

ISRG Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (ISRGJMS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: isrg j. multidiscip. Stud.

ISSN: 2584-0452 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjms/>

Volume – III, Issue - XII (December) 2025

Frequency: Monthly



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE RELATIONSHIP OF SERVICE QUALITY AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION OF CUSTOMERS OF RESORTS

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| **Received:** 29.11.2025 | **Accepted:** 03.12.2025 | **Published:** 07.12.2025

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Abstract

Behavioral intention is a crucial indicator of customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. This study examined whether social media marketing mediates the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention among customers of selected beach resorts in Mabini, Davao de Oro, Philippines. Although service quality and digital engagement have been widely studied, limited research has explored their combined effects in local tourism settings. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior, Expectation-Confirmation Theory, and SERVQUAL, the study proposed that social media marketing mediates the service quality-behavioral intention link. Using a descriptive-correlational design, data were gathered from 300 millennial customers who visited the resorts and interacted with Facebook ads. Mean scores, Spearman's rho, and Structural Equation Modeling were used for analysis. Findings showed very high levels of service quality, social media marketing, and behavioral intention. Service quality strongly correlated with behavioral intention, while social media marketing had moderate correlation with service quality and a weaker relationship with behavioral intention. Mediation analysis revealed that social media marketing does not significantly mediate the relationship, indicating that service quality remains the strongest predictor of customer loyalty and revisit intention. The study highlights the need to prioritize service excellence while using social media as a supporting engagement tool.

Keywords: Service Quality, Social Media Marketing, Behavioral Intention, Mediation Analysis, Tourism Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Behavioral intention is a critical determinant of success in the hospitality and tourism industry. However, sustaining these behaviors remains a challenge for many resorts and destinations (Khan et al, 2024). Afshardoost and Eshaghi, (2022) reveal that tourists often fail to return or advocate for destinations when actual experiences do not meet expectations set by promotional content. Nuñez and Borbon, (2021) stated that mismatched expectations have led to weak loyalty and limited willingness to pay more, undermining long-term competitiveness and profitability. Additionally, Gupta and Chopra, (2022) asserted that these issues are compounded by the growing reliance on digital platforms, where visually appealing advertisements create high expectations that, if unmet, result in customer dissatisfaction and negative word-of-mouth.

Behavioral intention plays a crucial role in the context of resorts, as it significantly influences customer decisions and satisfaction, which are vital for the sustainability and competitiveness of the hospitality industry (Guo et al., 2022). Setiono and Hidayat (2022) stated that service quality remains the most significant predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty, a high service quality positively affects revisit intention and advocacy behaviors. Additionally, Braganza (2025) claimed that resorts that provide reliable, personalized service build trust and emotional connection that drive repeat visits, while poor service diminishes customer confidence and weakens the overall experience despite any marketing efforts.

The relationship between service quality and behavioral intentions, suggesting that enhancing service quality can lead to improved customer loyalty and future engagement (Yorulmaz & Taş, 2022). Karsana and Murhadi, (2021) also claimed that service quality directly influences behavioral intentions. Consequently, Yesmin et al. (2023) stated SERVQUAL model demonstrates that service quality dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, and empathy significantly influence relationship quality and behavioral intentions. Also, Tran & Tran (2022) service quality, along with experience value and customer satisfaction, significantly influences behavioral intentions, underscoring the need for businesses to focus on these factors to improve customer loyalty and brand experience. Additionally, Hassan et al. (2023) asserted that service quality significantly impacts tourists' satisfaction and their intentions to pay and revisit, highlighting the importance of reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Despite extensive research on service quality, social media marketing, and behavioral intention, there is a lack of research that clearly explains how service quality influences behavioral intentions, specifically in resort settings. While social media marketing is known to enhance customer satisfaction, brand awareness, and retention, its role as a mediator between service quality and behavioral intention in the resort industry is underexplored. Most existing studies focus on hotels, cultural heritage sites, or other tourism sectors, leaving resort contexts largely unexamined. Additionally, the mechanisms through which social media marketing may strengthen or influence the effect of service quality on customers' intentions to revisit or recommend resorts remain unclear. This gap highlights the need to investigate how service quality and social media marketing interact to shape behavioral intentions among resort customers.

This study will be significant for resort owners, the tourism office, local government units (LGUs), guests, and academic institutions. The findings will be shared with resort owners to help enhance service quality and strengthen social media marketing strategies, ultimately improving guest satisfaction, loyalty, and overall competitiveness. The tourism office can use the insights to develop programs that support sustainable tourism development and promote high-quality service standards across resorts. The Local Government Unit (LGU) may utilize the results to craft policies and initiatives that boost local tourism performance and ensure positive visitor experiences. Guests will benefit from improved resort services shaped by the study's recommendations. Academic institutions can integrate the findings into tourism and hospitality-related curricula and future research. The University of Immaculate Conception will receive a copy of the study. The results will be presented in national and international research conferences, with potential publication in academic journals for wider dissemination.

