a calculated t value (2.456) > t table (1.96) and p (0.014) < 0.05, so it can be said that there is a positive and significant influence of service user satisfaction on service user loyalty. Thus, the third hypothesis which states that "There is a relationship between satisfaction and service user loyalty" can be accepted.

Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

d) Hypothesis Testing 4:

H4:There is a relationship between service user satisfaction and trust

In testing hypothesis 4, the original sample estimate value for the influence of service user satisfaction on trust was 0.183. This value proves that service user satisfaction has a positive effect on trust. This finding is supported by the results of the t-test which obtained a calculated t value (2.050) > t table (1.96) and p (0.040) < 0.05, so it can be said that there is a positive and significant influence of service user satisfaction on trust. Thus, the fourth hypothesis which states that "There is a relationship between service user satisfaction and trust" can be accepted.

e) Hypothesis Testing 5:

H5:There is a relationship between trust and user loyalty

In testing hypothesis 5, the original sample estimate value of the influence of trust on service user loyalty was obtained at 0.517. This value proves that Trust has a positive effect on service user loyalty, the results of which are also strengthened by the results of the t-test obtained with a calculated t value (7.961) > t table (1.96) and p (0.000) < 0.05, so it can be said that there is a positive and significant influence of Trust on service user loyalty. Thus, the fifth hypothesis which states that "There is a relationship between trust and service user loyalty" can be accepted.

The overall results of the research hypothesis test can be summarized as follows:

Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

| No | Hypothesis | Coefficient | T statistics | P values | Information |
|----|--|-------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | H1 : There is a relationship between service quality and the level of user loyalty. | 0.228 | 3,230 | 0.001 | Accepted |
| 2 | H2 : There is a relationship between service quality and trust | 0.528 | 7,466 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| 3 | H3 : There is a relationship between satisfaction and user loyalty | 0.181 | 2,456 | 0.014 | Accepted |
| 4 | H4 : There is a relationship between service user satisfaction and trust | 0.183 | 2,050 | 0.040 | Accepted |
| 5 | H5 : There is a relationship between trust and user loyalty | 0.517 | 7,961 | 0.000 | Accepted |

Description: The hypothesis is accepted if t> 1.96 or p<0.05

Indirect Effect Analysis

The indirect effect test was conducted to determine the influence of the Service Quality and User Satisfaction variables on the User Loyalty variable through the intervening variable, namely Trust. The results of the indirect effect test are presented in the following table.

Indirect Effect Test Results

| | Original sample | T statistics | P values | Information |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| User satisfaction -> Trust -> User loyalty | 0.095 | 1,994 | 0.046 | Significant |
| Service quality -> Trust -> Service user loyalty | 0.273 | 4,985 | 0.000 | Significant |



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

Source: Processed research data, 2025

According to the test results in the table above, it is known that the magnitude of the indirect effect of service quality on service user loyalty through trust is 0.273 with a calculated t value of 4.985 and p = 0.000 (p <0.05). This shows that trust significantly mediates the effect of service quality on service user loyalty. This means that good service quality can increase consumer trust, further trust in consumers will have an impact on service user loyalty to PT Pancaran Samudera Transport.

Another finding is that the magnitude of the indirect influence of service user satisfaction on service user loyalty through trust is 0.095 with a calculated t value of 1.994 and a significance value of p = 0.046 (p < 0.05). The results of this test mean that trust significantly mediates the influence of service user satisfaction on service user loyalty. This means that high service user satisfaction will increase consumer trust in. Furthermore, this trust fosters loyalty of PT Pancaran Samudera Transport service users.

3.2. The influence of service quality on service user loyalty.

Service quality has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on user loyalty. When users are satisfied with the service they receive, they are more likely to continue using that service in the future. This suggests that service quality is a crucial factor in building long-term relationships with users. Similar results were found in other studies.(Jacksen et al. 2021)which states that service quality contributes greatly to customer loyalty.

The quality of service in this study is reflected through five indicators, namely Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy indicators, while service user loyalty in this study is measured from the reflection of three indicators, namely the Return to Service, Retention, and Referrals indicators.

The service quality variable shows that the indicator with the strongest contribution (highest outer loading) is *Reliability reflects the consistency and accuracy of service delivery as promised. Meanwhile, for the service user loyalty variable, the indicator with the greatest influence is the user's desire to return to the service in the future. This finding indicates that the more reliable a service is in meeting customer expectations, the more likely users are to remain loyal and choose that service repeatedly. Operationally, this is evident in the level of readiness of the vessels and supporting equipment, which are always in optimal condition before departure, including complete documentation, engine checks, and smooth loading and unloading processes. This reliability provides customers with confidence that the service will run smoothly every time they ship.*

The service quality variable shows that the indicator with the lowest outer loading value is tangibility, namely physical aspects such as ship performance, equipment, supplies, and personnel readiness., and certified crew. These findings indicate that while physical aspects are important, operational performance and service accuracy are more critical for customers in this sector. This means that the physical elements of a service do not contribute as much as other indicators to overall perceptions of service quality. Meanwhile,



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

for the service user loyalty variable, the indicator with the lowest contribution is retention, which describes the extent to which users continue to use a service over the long term. This means that while users may return to a service, their decision to continue long-term is not strongly influenced by the factors measured in this study.

