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In An Era Where Travellers are Spoiled for Choice, What Truly Keeps Them Coming Back to the Same Airline

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Abstract: The airline industry is intensely competitive, with companies constantly striving to stand out through their service quality, hospitality, and technological advancements. In this context, particularly within service-based industries such as airlines, fostering long-term customer loyalty is crucial for achieving sustainable success. This research focuses on understanding how service quality and pricing influence customer satisfaction, which in turn drives loyalty toward AirAsia Malaysia Berhad. Using the SERVQUAL, which includes five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, this study examines the extent to which these factors, along with price, contribute to repeated customer preference and commitment. This study adopted a probability sampling approach, specifically using the simple random sampling technique. A total of 250 respondents were selected at random from across Malaysia using a Google Form survey distributed online. Both objectives, service quality (reliability) and price, are accepted for this study. However, other independent variables (tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) do not significantly influence satisfaction. The insights gained will help AirAsia strengthen its ability to retain customers by better aligning its services and pricing with customer expectations, fostering deeper brand quality.

Keywords: *Flights, SERVQUAL, Price, Satisfaction, Traveller*

1. Introduction and Background

In the era of intense competition that exists in the aviation sector today, frequent travelers play a crucial part in determining the success and longevity of airline service providers. These travelers, whether they are business professionals, people looking for a vacation, or those traveling internationally for work, make a major contribution to the overall recurrent income of an airline. Regular travelers are considered high-value consumers because their satisfaction may result in long-term profitability, support for the brand, and distinctiveness from other competitors. Frequent flyers are more than simply passengers. The airline industry is well-known for its service, which demands that businesses in the industry ensure continued happiness and satisfaction from their customers. Even if the cost of utilizing flight services is higher when compared to the cost of other modes of transportation, people still choose airlines as their primary mode of travel, whether they are going a short or long distance, since it is a quicker method to travel (Revfine, 2021).

A complex interaction of elements, including consistent service quality, cost, convenience, safety, flight schedules, customer experience, and technical efficiency, is frequently the foundation upon which loyalty among repeat passengers is constructed. When a traveler consistently obtains flights that are on time, interactions with personnel who are pleasant, booking procedures that are smooth, and tailored services, trust and happiness are strengthened. The happiness that a traveler experiences eventually develops into an emotional connection and a preference for a certain brand, which compels them to choose the same airline over others on several occasions, even when there are other options available.

In its most fundamental form, the relationship between frequent travelers and airline carriers may be described as a mutually beneficial one. While passengers look for dependability, comfort, and value, airlines work hard to fulfill and surpass those expectations to keep their most precious customer base. One of the most important differentiators that may ensure long-term success in a market that is becoming more crowded is the ability to comprehend and successfully manage this dynamic aspect.

2. Literature Review

The airline sector is continuously undergoing change, which is being pushed by the development of new

technologies, shifting tastes among customers, and elevated levels of competition. The airline industry faces numerous development challenges related to cultivating customer loyalty and ensuring satisfaction. The successful implementation of strategies focused on service quality, customer engagement, and complaint handling is critical in achieving high levels of customer satisfaction.

In this fast-paced climate, airlines are required to not only create creative tactics to improve their services but also actively interact with passengers to establish long-lasting relationships by establishing meaningful connections. Airline companies are able to personalize their offers, enhance the customer experience, and create loyalty when they have a thorough understanding of the requirements, preferences, and expectations of their passengers. Airlines are able to maintain their competitive edge and continue to prosper in the global aviation scene by monitoring the feelings of passengers and adjusting their services to meet their requirements. This is especially important in a sector where customer retention is essential for ongoing development.

Challenges such as economic fluctuations, evolving customer expectations, and increasing competition exacerbate the difficulties airlines face in retaining customers. During crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of effective complaint resolution mechanisms becomes even more pronounced, as customers expect prompt responses to grievances (Sun et al., 2022; Ravishankar & Christopher, 2023). Airlines that manage to address complaints efficiently not only enhance customer satisfaction but also foster loyalty, as customers are more likely to remain loyal to brands that listen and respond to their concerns (Ahmed et al., 2020; Chonsalasin et al., 2020).