Relationship between Variables

Service quality often measured using the SERVQUAL dimensions, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, has a significant and direct impact on customers' behavioral intentions. According to Setiono and Hidayat (2022), all five dimensions positively influenced customer satisfaction, with reliability emerging as the most influential predictor. Moreover, Gajić et al. (2023) found that high levels of responsiveness and empathy significantly contribute to guest loyalty in hotel settings. Lascaña and Junsay (2023) stated that the tangible aspects of a service, such as cleanliness and appearance, also play a key role in forming first impressions and shaping perceptions

Social media marketing, particularly through Facebook, also demonstrates a powerful influence on behavioral intention. Facebook's ability to deliver visually engaging content and peer-driven narratives has been shown to increase travel intent, trust, and brand engagement. In a tourism context, Azhar et al. (2023) confirmed that Facebook marketing enhances travel purchase decisions by building brand trust and loyalty. Likewise, Dotsey (2022) emphasized that Facebook advertisements in hotel promotions increased customer interest, influencing their decisions to revisit or recommend the destination. Gupta and Chopra (2022) further argued that digital content on platforms like Facebook directly influences millennials' behavioral decisions, especially when aligned with actual service experiences. These findings establish Facebook as a central tool in shaping behavioral responses such as revisit intention, recommendation, and willingness to pay more.

The mediating role of social media marketing, in the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention has been gaining scholarly attention. When Facebook content accurately reflects the actual quality of a service, it creates congruence between expectations and experiences, leading to higher satisfaction and repeat behavior. Farooq et al. (2023) suggested that digital platforms serve as amplifiers of perceived value when the actual service meets or exceeds expectations. Moreover, Torralba and Ylagan (2023) observed that resorts which maintained consistency between online promotion and on-ground service delivery reported significantly stronger revisit and recommendation intentions among guests. This suggests that Facebook marketing not only builds anticipation but can also strengthen the perceived reliability and credibility of the resort if supported by service excellence. Therefore, an integrated approach that connects strong service

quality with accurate and engaging Facebook advertising enhances the likelihood of favorable behavioral outcomes among customers.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology that was utilized in the study. This includes the research design, research locale, the research respondents, research instrument, data collection procedure, statistical treatment use, and ethical considerations in conducting the study.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive- specifically descriptive- causal design to investigate the connections between service quality, social media marketing, and behavioral intention of customers in selected beach resorts in Mabini, Davao de Oro. The descriptive aspect of the design mapped each variable as it existed at the time, identifying patterns, trends, and characteristics without attempting to establish causal relationships (Sirisilla, 2023). This approach allowed the study to offer a comprehensive overview of the status of service quality, social media marketing, and behavioral intention.

This study also employed casual design to investigate the impact of service quality on behavioral intention, with social media marketing servicing as a mediating variables. Causal design was deemed appropriate because the study aimed to establish directional relationships among variables and determine whether changes in one construct led to changes in another (Creswell and Creswell, 2021). According to Creswell, causal research design allowed researchers to identify probable cause-and-effect linkages by analyzing statistical associations among variables while holding other factors constant. Thus, by adopting a causal design, the study systematically assessed whether service quality significantly influenced customers' intentions to revisit or recommend resorts in Mabini, Davao De Oro, and further examined the role that social media marketing played in strengthening or explaining this relationship. This approach provided a clearer understanding of how these constructs interact within real-world service environments, which was essential for generating management insights relevant to tourism and hospitality settings.

In addition, mediation was utilized to Creswell and Creswell (2021) emphasized that incorporating mediators into causal research designs helps researchers determine whether the relationships between independent and dependent variables operate through an intervening process. In the context of this study, mediation analysis provided clarity on whether high service quality enhances social media engagement-such as positive online interaction, posts, or digital word-of-mouth-which, in turn, influences customers' intention to revisit or recommend the resort.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Mabini, Davao de Oro, Philippines, a coastal municipality recognized for its thriving ecotourism and expanding resort industry. Mabini hosts the Mabini Protected Landscape and Seascape (MPLS), a nationally declared protected area under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 2018 (DENR-Davao de Oro, 2025). Spanning more than 7,292 hectares of mangroves, coral reefs, and white sand beaches, MPLS is referred to as the "Jewel of Davao Gulf" and is recognized for its biodiversity and ecotourism appeal (Gallardo, 2022). The growing prominence of resorts such as Dusit Thani Lubi Plantation, Sea Eagle Beach Resort, and several community-based establishments highlights Mabini's increasing

competitiveness as a tourism destination (Province of Davao de Oro, 2023).

The selection of Mabini as the research locale is strongly aligned with the study's focus on social media marketing, service quality, and customer behavioral intention. The municipality has experienced a noticeable increase in tourist arrivals, especially among millennial and Gen Z travelers, who frequently rely on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to search for resorts, assess service experiences, and make travel decisions Province of Davao de Oro, 2023). This reliance on digital content and online reviews positions Mabini as an ideal setting to examine how social media marketing mediates the relationship between service quality and customer behavioral intention (Tacatani et al., 2025)

Research Respondents

The respondents for this study consisted of three hundred (300) customers, aged 24 to 39 years old, who have visited the selected resorts within the Mabini Beachlines and have interacted with social media advertisements promoting these resorts. Bujang et al. (2017) suggested that a minimum of 300 participants is necessary to obtain reliable and precise estimates in such designs. Similarly, Guant et al. (2019) emphasized that a sample of this size is generally adequate for conducting most applied linear regression analyses with sufficient statistical power. To ensure representativeness, the study employed probability sampling, specifically, simple random sampling. This approach facilitated the selection of a balanced group of resort customers, whose status of service quality, social media marketing, and behavioral intention were systematically examined

Individuals who had never visited the selected resorts, had no prior interaction with the resorts' social media pages, or were not active users of social media platforms were excluded from the study. Despite the focused approach, coordinating respondents' participation remained challenging due to varying availability of resort guests and the irregular nature of leisure travel schedules.

