The Influence of Airline Service Quality on Customer Loyalty with Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator

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Abstract

This research investigates the complex correlation between the quality of airline services, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in Chongqing, China. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), we analyzed the direct influence of service quality on customer satisfaction and its subsequent impact on loyalty in a sample of 323 individuals with diverse income levels. The structural equation modeling (SEM) research showed that the service quality construct, which encompasses dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, had a path coefficient 1.00. This indicates a virtually perfect positive impact on customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer satisfaction was a significant mediator in the connection, with a path coefficient of .28, indicating a substantial impact on customer loyalty. The research objective was to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty, assess the significant impact of these elements, and develop a model to understand their interconnectedness in the airline industry in Chongqing. The empirical data supported a high-fidelity model, as shown by favorable fit indices such as GFI, AGFI, CFI, and TLI, an appropriate ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom, and a significant p-value. The low RMSEA and RMR values further supported the model's integrity, while the high NFI

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suggested significant predictive potential. The results emphasize the crucial need for airlines to prioritize service quality to improve customer happiness. The emphasis on this aspect is vital for cultivating loyalty, which is essential for attaining long-term commercial prosperity. This research highlights the significance of ongoing enhancements in service quality to establish a devoted client base, which is crucial to gaining a competitive advantage and achieving profitability in Chongqing's fiercely competitive aviation market. The strong statistical evidence and practical consequences of this study support adopting a customer-centric strategy for business operations in the airline industry.

Keywords: quality of airline services, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty

Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has brought about unprecedented difficulties for the worldwide aviation sector, especially regarding passenger experience. In China, these issues have assessed the industry's resilience and stimulated a revolution in expectations for the quality of airline services (Jamaluddin et al., 2021). With its rapidly growing tourism industry, Chongqing has become a central location for studying these changes. Airlines have implemented various safety measures in response to the problem, including more rigorous cleaning methods, obligatory mask requirements, and attempts to maintain social separation. Notwithstanding these actions, the sector has seen a significant decrease in passengers due to increased safety concerns and the implementation of travel limitations (Garaus & Hudáková, 2022).

Service quality is crucial in the airline sector, particularly in a post-pandemic environment where passenger happiness is closely connected to health and safety protocols. Research conducted by Nastasi and Schensul (2005) has shown that elements such as the perceived quality

of in-flight services, dependability, and safety standards now significantly influence consumer satisfaction alongside conventional considerations like cost and schedule. The pandemic has brought forth new aspects of service quality, like the effectiveness and openness of health protocols and the ability to make flight changes, which have become crucial for preserving consumer confidence and allegiance.

Considering recent advancements, this study aims to examine the intricate relationship between airline service quality, customer happiness, and loyalty within the unique setting of Chongqing, China. The research seeks to elucidate the influence of airlines' service quality activities during the pandemic on customer perceptions and loyalty levels by using the SERVQUAL methodology. The study aims to address a significant gap in the existing literature by examining how customer satisfaction mediates between service quality and loyalty in the tourism industry that a pandemic has impacted.

The results of this study are anticipated to provide practical and implementable knowledge for airline operators and others involved in the sector. The research intends to guide airlines in strategically improving their service offerings by emphasizing the intricate ways service quality impacts consumer pleasure and loyalty. The acquired insights will be necessary for airlines to not only rebound from the epidemic's effects but also strategically position themselves for enduring expansion in an escalating market rivalry. This research could enhance academic comprehension and practical strategies in the airline business by extensively examining the Chongqing aviation market. The aim is to provide insights for plans emphasizing consumer-focused service enhancements, allowing airlines to adapt more effectively to the post-pandemic environment with more flexibility and customer satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To study the linkage Between Airline service quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Loyalty in Chongqing, China.
2. To study the critical influence of airline service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in Chongqing, China.
3. To study the model of linkage Between Airline service quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Loyalty in Chongqing, China.