The Standard of Service Quality Within the Airline Industry: The airline industry's ability to maintain high service quality is critical for customer satisfaction. Service quality encompasses various dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, which together create the overall customer experience during air travel (Kılıç & Enginkaya, 2024; Hassan & Salem, 2021). A grounded understanding of these attributes not only helps airlines meet customer expectations but also positions them competitively in a market characterized by intense rivalry.

Service quality in the airline industry can be understood through several dimensions, prominently including safety, reliability, and customer service. Research indicates that safety is frequently cited as a critical concern for passengers when choosing an airline (Riorini & Widayati, 2018). The emphasis on safety provides a foundation for customer satisfaction, as satisfied customers are more likely to develop brand loyalty, particularly in the context of low-cost carriers that face stiff competition (Rady, 2018).

Responsiveness, defined as the ability of airline staff to assist passengers during crises, plays an essential role in customer satisfaction, particularly in situations like flight delays. Kılıç and Enginkaya stated that responsive customer patronage, characterized by well-trained staff and effective communication form, will alleviate customer satisfaction and instill trust in the airline (Kılıç & Enginkaya, 2024). The tangible element of service quality also holds consequences. Aspects such as the cleanliness of the aircraft, the professionalism of the staff, and the overall appearance of the airline contribute to passengers' satisfaction levels. Research exploring customer experiences in Vietnamese airlines discovered that tangible aspects significantly correlate with both customer satisfaction, emphasizing the need for airlines to enhance their service quality in this area (Hoang et al., 2021). Additionally, Prayag et al.(2020) support this notion by demonstrating that tangible service qualities significantly influence customer satisfaction (Rahmat et al., 2023).

Service quality serves as a keystone for customer satisfaction in the airline division, fundamentally impacting customer satisfaction. Research shows a straight positive correlation between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction (Ahmed et al., 2020; Rahim, 2016; Ma, 2023). Airlines that maintain high service standards in various aspects—such as timekeeping, onboard service, and customer support—are more likely to see repeat business from travelers (Chonsalasin et al., 2020; Chanpariyavatevong et al., 2021). For example, studies indicate that passengers who understand high service quality are inclined to maintain their support over time, leading to a reliable customer base that boosts cost-effectiveness and market share (Ravishankar, 2023; Chanarpas, 2022).

H1: Service Quality has a consequential effect on Customer Satisfaction.

How Price Shapes Customer Satisfaction: The relationship between pricing strategies and customer satisfaction in the airline industry is an important topic that integrates various scopes, including service quality, customer hopes, and price sensitivity. Study indicates that ticket pricing pointedly influences customer satisfaction, as customers actively seek value in their travel experiences.

Pricing is one of the most serious elements of customer satisfaction in airlines. Studies reveal that ticket prices are closely tied to customers' purchasing decisions and overall satisfaction with services. Iqbal et al. discuss how price sensitivity moderates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, emphasizing the necessity for airlines to strategically exchange the needs of price-sensitive travelers to enhance loyalty and satisfaction (Iqbal et al., 2023). Furthermore, Sagala provides evidence that price, together with quality perception and corporate reputation, strongly impacts purchasing decisions related to airline services, demonstrating a significant correlation between these factors and customer satisfaction (Sagala, 2019).