In order to respect ethical standards and protect participants privacy, the study adhere to the Data-Privacy Act of 2012. Responses were anonymized by coding, and data were securely stored in password-protected files accessible only by the researcher. All information of the respondents was held and secured for data privacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the study and discusses the findings based on the responses of 300 survey participants. The study aimed to assess the status of Social Media Marketing (SMM), the level of Service Quality (ServQual), and the extent of Behavioral Intention (BI) among customers of selected resorts in Mabini, Davao de Oro.

Status of Service Quality among Selected Resorts

The information in Table 1 shows the status of Service Quality assessed across domains: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The status of service quality is very high with an overall average of 4.31, indicating it is highly manifested. The standard deviation is ranges from 0.59 to 0.79. Responses that are less than 1.0 are homogenous, whereas responses that are

greater than 1.0 are heterogeneous. This result suggests that respondents perceive the resorts' in Mabini, Davao de Oro consistently deliver superior quality service positively across the

five SERVQUAL dimensions. This corroborates to the findings of Setiono and Hidayat (2022) all five dimensions of service quality—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy which positively affect satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (2021), who stressed that reliability and

responsiveness of hotel staff are critical to maintaining customer satisfaction even under constrained conditions. Moreover, the result confirms the study Zhang et al. (2022) which demonstrated that reliable service delivery enhances customer satisfaction and competitive advantage.

Table 1
Status of Service Quality among Selected Resorts

Domains/Statements	Mean	SD	Description
1.1 Tangibility			
1. Provision of accurate and up-to-date information about the resort's products, services, and prices.	4.24	0.80	Very High
2. Availability of essential in-room amenities such as comfortable bedding, Wi-Fi connection, high-definition television, and complimentary refreshment tray.	4.22	0.79	Very High
3. Maintenance of visually appealing facilities, including the reception area, swimming pool, restaurant, bar, and gym.	4.19	0.87	High
4. Upkeep of clean and well-maintained facilities throughout the resort premises.	4.32	0.73	Very High
5. Accessibility of the resort (transportation, loading and unloading areas, and car parking spaces).	4.36	0.72	Very High
6. Resort staff are well dressed, and neat	4.24	0.90	Very High
Category Mean	4.26	0.59	Very High
1.2 Reliability			
1. Efficient handling of guest reservations.	4.36	0.77	Very High
2. Prompt facilitation of check-in and check-out procedures.	4.30	0.85	Very High
3. Provision of trustworthy services delivered within the agreed timeframe.	4.26	0.78	Very High
4. Performance of services accurately and correctly the first time.	4.31	0.76	Very High
5. Efficient handling and resolution of guest complaints.	4.27	0.81	Very High
6. Consistent and professional interaction of staff with guests.	4.33	0.76	Very High
Category Mean	4.31	0.61	Very High
1.3 Responsiveness			
1. Informing guests in advance regarding the schedule of service performance.	4.39	0.70	Very High
2. Paying close attention to guests by actively listening and communicating clearly and understandably.	4.36	0.77	Very High
3. Addressing guests' questions and complaints promptly and responsibly.	4.44	0.69	Very High
4. Responding quickly to guests' requests.	4.34	0.75	Very High
5. Providing prompt and efficient service to guests.	4.25	0.76	Very High
6. Extending apologies to guests when service delays occur (e.g., during check-in and check-out, room service, or housekeeping).	4.28	0.81	Very High
Category Mean	4.34	0.60	Very High
1.4 Assurance			
1. Demonstration of staff behavior that instills confidence in guests.	4.31	0.83	Very High
2. Provision of knowledgeable and accurate assistance in addressing guest requests and inquiries.	4.31	0.78	Very High

3. Availability of resort staff to attend to guest concerns at all times.	4.33	0.76	Very High
4. Provision of a safe and secure environment for all guests.	4.43	0.72	Very High
5. Exhibition of consistent courtesy and friendliness by resort staff.	4.35	0.77	Very High
Category Mean	4.35	0.66	Very High
1.5 Empathy			
1. Personalized and individualized attention to guests by the resort staff.	4.38	0.78	Very High
2. Operating hours that are convenient and accommodating to guests.	4.34	0.85	Very High
3. Understanding of guests' specific requirements by the resort staff.	4.29	0.77	Very High
4. Delivering services consistently with care and listening attentively to guests' feedback	4.29	0.89	Very High
Category Mean	4.32	0.71	Very High
Overall Mean	4.31	0.79	Very High

However, Handani et al. (2022) cautioned that tangible aspects negatively impacted guest satisfaction, suggesting that these elements may not meet guest expectations during their stay, potentially due to unique circumstances.

Tangibility. Statements under Tangibility mostly received a high descriptive level, contributing 4.26 which always manifested. This shows that guests were highly satisfied with the resorts' physical facilities, staff appearance, and amenities. This aligns with the findings of Khanna and Sharma (2023) asserted that tangibility is the most significant determinant of hotel-booking decisions. Similarly, this finding affirms Musembi et al. (2020) who found that cleanliness and comfort strongly affect satisfaction and revisit decisions. Tarmizi et al (2022) also noted that tangibility significantly influenced consumer satisfaction. Orga et al (2022), where tangible qualities, combined with reliability, were identified as key determinants of customer satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Reliability. This all statements under this domain showed very high mean score of 4.31. This result reflects that guests viewed the resorts as dependable, accurate, and consistent in delivering promised services. This aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (2021), who stressed that reliability of hotel staff is critical to maintaining customer satisfaction even under constrained conditions. Moreover, the findings also affirm Zhang et al. (2022) who found that reliable service delivery enhances customer satisfaction and competitive advantage.