Research Hypothesis

H_1: Airline Service Quality has a positive direct effect on Customer Satisfaction

H_2: Airline Service Quality has a positive direct effect on Loyalty

H_3: Customer Satisfaction has a positive direct impact on Loyalty

H_4: Airline Service Quality Has Positive Indirect Effect on Loyalty

Conceptual Framework

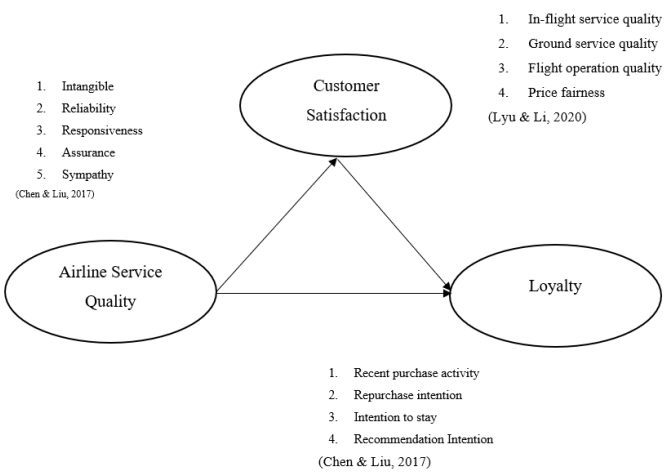


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

The concept and theory of Airline service quality

The concept of airline service quality is a critical competitive differentiator in the aviation industry. It encompasses the passengers' journey, from booking tickets to arriving at the destination. Good service quality can significantly enhance customer satisfaction, engender loyalty, and secure an airline's market position (Brady & Cronin Jr, 2001).

Central to the theoretical understanding of airline service quality is the SERVQUAL model, which posits that service quality is multidimensional. Originally conceptualized with ten dimensions, the model was later distilled into five core components, often called the RATER dimensions: Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness. These serve as a framework for assessing and improving the service quality of an airline, focusing on meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Oliver, 1980).

The SERVQUAL model measures service quality through a dual questionnaire that examines consumer expectations and perceptions across the RATER dimensions. American marketing gurus Valarie Zeithaml, Leonard Berry, and A. Parasuraman suggested that Initially used in service industries like banking and telecommunications, this model has been adapted for the airline industry, reflecting its unique service challenges and opportunities (Bhasin, 2022). The model’s questionnaire, comprising 22 items, is designed to gauge the gap between expected service and perceived service delivery. These questions cover a comprehensive range of service aspects, from the tangibility of the airline’s equipment and facilities to the reliability of its schedules, the responsiveness and empathy of its staff, and the assurance of safety and security.

Furthermore, the SERVQUAL model identifies five gaps that can affect service quality. These gaps pertain to discrepancies between

customer expectations and management perceptions, management perceptions and service specifications, service specifications and delivery, service delivery and external communication, and expected service and experienced service. Understanding and addressing these gaps is crucial for airlines, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has drastically altered consumer expectations and demands. The ability to adapt and evolve service offerings to meet these new needs is essential for maintaining relevance and customer loyalty in the dynamic landscape of the aviation industry.

The concept and theory of Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is vital to business success, reflecting how well a product or service meets or surpasses customer expectations. It is a crucial determinant of customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth endorsements, critical for repeat business and long-term viability. The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) is one of the most influential frameworks for understanding customer satisfaction. According to this theory, satisfaction results from the gap between expected and actual performance. When a product or service meets or exceeds expectations, customers are likely to experience satisfaction. Conversely, dissatisfaction is the typical outcome if performance falls short of what was anticipated, as shown in Figure 2.

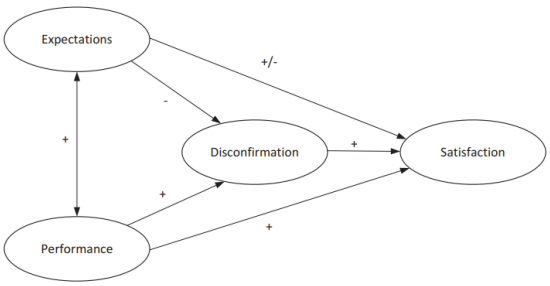


Figure 2 Expectancy disconfirmation model.

EDT posits that customer satisfaction is based on three key elements:

1. **Expectations**: These are preconceived notions customers hold regarding a product or service, shaped by their past experiences, marketing communications, and word-of-mouth.

2. **Perceived Performance** refers to the customer's product or service assessment after consumption.

3. **Disconfirmation:** This is the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance. Positive disconfirmation occurs when performance exceeds expectations, leading to satisfaction, while negative disconfirmation results when performance is below expectations, leading to dissatisfaction.