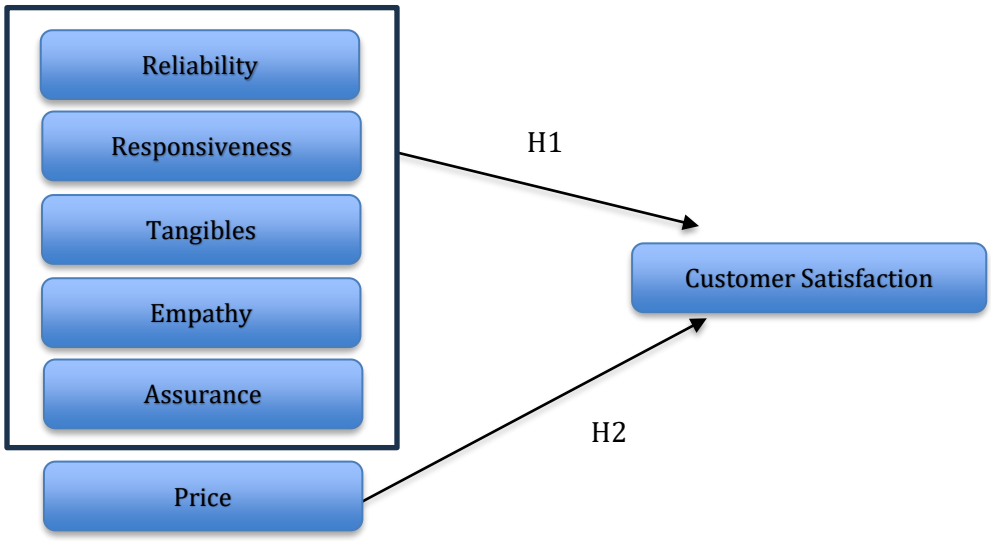
Moreover, the thought of customer satisfaction in the airline context is often associated with perceptions of value for money, with price equality identified as another critical determinant (Pahrudin et al., 2023). Customers weigh service quality against the costs incurred; thus, airlines must balance competitive pricing while offering satisfactory service experiences to retain passengers (Pahrudin et al., 2023; Thapa et al., 2020).

Another viewpoint is presented by Fadli and Rachmawati, who show that both ticket prices and service quality positively influence customer satisfaction. Their findings suggest that satisfactory service quality can sometimes moderate negative sentiments arising from higher ticket prices, highlighting a complex relationship between these variables (Fadli & Rachmawati, 2023). Similarly, Hoang et al. stress that external factors, such as unstable oil prices, compel airlines to adjust ticket prices, which can later affect customer satisfaction (Hoang et al., 2021). Moreover, understanding how customer perceptions of equality in pricing can impact satisfaction levels is vital. Shaliza et al. highlight that fair pricing, combined with high service quality, directly correlates to discriminating customer satisfaction levels (Shaliza et al., 2024). Concurrently, research conducted by Zhang et al. indicates that brand image and perceived quality pointedly affect customer satisfaction, suggesting that effective management of pricing and quality perceptions is vital for airlines aiming to enhance customer satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the competitive landscape of the airline industry necessitates that airlines engage with both pricing considerations and the all-embracing quality of service offered. The SERVQUAL model, examined by Wilfred et al., illustrates that service quality and pricing play important roles in determining customer satisfaction, especially in a competitive market setting (Wilfred et al., 2024). Their conclusions align with findings from other studies demonstrating a reliable link between service quality, price fairness, and customer retention (Pahrudin et al., 2023).
H2 Price has a significant influence on Customer Satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework: The study focuses on the ways in which customer satisfaction is affected by aspects such as service quality and pricing when it comes to picking their preferred aircraft for travel. This conceptual framework is distinct from the modified conceptual outline of research that was carried out by Hutagaol and Erdiansyah (2020). This difference is based on the data collection and demographic measurement that was completed.

Figure 1: Adapted Conceptual Framework of Research



3. Research Methodology

This study accepted a probability sampling approach, precisely using the simple random sampling technique. A total of 250 respondents were designated at random from across Malaysia using a Google Form survey distributed online. The mark population consisted of frequent travelers of AirAsia Malaysia Berhad, and respondents were chosen without bias to guarantee each individual had an equal chance of being selected. The sample size of 250 was selected to increase accuracy and minimize sampling error. To enhance the representativeness of the figures, the sample included a wide range of demographic backgrounds, such as different age groups, gender, income levels, and education levels. This approach was believed appropriate to reflect the variety of AirAsia passengers and to ensure the results are generalizable to the broader population of Malaysian air travelers. Thus, the researcher definite to choose a variety of age levels to be tested in this study.