Responsiveness. All statements in responsiveness attained a very high mean score 4.34. This means that that staff were perceived as prompt, attentive, and proactive in addressing guest needs. This corroborates the findings of Liu and Ji (2019) that responsive communication and immediate feedback improve the perceived helpfulness of services. Similarly, the result also affirms the findings of Yolcu et al. (2025) confirmed that responsiveness is a vital factor in both short-term satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Assurance. Among all domains, assurance obtained the highest mean, 4.35, indicating that guests feel confident in the resorts' staff competence, courtesy, and safety standards. This aligns to the findings of Warmadewa (2023), who reported that assurance significantly contributes to perceived service quality and trust. Similarly, the findings corroborate to Al-Ghaswyneh (2020) who emphasized that implementing quality-assurance standards enhances customer trust and loyalty, while Sangpikul (2022)

identified hygiene and safety as critical assurance components influencing confidence in hospitality environments. The very high rating for assurance therefore highlights effective staff professionalism and health-safety management, key features that strengthen customer confidence and advocacy behavior.

Empathy. Empathy also achieved a very high mean of 4.32, showing that guests appreciated personalized care, attention, and understanding from staff. This affirms the findings of Wu and Gao (2019), that empathy fosters positive emotions and co-creation experiences, improving satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the findings also affirm the Nurjannah et al. (2023) claimed that empathy as the most influential factor in customer satisfaction, while Ariesa et al. (2024) stressed that empathetic communication is essential for handling complaints effectively. The current findings thus suggest that resort employees' attentiveness and individualized service have been key to cultivating strong guest relationships.

The overall mean score of 4.31, which is very High, indicates that guests perceive the resort's service quality as excellent across all SERVQUAL dimensions. This indicates strong performance in providing reliable, responsive, and customer-focused services. The findings support the studies of Setiono and Hidayat (2022), confirming that all service quality dimensions significantly contribute to improved customer satisfaction. The findings also support the study by Wang et al. (2021), which emphasizes that high service quality increases revisit intention, and the study by Hassan et al. (2023), noting that strong tangibility, responsiveness, and assurance enhance loyalty and willingness to pay.

However, high service quality does not always guarantee perfect experiences. Handani et al. (2022) found that issues in tangibility and assurance can still reduce satisfaction when they do not meet guest expectations. This suggests that, although overall performance is very high, the resorts should continue refining areas such as visual appeal to further enhance customer satisfaction.

Status of Social Media Marketing Efforts Employed by Resorts

The data in Table 2 indicate that the overall status of social media marketing among selected resorts in Mabini, Davao de Oro is very high with a mean score of 4.32, and standard deviation ranging from 0.58 to 0.92, showing that responses were generally consistent and homogenous. This demonstrates that guests perceive social media marketing strategies as strongly evident and highly influential throughout their travel decision making process. These

findings affirm the finding of Ding and Syed (2022) who emphasized that electronic word-of-mouth significantly shapes travel perceptions and influences tourist behavior, while Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) highlighted that social media enhances customer satisfaction, brand awareness, and retention in

hospitality contexts. Similarly, Xiaoluan (2021) and Lopez-Ortiz et al. (2023) affirmed that visually appealing content on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok strengthens destination attractiveness and directly affects tourists' intention to visit.

Table 2
Status of Social Media Marketing

Domains/Statements	Mean	SD	Description
2.1 Influence of Social Media on Tourism Marketing			
1. Being influenced positive comments about holiday destinations on social media	4.54	0.64	Very High
2. Being influenced by positive comments about tour operators or agencies on social media.	4.32	0.81	Very High
3. Being influenced by positive comments about hotel enterprises on social media.	4.22	0.84	Very High
4. Being influenced by positive comments about food and beverage enterprises on social media.	4.25	0.80	Very High
5. Being influenced by positive comments about activities during my stay on social media.	4.26	0.79	Very High
Category Mean	4.32	0.61	Very High
2.2 Social media usage levels and reasons for use during holiday planning process			
1. Visiting travel-related social media regularly as inspiration for future holidays.	4.20	0.92	Very High
2. Using social media when beginning to search for ideas on where to go for holidays.	4.44	0.80	Very High
3. Using social media to narrow down destination choices.	4.38	0.80	Very High
4. Using social media to confirm that a chosen destination is a good choice.	4.42	0.78	Very High
5. Using social media to seek ideas and information on accommodation options.	4.46	0.64	Very High
Category Mean	4.38	0.58	Very High
1.3 Roles of social media regarding tourists' decision-making			
1. Influencing decision-making through social media.	4.19	0.92	High
2. Creating initial awareness and generating interest or desire to travel through social media.	4.30	0.79	Very High
3. Reminding viewers about destinations and reinforcing their need or desire to visit through social media.	4.31	0.77	Very High
4. Guiding tourists in finding places to visit and activities to do through social media.	4.35	0.75	Very High
5. Serving as an approver for travelers' final choices through social media.	4.19	0.91	High
Category Mean	4.27	0.65	Very High
Overall Mean	4.32	0.81	Very High

Influence of Social Media. This domain obtained a very high descriptive level with a mean of 4.32. Respondents reported that positive online comments about destinations, hotels, operators, and activities strongly influenced their decisions. This finding aligns with Ding and Syed (2022), who emphasized that eWOM is a powerful driver of tourism engagement and purchase intention. Likewise, this also affirms the finding of Al-Dmour et al. (2023) that well-crafted social media marketing enhances customer satisfaction by providing relevant information that resonates with traveler expectations. The current results reaffirm the assertion of Lopez-Ortiz et al. (2023) that platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter play a central role in crafting destination image and shaping tourist choices.