The theory emphasizes that managing customer expectations and ensuring that the perceived performance aligns with or exceeds those expectations are crucial strategies for fostering satisfaction.

Empirical support for EDT comes from studies across various industries. Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) demonstrated in the banking sector that higher expectations can lead to greater disconfirmation and lower satisfaction when services fail to meet these expectations. Conversely, positive disconfirmation, where services surpass expectations, enhances satisfaction. Similarly, Mittal and Kamakura (2001) found that negative disconfirmation prompted customers to switch brands in the automobile industry, while positive disconfirmation reinforced brand loyalty.

These studies corroborate EDT's proposition that satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by the interplay between customer expectations

and perceived product or service performance. For businesses, this underscores the importance of accurately setting customer expectations and consistently delivering quality experiences to build a loyal customer base.

Concept and Theory of Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a crucial factor in the prosperity and longevity of a company, signifying a customer's dedication to repeatedly buying or continuing to use a brand's goods or services. It results from continuous pleasant contact and contentment, which eventually leads to a favored and often exclusive relationship over some time. In the highly competitive realm of contemporary commerce, the cultivation of client loyalty extends beyond mere product or service quality. It entails developing genuine connections that provide value beyond just transactions.

Several theoretical frameworks, such as the satisfaction-retention-profit chain model, the commitment-trust theory, and the social exchange theory, support our knowledge of consumer loyalty. These theories jointly emphasize the significance of consumer happiness, trust, and perceived value in establishing loyalty.

The Service-Profit Chain (SPC)

The Service-Profit Chain (SPC), conceptualized by Heskett, Sasser, and Schlesinger, establishes a clear correlation between organizational practices, staff engagement, customer happiness, and profitability. According to the paradigm, internal service quality is said to cause staff satisfaction, promoting customer contentment and loyalty, resulting in improved financial success. This sequence of consequences emphasizes the essential contribution of workers in providing exceptional service that meets customers' needs, cultivates their loyalty, and improves the company's financial results.

Rust et al.'s formulation of the SPC model enhances this notion by establishing a clear connection between service investments and customer perceptions of quality, which subsequently influence financial returns. This method highlights the significance of service quality in enhancing customer pleasure and loyalty while also proposing a measurable return on investment in service quality enhancements.

The SPC framework has expanded its scope outside the service industry, acknowledging that customer loyalty in many industries is primarily influenced by service and product quality, thereby emphasizing the importance of customer happiness. The enlarged model's satisfaction-profit chain encompasses a broader spectrum of elements that impact consumer happiness and loyalty. These elements include not only the productivity and quality of employees but also the characteristics of the product and the operational efficiency that together contribute to the total happiness of customers. This paradigm has also evolved to recognize the intricate and even nonlinear connections between various components of the service delivery process and their influence on financial success. The acknowledgment of immediate and unfiltered connections between operational inputs and financial results signifies a notable change in comprehending the mechanics of consumer loyalty. It implies that investing in the quality of services or products might have immediate economic consequences, but it can also result in long-term financial rewards by increasing consumer loyalty.

To summarize, the theoretical frameworks of client loyalty emphasize a comprehensive approach to establishing and sustaining customer relationships. The customer experience is not just focused on the final product or service but encompasses all interactions with workers, the company's operational efficiency, and the overall value offered. These frameworks provide organizations with a thorough comprehension of the

elements that lead to client loyalty, providing insights into enhancing their strategy for long-term success.

Research Methodology

The researcher used a mixed-method approach to investigate the relationship between airline service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in Chongqing, China. The primary data-gathering techniques used are field distribution and network surveys. Chongqing Airlines and Huaxia Airlines Chongqing Company directly administered surveys, forging enduring collaborative partnerships with the researchers. In quantitative research, the sample size represents an unknown population. The researcher used Cochran's method (Cochran, 1977) to determine the sample size, resulting in 323 samples for this study. The researcher used the purposive random sample strategy to choose 17 important informants in the qualitative research. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher assessed the validity of the research instrument by administering the IOC test to three specialists. Subsequently, 30 questionnaires were used for a trial, and the instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The result was .971. Upon disseminating the questionnaires, the researcher gathered replies. Using the stratified random sampling methodology resulted in a sample more reflective of the overall population and less influenced by bias, enhancing the credibility of the study outcomes.