The sample size will involve a least 250 respondents, comprising AirAsia travelers, based on the circulation of a questionnaire containing 5 questions for each variable, multiplied by 5, which signifies the number of respondents who will receive and complete the questionnaire. A widely cited recommendation by Roscoe (1975) recommends that for multivariate analysis, including multiple regression, the lowest sample size should be at least ten times the number of variables calculated (Josephine et al., 2024). This is supported by a study that indicates that if four predictor variables are included, a minimum of 40 respondents is recommended to maintain statistical reliability. Additionally, Chen et al. highlight that larger samples enhance the power of statistical tests used, ensuring more robust outcomes (Chen et al., 2014).

Thus, for this study minimum requirement for respondents for multiple regressions should be at least five times more cases than the IVs (Independent variables). The total number of IVs will comprise a minimum of 250 data points. Consequently, this criterion is fulfilled. The questionnaires will be distributed randomly inside the KLIA2 area and Putrajaya.

The foundation of primary data is the survey questionnaire distributed to the respondents. The respondents completed this questionnaire. The data was collected via a questionnaire distributed to AirAsia passengers in Malaysia. The researchers employed a mall intercept strategy to distribute the questionnaire to travelers in the departure and arrival halls of the LCCT. The researchers will disseminate the surveys via Google Forms by email, and passengers will respond to the questionnaires using the forms.

4. Results

Demographic Frequency Data: The profile of the respondents was analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage, as presented in Table 1. There were roughly 162 male respondents and 88 female respondents.

Male respondents constituted 64.7 percent, while female respondents accounted for 35.3 percent.

There are four age categories: individuals aged 18 to 25, those aged 26 to 35, those aged 36 to 45, and those above 46. The results reveal that 112 respondents were aged 18 to 25, 16 respondents were aged 26 to 35, 7 respondents were aged 36 to 45, and 3 respondents were aged 46 and above. The four age categories represented 46.0 percent, 44.8 percent, 6.4 percent, and 2.8 percent of the respondents, respectively.

There exist four distinct racial categories: Malay, Chinese, Indian, and others. There were 179 Malay replies, 55 Chinese, 6 Indian, and 10 categorized as others. The four categories accounted for 71.8 percent, 21.8 percent, 2.4 percent, and 4.0 percent of the total respondents, respectively.

There exist three tiers of education: secondary education (SRP / SPM / STPM / A-Level), tertiary education (Diploma / Bachelor / Master / PhD), and additional categories. The findings reveal that 25 respondents possessed Secondary Education (SRP / SPM / STPM / A-Level), constituting 10 percent of the total, while 222 respondents held Tertiary Education (Diploma / Bachelor / Master / PhD), accounting for 88.8 percent. Additionally, 3 respondents had alternative educational qualifications, representing 1.2 percent of the sample.

There exist five employment classifications: student, government sector, private sector, retiree, and unemployed. A total of 182 respondents were surveyed, comprising 44.9 percent students, 34 respondents or 8.4 percent public sector employees, 153 respondents or 37.8 percent private sector employees, and two retirees, accounting for 0.5 percent, and 34 unemployed individuals, also representing 8.4 percent.

There are five income brackets: individuals earning less than RM1200, those earning between RM1201 and RM3000, those earning between RM3001 and RM5000, and those earning between RM5001 and RM7000. The findings reveal that 39 respondents, constituting 15.6 percent, reported an income below RM1200; 130 respondents, representing 52 percent, had an income ranging from RM1201 to RM3000; 72 respondents, or 28.8 percent, earned between RM3001 and RM5000; 9 respondents, equating to 3.6 percent, received an income between RM5001 and RM7000; and no respondents, or 0 percent, reported an income exceeding RM7001.

Regarding the utilization of Air Asia as the airline service provider, there exist two classifications: Yes or No. The results indicate that 248 respondents utilized Air Asia as their airline service provider, constituting 99.2 percent of the responses, while 2 respondents reported never using Air Asia, or 0.8 percent of the results. The other airlines favored by the respondents are as follows. The results indicate that 55 respondents utilize Malaysia Airlines, accounting for 22 percent; 9 respondents use Malindo/Batik Air, representing 3.6 percent; 8 respondents prefer Firefly, comprising 3.2 percent; and 178 respondents, or 71.2 percent, utilize other airline services.