Social Media Usage. This domain yielded the highest category mean 4.38, indicating that social media plays a significant role in guiding guests in searching, evaluating, and choosing holiday

options. Travelers reported using social media from the early inspiration stage to the final confirmation of destination and accommodation choices. These findings corroborate the claim of de Lima et al. (2021), that visual-centric platforms, such as Instagram, drive destination desirability. The results also reinforce Gretzel's (2021) observations that social media serves as a digital planning assistant, enabling users to organize and compare travel-related content. Additionally, Unger and Grassl (2020) noted that younger generations rely heavily on social media to identify "Instagrammable" locations, which mirrors the dominant millennial respondent profile of this study.

Roles of Social Media. This domain was also rated very high, with a mean score of 4.27, confirming that social media contributes across multiple decision point including awareness, desire formation, itinerary planning, and final approval of travel choices. This finding aligns with Nor Azazi and Shaed (2020) who reported

that platforms like TripAdvisor and Instagram significantly influence hotel selection. Furthermore, the finding also affirms the claim of Ismarizal and Kusumah (2023) who emphasized that aesthetically appealing content on social media strongly impacts Gen Y and Gen Z travel decisions. The results reaffirm Karuna and Prakash (2025) findings, who highlighted the substantial influence of influencer-driven content on travel intentions.

The overall results of Table 2 reveal that social media marketing among the selected resorts is very high ($M = 4.32$), indicating that respondents consistently recognize the strong influence, active usage, and essential role of social platforms in shaping their travel choices. The very high ratings across all three domains demonstrate that social media is now deeply embedded in the tourist journey. This supports the findings of Cahyani et al. (2021), who emphasized that social media has become a vital tool for communication and relationship-building among hospitality providers. The results also affirm Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022), who found that social media marketing significantly enhances brand awareness, satisfaction, and customer retention, actors that are reflected in how guests in this study frequently relied on online content to guide their decisions

Status of Behavioral Intentions

Presented in Table 3 shows that the overall status of behavioral intention among guests of the selected resorts is very high with a mean score of 4.26. this suggest that guests exhibit a high likelihood of revisiting, recommending, paying more for services, and maintaining loyalty toward the resorts. This confirms Kokkhangplu et al. (2023) findings that customer satisfaction and perceived value significantly enhance revisit intentions. This also affirms the claim of Amenuvor et al (2019) that positive customer experience drives stronger behavioral commitments. Similarly, the data corroborates with the findings of Ye et al. (2022) reliability and responsiveness promote behavioral intentions such as revisiting and recommending.

Revisit Intention. This domain received a very high rating of 4.33, indicating that guests are willing and motivated to return to the resorts in the future. This suggests that their previous experiences were positive enough to influence repeat visits. This supports the findings of Wang et al (2021), who emphasized that when guests perceive service to be reliable and responsive, their desire to return increases. Similarly, the data affirms Wijaya and Anggraini (2023) findings that a pleasant physical environment, quality service, and overall satisfaction significantly strengthen a tourist's intention to revisit a destination. The result is also consistent with Nor Azam et al. (2022) who found that perceived value and satisfaction in resort settings encourage guests to come back.

Table 3
Status of Behavioral Intentions

Domains/Statements	Mean	SD	Description
3.1 Revisit Intention			
1. Willingness to visit the resort as part of one's travel plan	4.5	0.67	Very High
2. Preference to return to the resort in the future	4.40	0.71	Very High
3. Preference to visit the resort more frequently	4.27	0.74	Very High
4. Effort to prioritize visiting the resort.	4.16	0.76	High
Category Mean	4.33	0.60	Very High
3.2 Intention to Recommend			
1. Encouragement for family and relatives to stay at the resort.	4.28	0.83	Very High
2. Recommendation of the resort to friends and other potential visitors..	4.35	0.70	Very High
3. Expression of positive feedback about the resort to others	4.29	0.74	Very High
4. Persuasion of others to visit the resort based on perceived service quality	4.26	0.72	Very High
Category Mean	4.30	0.66	Very High
3.3 Willingness to Pay More			
1. Continued patronage of the resort despite competitors offering lower prices.	4.35	0.73	Very High
2. Ongoing patronage of the resort despite reasonable price increases.	4.28	0.79	Very High
3. Willingness to pay more for my stay in this resort.	4.06	0.86	High
4. Unconcern regarding additional spending during repeated stays at the resort.	4.24	0.82	Very High
Category Mean	4.23	0.70	Very High
3.4 Loyalty			
1. Intention to continue selecting the resort for future visits.	4.31	0.78	Very High
2. Consideration of the resort as the primary choice for accommodation.	4.19	0.82	High

3. Greater sense of satisfaction when visiting this resort compared to others.	4.18	0.81	High
4. Self-perceived loyalty towards the resort.	4.08	0.89	High
Category Mean	4.19	0.71	High
Overall Mean	4.26	0.78	Very High

Revisit Intention. This domain received a very high rating of 4.33, indicating that guests are willing and motivated to return to the resorts in the future. This suggests that their previous experiences were positive enough to influence repeat visits. This supports the findings of Wang et al (2021), who emphasized that when guests perceive service to be reliable and responsive, their desire to return increases. Similarly, the data affirms Wijaya and Anggraini (2023) findings that a pleasant physical environment, quality service, and overall satisfaction significantly strengthen a tourist's intention to revisit a destination. The result is also consistent with Nor Azam et al. (2022) who found that perceived value and satisfaction in resort settings encourage guests to come back.