Research Instrument

For this research, the questionnaire was a rating scale with five levels: Strongly agree, Agree, moderate, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. The researcher has developed an improvement from the research questionnaire Likert scale (Likert, 1932); the questionnaire is divided into four parts:

Part 1 The status of the respondents It was a multiple-choice question with four questions about the quality of the respondents, such as Gender, Education, Income, Occupation, etc.

Part 2 The Study Airline Service Quality in Chongqing, China. It is a 5-level estimation scale question asking about factors of Airline Service Quality (Chen & Liu, 2017) and is divided into five areas, which are 1) Intangible, 2) Reliability, 3) Responsiveness, 4) Assurance, and 5) Sympathy

Part 3 Study Customer Satisfaction in Chongqing, China. It is a 5-level estimation scale question asking about factors of Customer Satisfaction (Lyu & Li, 2020). It is divided into four areas: 1) in-flight, 2) ground service quality, 3) flight operation quality, and 4) price fairness.

Part 4 Study Customer Loyalty in Chongqing, China. It is a 5-level estimation scale question asking about factors of Customer Loyalty (Chen & Liu, 2017). It is divided into four areas, which are 1) Recent purchase activity, 2) Repurchase intention, 3) Intention to stay, and 4) Recommendation Intention

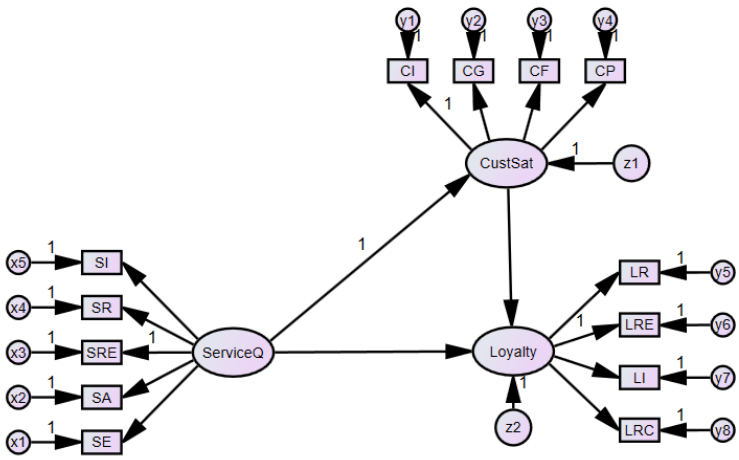
Result

The majority of responders obtained answers from a sample size of 323 persons. The female population comprises 59.8% of the total of 193 individuals. One hundred forty-six people, accounting for 45.2% of the sample, fell between 36-40 years old. Additionally, 221 individuals, representing 68.4% of the population, had a Bachelor's degree. The income totals 8,000, which is 35.6% of the total.

Table 1 The correlation matrix between variables

	SI	SR	SRE	SA	SE	CI	CG	CF	CP	LR	LRE	LI	LRC
SI	1	.902	.925	.912	.881	.866	.895	.778	.876	.928	.901	.863	.919
SR		1	.876	.853	.841	.851	.868	.762	.842	.895	.860	.833	.908
SRE			1	.921	.900	.857	.882	.751	.875	.926	.902	.855	.909
SA				1	.888	.842	.891	.804	.882	.916	.902	.881	.901
SE					1	.806	.836	.700	.816	.865	.859	.833	.859
CI						1	.900	.849	.881	.860	.861	.844	.894
CG							1	.874	.924	.918	.861	.858	.893
CF								1	.852	.803	.735	.762	.786
CP									1	.930	.829	.807	.858
LR										1	.910	.868	.920
LRE											1	.918	.952
LI												1	.953
LRC													1

Table 1 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients between several criteria related to airline service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. In general, this table demonstrates robust positive correlations among 323 participants. The strong connections indicate that enhancements in service quality are likely to be linked with higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.



Chi-square = 52.269, df = 37, Chi-square/df = 1.413, p = .049, GFI = .977, AGFI = .943, CFI = .998, TLI = .996, RMSEA = .036, RMR = .002, NFI = .994

The researcher illustrated the Structural Equation Modelling of the linkage between airline service quality, Customer satisfaction, and Customer loyalty In Chongqing, China. This Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) diagram represents the relationships between observed variables, latent constructs, and the model's overall fit to the empirical data.