Finally, regarding the frequency of respondents' travel with Air Asia over the past 12 months, there are three categories: 1-3 times, 4-6 times, and 6 times or more. The results indicate that 199 respondents utilized Air Asia services 1-3 times in the past 12 months, constituting 79.9 percent of the total respondents. Additionally, 44 respondents used Air Asia services between 3-6 times, representing 17.7 percent, while 6 respondents availed themselves of Air Asia services 6 times or more, accounting for 2.4 percent.

Table 1: Demographic Frequency Data

Frequency Distribution **Demographic**	**Categories**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	162	64.7
	Female	88	35.3
	Total	**250**	**100**
Age	18 – 25 Years Old	115	46.0
	26 – 35 Years Old	112	44.8
	36 – 45 Years Old	16	06.4
	> 46 Years Old	7	02.8
	Total	**250**	**100**

Race	Malay	179	71.8
	Chinese	55	21.8
	Indian	6	02.4
	Others	10	04.0
	Total	**250**	**100**
Education Level	Secondary Education -	25	10
	(SRP / SPM / STPM/ A-	222	88.8
	Level)	3	1.2
	Tertiary Education -	250	100
	(Diploma / Bachelor /		
	Master / PhD)		
	Others		
	Total		
Employment Status	Student	48	19.2
	Government Sector	123	49.2
	Private Sector	72	28.8
	Retiree	3	01.2
	Unemployed	4	01.6
	Total	250	100
Income	Below RM1200	39	15.6
	RM1201 – RM3000	130	52.0
	RM3001 – RM5000	72	28.8
	RM5001 – RM7000	9	03.6
	Above RM7001	0	0
	Total	250	100
Have you ever used Air	Yes	250	100
Asia as the airline	No	0	0
service provider?	Total	250	100
Based on your answer	Malaysia Airlines	55	22.0
above, which airline	Malindo/Batik Air	9	03.6
service do you prefer	Firefly	8	03.2
the most?	Others	178	71.2
	Total	250	100
How often did you	1-3 times	199	79.9
travel using Air Asia in	4-6 times	44	17.7
the past 12 months?	6 times or above	6	02.4
	Total	250	100

Reliability Test: In comparison with the analyzed reliability statistics that were provided (Table 2), the findings present a contrasting perspective. Using Cronbach's Alpha, it is noticeable that the tangible factor is (α = 0.950), reliability (α = 0.945), responsiveness (α = 0.934), empathy (α = 0.942), assurance (α = 0.946), and price (α = 0.913). This further indicates that the reliability is exceptional. These findings confirm that the measurement scales are highly reliable, offering a precise and credible assessment of the level of satisfaction.

Table 2: Reliability Test

	Total Item	Reliability (α)
Tangible	.950	5
Reliability	.945	5
Responsiveness	.934	5
Empathy	.942	5
Assurance	.946	5
Price	.913	5
Satisfaction	.934	5

Model Summary: According to the R value that is shown in Table 3, which is 0.956, perception and involvement together are responsible for 95.6% of the variation in satisfaction. Despite the fact that the adjusted R Square is somewhat lower than the original value of 0.913, it still illustrates the strong performance of the model while taking into account the number of predictors. These results draw attention to the enormous impact that perception and involvement have on the degrees of pleasure experienced by individuals, which in turn makes a major contribution to the total outcome. The remaining proportion, on the other hand, may be linked to external factors that were not investigated in this study. This highlights possible areas that might benefit from more research and investigation.

Table 3: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.956[a]	0.913	0.911	0.937	2.082

a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL_STF, TOTAL_TNG, TOTAL_ASSR, TOTAL_RLB, TOTAL_PRC, TOTAL_RSV, TOTAL_EMP
b. Dependent Variable: TOTAL_STF

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA and multiple comparisons) ANOVA's p-value=0 (F-Stat) in Table 4 indicates the independent variable can be used for variation of Satisfaction. R-square is 0.913, which shows that 91.3% of the satisfaction is affected by the five identified independent variables (Steel and Torrie et. al., 1960).