Intention to Recommend. The result of this indicator scored a mean of 4.30 which is very high indicating that guests are highly willing to share positive experiences and encourage other to visit the resorts. This suggests strong guest satisfaction, as customers typically recommend a destination when they feel they have received good value and service. This aligns with Khoerunisa et al. (2025), who found that high service quality increases customers' desire to recommend a hotel or resort. It also supports the findings of Filieri et al. (2020) who emphasized that when guests perceive their experience as positive and trustworthy, they are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth and influence other's decisions. Likewise, this affirm Oliveira et al (2020) claims that positive reviews and credible information motivate guests to recommend destinations to family and friends.

Willingness to Pay. The results show that this category received a very high mean score of 4.23, indicating that guests are generally

willing to pay to continue patronizing the resorts even if prices increase or competitors offer lower rates. This suggest that guests perceive the resorts as providing good value, which makes them comfortable paying more for the experience. This aligns with Nelson et al (2021), who found that customers are willing to pay a premium when they believe the service or environment offers high value. Similarly, the result also confirms that claim of Puciato et al (2023) that guests with positive experiences show a stronger readiness to spends more on accommodations that meet their expectations. Lastly, this affirms Park et al (2021) that when customers experience quality and meaningful services their willingness to pay more increases.

Loyalty. this domain received a high mean score 4.19, reflecting strong but slightly variable guest loyalty which indicates that although guests feel positively attached to the resorts, loyalty may still be influenced by emerging competitors or unique resort offerings. This result aligns with Tabaku and Krujna (2019) that true loyalty is influence not by only satisfaction but also by perceived value and emotional connection. The findings also support Musa (2023) who concluded that stable loyalty emerges when service quality and trust are consistently upheld.

Correlation Between Variables

The data in Table 5 presents the relationship between Service Quality and Social Media Marketing ($r=.5881$), Service Quality and Behavioral Intention ($r=.762$), and Social Media Marketing and Behavioral Intention ($r=.405$) All correlations are statistically significant, suggesting strong and positive relationships between these variables.

Table 4
Correlation between Variables

Variable	r	p-value	Remarks
Service Quality and Social Media Marketing	.581	.001	Significant
Service Quality and Behavioral Intention	.762	.001	Significant
Social Media Marketing and Behavioral Intention	.405	.001	Significant

Service Quality and Social Media Marketing showed a strong positive and significant relationship. This suggest that as resorts service quality increases, so does their social media marketing trends to increase .581. This result supports the notion that satisfied customers are more likely to engage online, post positive content, and respond well to digital promotions. This finding affirms the study of Lopez-Ortiz et al (2023) who found that social media marketing becomes more effective when real service experiences support what is shown online. Similarly, this also confirms the claim of Cheraghalizadeh and Dedkova (2022) that strong service encounters encourage positive digital engagement and build credibility for online marketing efforts. Additionally, it corroborates to Ding and Syed (2022) which emphasized that positive customer experiences naturally create strong electronic word-of-mouth, which further enhances the impact of social media strategies.

The correlation between service quality and behavioral intention shows a strong and positive relationship. This indicates that when service quality increases, behavioral intention also increases .762, particularly in terms of customers' likelihood to revisit, recommend, pay more, and remain loyal. This result confirmed Setiono and Hidayat (2022) findings, that excellent service quality directly enhances revisit intention and customer advocacy. Additionally, this also confirms the study of Wang et al. (2021) which emphasized that reliable and responsive service environments lead to higher levels of customer commitment, even during challenging circumstances. Likewise, it supports the study Yesmin et al. (2023) which highlighted that SERVQUAL dimensions such as reliability, assurance, and empathy significantly influence customers' future intentions in the hospitality sector.

The correlation between social media marketing and behavioral intention is also positive and statistically significant, indicating that as social media marketing improves, behavioral intention tends to increase. Although the relationship is weaker compared to service quality, the positive correlation suggests that strong social media presence can still encourage customers to revisit or recommend the resort. This result is supported by Gupta and Chopra (2022), who stated that social media platforms influence millennial travelers' decision-making and enhance their intention to engage with a brand. Additionally, it affirms the study of Dotsey (2022) that digital promotions and online brand visibility increase the likelihood of customers choosing the same service in the future. This further confirms Lopez-Ortiz et al. (2023) claim that visually appealing content and credible online information enhance customers' willingness to return and recommend.