Table 2 The result of the Structural Equation Model

Dependent Variables	Customer Satisfaction			Loyalty		
Independent Variable	TE	DE	IE	TE	DE	IE
Airline Service Quality	.961	.961	-	.992	.708	.284
Customer Satisfaction	-	-	-	.296	.296	-
R-Square	.923			.990		

χ^2 =52.269, df = 37, χ^2/df =1.413, p = .049, GFI = .977, AGFI = .943, CFI = .998, TLI = .996, RMSEA = .036, RMR = .002, NFI = .994

Table 2 The study examines the relationships between Airline Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Loyalty within the airline industry. Airline Service Quality, measured by four variables (SI, SR, SRE, SA), significantly impacts Customer Satisfaction with a standardized path coefficient of 1.00, indicating a direct and substantial effect. Customer Satisfaction, in turn, positively influences Loyalty, albeit with a less intense effect, as denoted by a path coefficient of .28. Loyalty itself is assessed through four variables (LR, LRE, LI, LRC). The strength of the relationships is quantified by path coefficients, demonstrating a powerful positive impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and a positive, though comparatively moderate, contribution of Customer Satisfaction to Loyalty. Model fit indices suggest the model's appropriateness for the observed data. A Chi-square value of 52.269 with 37 degrees of freedom results in a Chi-square/df of 1.413, indicating a good fit. The p-value is .049, bordering on acceptable. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted GFI (AGFI) show excellent model fit with values of .977 and .943, respectively.

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) at .998 and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) at .996 reflect an excellent fit. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) at .036 and the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) at .002 are within desirable ranges, confirming the model's accuracy. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) at .994 further supports the firm fit of the model to the data. In summary, the model effectively illustrates a significant positive relationship between Airline Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction, which moderately enhances Loyalty. The comprehensive fit indices confirm the model's reliability and validity in representing the data accurately, highlighting the critical role of service quality in driving customer satisfaction and loyalty in the airline industry.

The result of the in-depth interview

The in-depth interviews provide insightful perspectives on the factors influencing airline service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

Airline Service Quality: Participants emphasized the critical role of service quality in shaping their airline experiences. Key factors include the professionalism and friendliness of the cabin crew, the range and quality of in-flight amenities, and the efficiency of check-in and boarding processes. Handling unforeseen events like flight delays and cancellations significantly affects perceptions of service quality. Negative experiences, particularly those poorly managed, have a lasting impact on satisfaction and future airline choices, with frequent flyers stressing the cumulative effect of multiple experiences. Effective communication and transparency during service disruptions were highlighted as crucial in mitigating negative impacts on service quality perceptions.

Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is closely tied to meeting expectations, especially on-time performance, in-flight comfort, and customer service quality. Consistency in service delivery emerged as

a pivotal theme, with deviations from expected standards leading to dissatisfaction. This aspect is particularly vital for frequent flyers, who base their assessments on a series of interactions over time. The satisfaction level correlates with the likelihood of recommending the airline, indicating the importance of positive experiences in promoting word-of-mouth marketing. Transparent and empathetic communication during disruptions also significantly maintains satisfaction levels, underlining the need for effective communication strategies.

Loyalty: Loyalty emerges from a complex mix of consistently positive experiences and perceived value rather than merely from loyalty programs. While rewards and benefits are recognized as influencing factors, true loyalty is more deeply rooted in overall satisfaction with the airline's services. Loyalty is highly conditional, with customers open to switching airlines in response to perceived declines in service quality or better offers from competitors. This underscores the airline industry's competitive nature, where maintaining high service standards and nurturing customer relationships is essential to retaining loyalty.

These findings emphasized airlines' need to prioritize exceptional service quality, consistent and reliable service delivery, and effective communication to foster customer satisfaction and loyalty. The insights also highlight the competitive stakes in the airline industry, where customer loyalty is continuously contingent upon the airline's ability to consistently meet and exceed customer expectations.

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher studied in Chongqing, China, and thoroughly examined the connection between airline service quality, customer happiness, and loyalty. The researcher used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to establish a precise and statistically significant model that explains the critical impact of service quality on customer satisfaction

and, therefore, on customer loyalty in the airline business. The income distribution of the sample, which reflects the different economic backgrounds of the participants, has given a strong foundation for studying the connections between real-world variances in consumer profiles. Our research shows that the service quality concept, which includes factors like reliability, promptness, trustworthiness, and understanding, firmly and directly impacts customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by the path coefficient 1.00. This practically flawless positive impact emphasizes the indisputable significance of service quality as a factor that determines client perceptions and experiences.