Table 4: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2240.448	7	320.064	364.551	0.000[b]
	Residual	212.468	242	0.878		
	Total	2452.916	249			

a.Dependent Variable: Satisfaction
b.Predictors: (Constant), Tangible, Assurance, Reliability, Price, Responsiveness, Empathy

Correlations: In this research, Satisfaction showed a positive correlation with r=0.949, which was significant at the 0.01 level. It was followed by Price (r=0.894), Assurance (r=0.875), Empathy (r=0.871), Reliability (r=0.871), Responsiveness (r=0.858), and Tangible (r=0.824), all of which had significant correlations at the 0.01 level. Thus, the findings indicate that there is a significant connection between customer satisfaction and all of the independent factors.

Table 5: Correlations

		Tangible	Reliability	Responsiveness	Empathy	Assurance	Price	Satisfaction	Loyalty
Tangible	Pearson Correlation	1	.844**	.864**	.811**	.828**	.829**	.836**	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.844**	.844**	.844**	.844**	.844**	.844**	.844**	.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.864**	.864**	.864**	.864**	.864**	.864**	.864**	.864**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.811**	.811**	.811**	.811**	.811**	.811**	.811**	.811**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.828**	.828**	.828**	.828**	.828**	.828**	.828**	.828**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Price	Pearson Correlation	.829**	.829**	.829**	.829**	.829**	.829**	.829**	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.836**	.836**	.836**	.836**	.836**	.836**	.836**	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Coefficients: The value of Tangible is 0.814, which is more than the p-value of 0.05, indicating that it is significant. From this, it is possible to conclude that there is no major connection between the tangible and the satisfaction of the client. A value of 0.007, which is below the p-value of 0.05, is considered to be a significant value of reliability. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that there is a considerable link between reliability and the satisfaction of customers. A value of 0.323, which is more than the p-value of 0.05, is considered to be a significant value of responsiveness. It is possible to conclude that there is no significant connection between responsiveness and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers. The value of empathy is 0.779, which is more than the p-value of 0.05, indicating that it is significant. It is possible to conclude that there is no substantial connection between empathy and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers. The value of Assurance is 0.056, which is more than the p-value of 0.05, indicating that it is significant. It is possible to conclude that there is no substantial connection between assurance and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers. Price has a significant value of 0.002, which is lower than the p-value of 0.05; hence, it is significant. This leads one to the conclusion that there is a considerable link between pricing and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers.

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	Collinearity Statistics VIF
1	(Constant)	-0.335	0.503		-0.665	0.507		
	Tangible	0.012	0.049	0.010	0.235	0.814	0.203	4.924
	Reliability	0.134	0.050	0.143	2.706	0.007	0.128	7.842
	Responsiveness	-0.053	0.054	-0.051	-0.990	0.323	0.133	7.541
	Empathy	-0.014	0.051	-0.015	-0.281	0.779	0.119	8.379
	Assurance	0.104	0.054	0.098	1.924	0.056	0.138	7.258
	Price	0.168	0.053	0.154	3.155	0.002	0.150	6.683
	Satisfaction	0.661	0.058	0.647	11.340	0.000	0.110	9.105

Discussion

The correlation between dependability and customer happiness is a crucial focus in service quality research. Empirical evidence indicates that reliability, an element of service quality, profoundly affects customer happiness. The findings of H1 (To Investigate the Impact of Service Quality Towards Customer's Satisfaction), reliability is compatible with the study by Tindage et al. (2023) stated that service quality, including reliability,

has a quantifiable and positive correlation with customer satisfaction, emphasizing the necessity for organizations to enhance service performance. The first hypothesis, H1, which was accepted with a mean score of 4.25, investigated the connection between the quality of service provided and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers. The impact of reliability in service quality on customer satisfaction is a critical area of research within the field of service management. Reliability is recognized as one of the fundamental dimensions of service quality, encompassing the capability of a service provider to deliver promised services dependably and accurately. Many studies have recognized a direct association between reliability and customer satisfaction across numerous service industries, suggesting that higher reliability naturally leads to improved levels of customer contentment and loyalty.