Mediating Effect of Social Media Marketing on the Relationship Between Service Quality and Behavioral Intention

The mediation analysis results in Table 5 demonstrate the direct, indirect, and total effects of service quality on behavioral intention,

with social media marketing (SMM) serving as the mediating variable. The analysis revealed a significant direct effect of service quality on behavioral intention, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.877 ($p < .01$), indicating that a one-unit increase in service quality led to a corresponding 0.877-unit increase in behavioral intention. This finding underscores that customers' perceptions of superior service quality significantly enhance their intent to revisit, recommend, and remain loyal to the resorts. The indirect effect of service quality on behavioral intention through SMM, however, was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.016$, $p > .05$), implying that social media marketing does not mediate the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention. In contrast, the total effect of service quality on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.861$, $p < .01$) remained significant, confirming that service quality independently and strongly influences behavioral intention. This aligns with the findings of Harrigan et al. (2020), who emphasized that high-quality service directly strengthens customer behavioral intentions without necessarily relying on online marketing intermediaries.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis of Social Media Marketing on the Relationship Between Service Quality and Behavioral Intention

Independent Variable (IV) = Service quality				
Dependent Variable (DV). = Behavioral Intention				
Mediating Variable (MV). = Social Media Marketing				
		Standardized Beta (β)	Standard Error	p-value
<i>Direct Effects (IV \rightarrow DV)</i>				
Service quality on Behavioral Intention		0.877	0.045	<.001
<i>Indirect Effects (IV \rightarrow MV \rightarrow DV)</i>				
Service quality \rightarrow Social Media Marketing \rightarrow Behavioral Intention		-0.016	0.026	<.541
<i>Total Effects (IV \rightarrow DV)</i>				
Service quality \rightarrow Social Media Marketing		0.861	0.037	<.001
<i>Path Coefficients</i>				
Social Media Marketing \rightarrow Behavioral Intention		-0.027	0.045	<.541
Service quality \rightarrow Behavioral Intention		0.877	0.045	<.001
Service quality \rightarrow Social Media Marketing		0.573	0.047	<.001
<i>R-Squared</i>				
Behavioral Intention	0.646			
Social Media Marketing	0.328			

Furthermore, the model's R^2 value of 0.646 for behavioral intention indicates that 64.6% of the variance in customers' behavioral intentions is explained by service quality and social media marketing combined, while 32.8% of the variance in SMM

is explained by service quality ($R^2 = 0.328$). These values suggest that service quality remains the dominant explanatory factor in shaping behavioral outcomes. Consistently, studies such as Gajić et al. (2023) found that customer perceptions of tangible and reliable

service experiences have a stronger and more enduring influence on loyalty and revisit intentions than digital promotional strategies.

From the Path Plot model (Figure 3), service quality exhibited the strongest and most significant direct effect on both social media marketing ($\beta = 0.573$, $p < .05$) and behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.877$, $p < .05$). This demonstrates that higher service quality encourages greater customer engagement with social media content and simultaneously fosters stronger behavioral intentions. Conversely, the effect of social media marketing on behavioral intention was not significant ($\beta = -0.027$, $p > .05$), indicating that SMM has minimal impact on whether customers intend to revisit or recommend the resorts. This finding resonates with Fan et al. (2023), who argued that while social media marketing enhances visibility and brand perception, the actual decision to revisit or endorse a resort depends primarily on the quality of personal service experiences. Hence, the model supports that service quality serves as the key determinant of behavioral intention, with social media marketing playing only a supplementary, non-mediating role.

The mediation analysis and the path plot confirm that there is a direct and significant relationship between Service Quality and Behavioral Intention, while Social Media Marketing (SMM) does not serve as a significant mediating factor. This implies that customers' intentions to revisit, recommend, and remain loyal to a resort are primarily driven by their direct service experiences rather than by digital marketing influences.

The study findings align with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that an individual's behavioral intention is directly shaped by their attitudes and perceived control over the behavior. In this context, positive perceptions of service quality strengthen customers' attitudes toward the resort, increasing their likelihood to revisit or recommend it. The findings also resonate with the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), which asserts that satisfaction, and consequently behavioral intention, occurs when service experiences meet or exceed customer expectations. Similarly, the SERVQUAL Model (Parasuraman et al., 1988) supports this result by emphasizing that service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, and empathy are direct predictors of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Likewise, the results corroborate with the propositions of Efendioglu and Durmaz (2022), who highlighted that while digital marketing enhances brand awareness, customer loyalty and behavioral commitment are sustained primarily through consistent and superior service delivery. This reinforces that, in the resort and tourism industry, service excellence remains the strongest driver of customer behavioral intention, even in the presence of active social media marketing efforts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations. These were based on the findings of the study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn in relation to the study's specific objectives:

The level of service quality among selected beach resorts in Mabini, Davao de Oro, was rated very high across all SERVQUAL dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This indicates that the resorts have effectively

demonstrated professionalism, dependability, and genuine concern for customers' needs. The results affirm that resort staff deliver prompt and courteous services, maintain well-kept facilities, and exhibit strong reliability and assurance, all of which contribute to customer satisfaction and trust.

The level of social media marketing was also found to be *very high*, signifying that digital engagement is highly evident. Resorts in Mabini utilize platforms such as Facebook to influence travelers' decision-making processes, particularly in destination choice, accommodation selection, and travel planning. This suggests that the resorts have successfully used social media to communicate their brand identity, share customer experiences, and attract new visitors through persuasive online content.

The level of behavioral intention was likewise *very high*, indicating that customers demonstrate strong commitment toward the resorts. High revisit intention, willingness to recommend, readiness to pay more for quality service, and emotional loyalty confirm that the resorts have built a solid foundation of trust and satisfaction among their guests. This positive behavioral response highlights the effectiveness of quality service delivery in fostering long-term customer relationships.