The results of the study concluded that service quality has a positive and significant influence on the loyalty of service users at PT Pancaran Samudera Transport, which means that the better the quality of service provided, starting from timeliness, reliability, responsiveness, to the professionalism of personnel, the higher the tendency of customers to continue using the company's services on an ongoing basis.

3.2.1. The influence of service quality on trust

Service quality has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on user trust. This means that the better the service quality, the higher the level of user trust in the service provider. This trust grows because users feel satisfied, valued, and receive services that meet their expectations. These results support previous research, which showed that service quality significantly predicts trust.(Alghfeli et al. 2020).

Service quality in this study is reflected through five indicators: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Trust, in this study, is measured through four indicators: Competence, Transparency, Public Interest, and Honesty.

For the service quality variable, the tangible indicator with the highest outer loading value is readiness, or the readiness of the vessel and other supporting equipment. This indicates that fleet readiness, completeness of safety equipment, and crew readiness in providing services are important factors directly perceived by service users. Meanwhile, for the trust variable, the indicator with the highest outer loading value is public interest, which reflects user confidence that the service provider truly cares about public safety and interests. These findings indicate that optimal operational readiness, ranging from the availability of operationally fit vessels, well-maintained supporting equipment, to well-trained crews, directly increases user trust. In other words, the more prepared and organized a company's operations are, the greater the public's confidence that the service is safe, reliable, and prioritizes the public's interests.

The tangibility indicator showed the lowest outer loading value in the service quality variable, while the competence indicator held a similar position in the trust variable. This condition suggests that improving tangibility aspects, including the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, and personnel, can be an effective strategy to strengthen the perception of service provider competence. For example, the company implements fleet operational readiness standards by ensuring all vessels undergo technical inspections before departure. Each unit is equipped with the latest and adequate safety equipment and a calibrated digital GPS-based navigation system. Furthermore, operational personnel wear clean uniforms and complete work equipment according to SOPs. This equipment readiness and professional appearance build a reliable and competent company image in the eyes of customers.



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

In conclusion, The quality of service provided by PT Pancaran Samudera Transport has been proven to have a positive and significant impact on the level of trust of service users, which means improving service quality. Various aspects of service quality, such as punctuality, fleet reliability, personnel professionalism, and smooth communication, contribute to increasing customer confidence in the company's ability to fulfill service promises and maintain their satisfaction.

3.2.2. Influence satisfaction on user loyalty.

Satisfaction has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on service user loyalty. This means that the higher the level of satisfaction experienced by users, the more likely they are to remain loyal to the service. This confirms that maintaining and improving customer satisfaction is a crucial strategy for building long-term loyalty. These results support previous research, including research conducted by(Lubis et al. 2021)emphasized that satisfaction is the main factor that drives long-term customer loyalty.

In this study, user satisfaction was measured using three indicators: overall satisfaction with the service, satisfaction with the match between expectations and results, and overall service experience. Meanwhile, user loyalty was measured using three indicators: return to service, retention, and referrals.

In the context of coal transportation operations using tugboats and barges, the tangible indicator with the highest outer loading value is readiness, or the level of readiness of the vessel and its supporting equipment. This finding indicates that service users are highly concerned with the extent to which vessels, machinery, and loading and unloading facilities are ready for use on time, without experiencing technical disruptions that could hinder delivery. Consistent operational readiness not only reflects the company's professionalism but also minimizes the risk of delays that could potentially result in financial losses for service users. Regarding service user satisfaction, the strongest indicator is satisfaction with the match between expectations and the service results received. This means that when delivery speed, cargo security, and schedule reliability are in line with promises, customer satisfaction increases significantly.

Meanwhile, in terms of user loyalty, the strongest indicator was the desire to return to the service in the future. This suggests that fleet reliability and readiness are key factors driving customer retention.

Conversely, the indicator with the lowest contribution to the satisfaction variable was overall satisfaction with service, suggesting room for improvement in supporting aspects, such as operational communication or the completeness of delivery documentation. Therefore, companies need to prioritize improving the technical readiness of their fleet while strengthening non-technical service aspects to sustainably maintain user satisfaction and loyalty.

The results of the study show that the level of customer satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on the loyalty of service users at PT Pancaran Samudera Transport,



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

which means that the higher the satisfaction felt by customers, the greater their tendency to continue using the company's services repeatedly and recommend them to others.

3.2.3. Influence satisfaction against trustservice users.

Satisfaction has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on user trust. This means that the higher the level of satisfaction experienced by users, the greater the level of trust they place in the service provider. This reflects that consistent positive experiences can build users' sense of security and confidence in the quality of the service they receive. These results are supported by previous research.(Albarq 2023) which explains that consumer trust is built from satisfaction with the service received.

In this study, user satisfaction was measured using three indicators: overall satisfaction with the service, satisfaction with the match between expectations and results, and overall service experience. These three indicators can increase trust, which in this study was measured by reflecting four indicators: competence, transparency, public interest, and honesty.