Research specifies that reliability significantly affects customer perceptions and satisfaction. For example, Woldemichael emphasizes that reliability plays a vital role in enhancing customer satisfaction, specifically within the Ethiopian Electric Utility framework, confirming that customers respond positively to reliable service distribution (Woldemichael, 2024). Likewise, Shrestha's study demonstrates that reliability is the strongest dimension of service quality impacting customer satisfaction, highlighting its significance as a factor in various service sectors (Shrestha, 2021). This idea is supported further by Muchimba and Sinkala, who recognize reliability as one of the principal attributes that significantly moves customer satisfaction among bank customers in Zambia (Muchimba & Sinkala, 2024). Moreover, Lee et al. back the statement that perceived service quality, through its reliability dimension, leads to better customer satisfaction, signifying that the perception of reliability acts as an antecedent to enhancing customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2000). Similarly, Narteh found a positive association between various hypotheses of service quality, including reliability, and customer satisfaction in the background of retail banking in Ghana (Narteh, 2018). This correlation highlights the necessity for service providers to rank reliability to support consumer satisfaction.

The consequences extend beyond merely enhancing customer satisfaction; reliable service also affects customer retention and recommendation intentions. Park et al. highlight that service quality surfaces, such as reliability, not only directly affect customer satisfaction but also outline upcoming consumer behaviors, including the likelihood of recommending the service to others (Park et al., 2021). Thus, reliability's contribution to enhancing service quality cannot be overstated, ensuring the sustenance of customer relationships. The necessity for strategic attention towards enhancing reliability is underscored in a study by Nguyen et al., which reveals that service capacity and tangibility, in addition to reliability, significantly correlate with customer satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2020). This illustrates that while reliability is paramount, it exists within a broader tapestry of service quality dimensions, all contributing to customer perceptions of satisfaction.

The findings of H2 (To Investigate the Impact of Price on Air Asia Customers' Satisfaction) show that Price has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction. On account of the fact that the price was favorable, with a Mean of 4.39, it is predicted that this tool will be used. AirAsia has a significant association between prices and service. This is because there was a significant association between pricing strategy and the level of satisfaction experienced by AirAsia's customers. The hypothesis H2 was tested to see whether or not there is a correlation between price and satisfaction, and it was found to be true. Consequently, this demonstrates that people choose AirAsia over other airlines because of the reduced pricing that they provide. Nevertheless, respondents had greater expectations for the cost, which was a key factor in their choice to choose AirAsia as the service provider that would enable them to achieve a better level of satisfaction.

An important frame of research designates a direct correlation between price and customer satisfaction. For example, in the context of India's airline sector, the association between price and customer satisfaction was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = 0.425$, $p = 0.000$), signifying that competitive pricing positively affects customer satisfaction levels, eventually influencing airline attractiveness (Wilfred et al., 2024). Likewise, another study established that customer satisfaction is crucial in inducing repurchase purposes, emphasizing the need for airlines to maintain a balance between service quality and pricing to remember customers (Setiawan et al., 2020). Such findings resonate in industries rassling with similar challenges, where price sensitivity plays a perilous role as well (Iqbal et al., 2023). Also, the interaction of service quality with pricing tools underlines its importance in shaping customer perceptions. Airlines that deliver excellent service quality not only boost customer satisfaction but can also validate higher price points. A study designated that ideal

service quality is a deciding factor for customer satisfaction, even in the face of unstable prices due to external economic burdens such as rising oil costs (Hoang et al., 2021). This highlights the dual role of service quality alongside pricing strategies in inducing customer satisfaction (Riorini & Widayati, 2018; Pahrudin et al., 2023). Thus, customers might be willing to pay first-class fares for improved service involvement, highlighting the interaction between perceived value and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the insight of price equality directly impacts customer satisfaction in the airline sector (Setiawan et al., 2020; Artik & Duygun, 2022). When customers trust that prices reflect fair value for services reduced, their overall satisfaction tends to increase. This trust strengthens repeat business, with satisfied customers often acting as brand supporters, further influencing potential customers' decisions (Bilal, 2023). Additionally, the study by Khuzaifah et al. provides insights into how perceived service quality mediates customer satisfaction and purchasing behaviors, highlighting that while price may not directly influence repurchase intentions, it indeed mediates through customer satisfaction (Khuzaifah et al., 2023). Such dynamics complicate the relationship between price and customer satisfaction, suggesting that strategic pricing must be viewed through the lens of overall customer experience.