A significant and strong positive relationship was found between service quality and behavioral intention, emphasizing that customers who experience excellent service quality are more likely to return, promote, and remain loyal to the resort. Moreover, there exists a moderate positive relationship between service quality and social media marketing, suggesting that resorts offering higher service quality are also those with credible and engaging online presence. Similarly, a significant but weaker correlation between social media marketing and behavioral intention implies that digital engagement contributes to customer interest but is not the primary driver of behavioral outcomes.

The mediation analysis revealed that social media marketing does not significantly mediate the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention. This means that while social media marketing helps in creating awareness and setting customer expectations, it cannot independently influence behavioral outcomes without strong service quality. Ultimately, it is the actual service quality experience that determines customer satisfaction and loyalty, with social media acting only as a reinforcing channel.

The findings of this study affirm the theoretical underpinnings of the research, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Expectation-Confirmation Theory, and the SERVQUAL Model. Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, the results demonstrate that positive customer attitudes—shaped by perceived service quality and satisfaction—lead to stronger behavioral intentions such as loyalty and continued patronage. In alignment with the Expectation-Confirmation Theory, the study confirms that when customers' expectations are met or exceeded, satisfaction and trust are reinforced, thereby sustaining favorable behavioral outcomes. Moreover, in accordance with the SERVQUAL Model, the findings highlight that service reliability, responsiveness, and empathy remain critical dimensions in determining overall service excellence. Ultimately, service quality emerges as the primary driver of customer loyalty, while social media marketing acts as a complementary force that maintains engagement and enhances brand perception.

Recommendations

In line with the study's findings, several practical recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the tourism and hospitality sector in Mabini, Davao de Oro:

The study revealed that behavioral intention among visitors to Mabini resorts was rated very high, indicating strong customer willingness to revisit and recommend these destinations. To capitalize on this strength, resort managers are encouraged to develop customer loyalty and retention programs that reward repeat patronage and foster long-term relationships. These may include membership or rewards systems, referral incentives, or personalized service packages for returning guests. Establishing regular feedback mechanisms such as post-visit online surveys, customer satisfaction cards, or social media review monitoring can also help management track guest experiences and promptly address any service concerns. By actively engaging with customers after their visits, resorts can sustain positive behavioral intentions and encourage consistent brand advocacy.

In relation to service quality, which was also rated very high, maintaining and enhancing performance standards is essential to sustain competitiveness. The Department of Tourism (DOT), in collaboration with TESDA and private training providers, may conduct regular service excellence programs focusing on the SERVQUAL dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These training initiatives can cover practical topics such as customer care, hospitality etiquette, conflict resolution, and crisis management. Resort owners should likewise invest in facility upkeep, staff development, and periodic service audits to ensure consistent delivery of superior guest experiences. Adopting a structured quality assurance system and conducting routine customer satisfaction assessments will further reinforce operational efficiency and professional service behavior.

Given the significant relationship between service quality and behavioral intention, resorts are encouraged to adopt experience-based marketing strategies that translate excellent service into memorable guest experiences. Organizing themed events, cultural showcases, and eco-friendly tourism activities can help create emotional connections that deepen customer loyalty. Collaborations with local communities to feature authentic products, cuisine, and traditions will not only enrich the visitor experience but also promote inclusive and sustainable tourism development within Mabini.

Although social media marketing did not significantly mediate the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention, it remains a valuable support mechanism for maintaining visibility and engagement. The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Mabini, in partnership with resort owners, may continue to strengthen this area by organizing digital marketing enhancement programs focused on content creation, social media analytics, and online engagement strategies. A unified digital tourism platform showcasing all Mabini resorts can be established to centralize promotions and build a cohesive destination identity. Furthermore, the LGU may lead digital literacy and authenticity campaigns to ensure that online materials accurately portray the actual resort experience, fostering transparency, trust, and credibility among potential visitors.

Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to explore additional factors that may influence customer behavioral intentions, such as customer satisfaction, emotional value,

destination image, or post-visit engagement. Employing mixed-method, longitudinal, or experimental research designs may provide deeper insights into how service quality, online marketing, and customer experiences interact over time within the tourism and hospitality sector.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study would not have reached completion without the invaluable support and assistance of the respected individuals and professionals who contributed to its success. The researcher extends sincere gratitude to the following:

To his adviser, Dr. Presentacion C. Acosta, and thesis instructor Dr. Mary Jane B. Amoguis, for their insightful guidance, constructive feedback, and steadfast support throughout the entire research journey, as well as for their generous approval and encouragement of this study.

To the technical panel members — Dr. Mary Jane B. Amoguis, Dr. Dunhill Z. Bilog, Dr. Emma V. Sagarino and Dr. Loribelle Ocenar — for their expert technical advice and thoughtful comments, which greatly enhanced the study's accuracy and quality.

To the managers and operators of Community-Based Ecotourism Sites for their cooperation and openness, which facilitated the dissemination and collection of survey data essential to this research.

To his family, whose constant prayers, motivation, and unwavering support have been a source of inspiration and strength throughout the preparation of this manuscript.

To his friends who assisted in the dissemination and distribution of the survey questionnaires, contributing significantly to the study's successful data gathering.

To the University of the Immaculate Conception, the institution that nurtured and equipped him with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue and achieve his academic goals.

Most importantly, to Almighty God, for bestowing wisdom, knowledge, and strength that guided and sustained him in completing this work.

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