Tangible variables show that the indicator with the highest outer loading value is the readiness of the vessel and other supporting equipment. This finding indicates that fleet readiness—from the condition of the tugboat engine, the suitability of the barge, to the availability of safety equipment—is the most influential factor in positive customer perceptions. When vessels and supporting equipment are always ready to operate according to schedule and safety standards, service users feel confident in the smooth delivery process, resulting in increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Meanwhile, in terms of service user satisfaction, the indicator with the highest outer loading score was satisfaction with the alignment between promised delivery schedules and actual delivery on the ground. This demonstrates that on-time delivery is a key benchmark for building customer satisfaction in the coal transportation industry.

Conversely, the indicator with the lowest outer loading value in the tangible variable was cleanliness of ship facilities, while in the service user satisfaction variable, the indicator with the lowest contribution was satisfaction with the flexibility of service adjustments. These findings confirm that although cleanliness and flexibility of service are important, they are still considered less crucial than fleet readiness and on-time delivery. Therefore, priorities for improving operational performance should be focused on maintaining ships and supporting equipment to ensure optimal readiness before sailing, along with strengthening delivery time management to continue to meet or exceed customer expectations.

The results of the study show that the level of customer satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on the trust of service users in PT Pancaran Samudera Transport, which means that the higher the satisfaction felt by customers towards the quality of service, the stronger their trust in the company's professionalism and commitment in meeting logistics needs.

3.2.4. The influence of truston user loyalty.

Trust has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on service user loyalty. This



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

means that the higher the level of trust a customer has in a service provider, the more likely they are to remain loyal and continue using that service. Trust is an important foundation for building long-term relationships between service users and providers. These results support previous research that revealed a significant positive correlation between customer trust and loyalty.(Albarq 2023).

Trust in this study was measured by reflecting four indicators: Competence, Transparency, Public Interest, and Honesty. These four aspects can increase service user loyalty, which in this study was measured by reflecting three indicators: Returning to Service, Retention, and Referrals.

For tangible variables, the indicator with the highest outer loading value is readiness, or the readiness of the vessel and supporting equipment, such as the condition of the tugboat engine, the availability of navigation equipment, and the readiness of the barge to load coal. These findings indicate that the higher the readiness of the fleet and supporting facilities, the greater the customer perception of service quality. This is because high readiness reflects the operational ability to meet delivery schedules on time, minimize the risk of cargo damage, and reduce delays due to technical disruptions.

Conversely, the tangible indicator with the lowest outer loading value is maintenance documentation, or the completeness of ship maintenance records. Although its value is lower than readiness, orderly documentation remains important as it demonstrates compliance with maritime safety standards and regulations. Improving the quality of maintenance documentation can increase customer confidence in the company's commitment to maintaining fleet safety and performance, ultimately contributing to long-term loyalty.

The research results show that trust has a positive and significant influence on customer loyalty at PT Pancaran Samudera Transport. This means that the higher a customer's level of confidence in the company's integrity, reliability, and professionalism, the greater their likelihood of continuing to use its services. This trust is built through consistent service quality, timely delivery, product security, and transparent communication, thus encouraging customers to establish long-term relationships and recommend the company to others.

4. Conclusion

Based on research results, increasing user loyalty at PT Pancaran Samudera Transport can be achieved by strengthening trust, which is shaped by service quality and customer satisfaction levels. This indicates that when service providers are able to deliver quality service and create a satisfying user experience, customer trust will increase. This positive growth in trust will ultimately drive user loyalty to the services provided. The results of the hypothesis proof show: 1. Service quality has a positive and significant impact on customer loyalty. This means that improvements in aspects such as tangibility (the tangibles of the service), reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy will drive increased customer loyalty. The more optimally these five dimensions are implemented, the more likely customers are to remain loyal and continue using the service. 2. Service quality has been



Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

proven to have a positive and significant impact on the level of trust of service users. This implies that improving service quality directly strengthens various dimensions of trust, such as competence, information transparency, orientation to the public interest, and honesty in service provision. In other words, the more optimal the service provided, the higher the customer's perception of trust in the service provider. 3. Research results show that satisfaction plays a positive and significant role in influencing service user loyalty. In other words, when customers are satisfied with the overall service, perceive a match between expectations and reality, and have a satisfying service experience, their likelihood of remaining loyal and continuing to use the service increases. Satisfaction is a key factor in building long-term customer relationships. 4. Service user satisfaction has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on the level of trust they place in a service. In other words, the higher the level of customer satisfaction with overall service quality, the match between expectations and service delivery, and the experience during use, the stronger the trust they form in the service provider. Satisfaction is a key factor in building and strengthening customer trust on an ongoing basis. 5. TrustTrust has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on service user loyalty. This means that the higher a customer's level of trust in a service provider, the greater their likelihood of continuing to use that service, retaining it long-term, and recommending it to others. Trust is a key element in shaping overall customer loyalty.

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Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

Service Quality Towards Cargo (Ghazali Ramadhani & Ken Sudarti)

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Vol. 2 No. 3 September (2025)

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