The independent variables of reliability and pricing exhibit substantial correlations with consumer satisfaction. The correlation coefficients for reliability ($r = .007$, $p < 0.01$), price ($r = .002$, $p < 0.01$), and satisfaction ($r = .00$, $p < 0.01$) are all statistically significant. The multiple regression analysis results suggest that the R-squared value of .913 signifies that 91.3% of the total variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variables, and the regression model is statistically significant. Consequently, the independent variables in this study (service quality, reliability, and pricing) greatly influence consumer satisfaction. However, other independent variables (tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) do not significantly influence satisfaction.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

Research Implications

Negative attitudes—such as AirAsia travelers staying loyal owing to fear of losing privileges or the high cost of switching providers—illustrate customer behavior. Future studies should explore both positive and negative factors on satisfaction and loyalty to better understand and reduce discontent. Additionally, this survey does not differentiate airline service providers. Future studies might examine provider use behaviors for a more targeted analysis. While the present study focuses on business-to-consumer interactions, studying business-to-business dynamics may broaden industry insights. Concerning the inconsistencies between the gender group (i.e., male and female) and customer experience, network operators must stage experiences positively to appeal to the customers' senses.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this research give a theoretical framework that is strengthened and expanded upon by the SERVQUAL model, which was first created by Parasuraman et al. (1988). This was accomplished by using the SERVQUAL model, which is a relatively inexpensive airline service provider. According to the findings of this study, the dimensions of service quality and pricing are important determinants of consumer happiness, which in turn has a substantial impact on customer loyalty. This study reinforces the SERVQUAL model's relevance by demonstrating that service quality dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—alongside price, play a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty within the low-cost airline sector. It extends the theoretical framework by highlighting the role of customer satisfaction and suggests that price should be considered a vital complement to service quality in understanding customer satisfaction, especially in price-sensitive industries.

Managerial Implications

Technology has helped AirAsia increase customer happiness and reliability. Affordable cost still drives consumer choices, but today's travelers are pickier about service dependability and value. High-quality service plans boost client happiness and help them understand AirAsia's value. Staying ahead in a competitive market requires this mindset. Few Malaysian airlines understand the value of strategic pricing, but AirAsia has concentrated on quantifiable service quality. However, focusing on intangibles like customer experience and

customer satisfaction might boost its competitiveness. AirAsia should use its physical and intangible assets now to improve dependability and stay ahead of the competition. Excellent customer service and a passenger-focused company approach will develop long-term connections and boost profits. AirAsia may become the top option for budget-conscious and reliable tourists by adopting this method.

Conclusion

The objective for the first hypothesis (To Investigate the Impact of Service Quality Towards Customer's Satisfaction) was not achieved, as there is no connection between the quality of service provided and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers, except for the reliability item. Consequently, the independent variables in this study (service quality, reliability, and pricing) greatly influence consumer satisfaction. However, other independent variables (tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance) do not significantly influence satisfaction. The objective of the second hypothesis (To Investigate the Impact of Price on Air Asia Customers' Satisfaction) shows that Price has a positive effect on Customer Satisfaction.

Since only specific dimensions of service quality, particularly reliability and pricing, were identified as significantly affecting customer satisfaction, further research should investigate the reasons behind the lack of significant impact from other service quality dimensions, including tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that there is a significant course of action that should be taken in order to enhance the level of customer satisfaction seen in the airline industry. When it comes to ensuring that airline companies continue to provide a high level of pleasure to their passengers, the findings of the study are very pertinent for the corporate leadership to take into consideration. The researchers explain some ideas for future research and bring out some of the limits that this study has, all with the intention of extending the present knowledge of the topic area that this study focuses on.

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