Upon further examination, it has been shown that customer satisfaction has a crucial function as a mediator, with a significant but modest path coefficient of .28, strengthening its influence in promoting customer loyalty. This mediation highlights that customer pleasure is not only a temporary condition but a crucial factor influencing long-term consumer behavior and loyalty toward the airline.

The model's robustness is confirmed by many fit indices, such as GFI, AGFI, CFI, and TLI, and notably the ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom and the crucial p-value. These indicators together indicate a high level of model fit. The indices approach the ideal value, and the low RMSEA and RMR values further confirm the model's structural integrity. The NFI's assessment of the model's predicted accuracy is evidence of the SEM's efficacy in capturing the intricate dynamics of consumer interactions and perceptions.

This study emphasizes the importance of service quality in improving customer satisfaction, which influences loyalty. It recommends that airlines pursue quality enhancements as a strategic need. Implementing such a plan is especially crucial in the highly competitive environment of Chongqing's aviation industry, where maintaining client

loyalty is paramount. Hence, the results of this investigation not only demonstrate statistical significance but also have significant practical consequences. These actions serve a solid and urgent demand for airlines to consistently improve their service quality, establishing a dedicated and loyal consumer following. The findings obtained from this thorough examination emphasize the need to adopt a customer-focused strategy in company activities, which is crucial for long-term success and gaining a competitive edge in the airline sector. The research using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), supported by robust fit indices, provides convincing evidence supporting the customer-oriented approach. It emphasizes the need for continuous service improvements to foster loyalty and guarantee profitability in the airline market in Chongqing.

Discussion

The study's results have significant ramifications for the aviation industry, namely in shedding light on the advantages of prioritizing improvements in service quality. This work has used Structural Equation Modeling to conduct a thorough analysis, further substantiating the crucial association between service quality and customer happiness. This association has been well-established as a substantial determinant of consumer loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). The study's conclusions agree with the ethos of Vargo and Lusch's Service-Dominant Logic (2004), which proposes that value is co-created via customer interactions and experiences and that the customer's perception of value is a fulcrum of corporate strategy. Airlines can significantly transform customer satisfaction by integrating service quality into the corporate culture and operational strategy. The service management literature endorses the focus on client-centricity and is also evident in the marketing strategies of prosperous service companies that prioritize customer experience (Berry et al., 2002). The achievement of customer pleasure and the subsequent development of strong customer loyalty are contingent upon the

alignment of service delivery with customer expectations. This phenomenon has been widely examined in the scholarly works of Parasuraman et al. (1985) and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996).

The strong correlation between service quality and customer happiness, which in turn drives customer loyalty, highlights the need for ongoing enhancements and innovative approaches in service provision. This statement highlights the need for airlines to embrace a comprehensive customer experience perspective, including all consumer interactions, ranging from ticket acquisition to post-flight services (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). The process of comprehending customer expectations, preferences, and aversions holds significant importance, as evidenced by the theoretical framework of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and its subsequent expansion into the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). These theories emphasize the influential role of attitudes in predicting behavioral intentions. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of these results in the current body of literature, it would be advantageous for future studies to investigate these processes across other cultural settings. The impact of cultural characteristics on customer behavior and expectations has been extensively shown (Hofstede, 1984), particularly in globalization and the worldwide presence of the aviation business. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006) that service expectations and perceptions may differ significantly across various cultures. This suggests that cultural subtleties significantly influence the link between service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Furthermore, the expanding market of low-cost carriers presents a promising opportunity for further investigation. The specific sector in this context exhibits distinct consumer expectations and business methods. Exploring this sector might provide more understanding of the applicability of the service quality-satisfaction-loyalty relationship discovered in the research conducted by O'Connell and Williams in 2005. The low-cost

market, characterized by its specific value proposition and operational complexities, provides an exceptional context for examining the relevance of the study's results (Rhoades & Waguespack, 2008).

Suggestion

1. Emphasize Practical Applications

While the research offers valuable theoretical insights, it could benefit from a stronger emphasis on practical applications. Based on your findings, this could include specific strategies airlines can employ to improve service quality and customer experience. These strategies might involve staff training, customer feedback systems, and technology enhancements.

2. Expand Cultural Context Analysis

Given the global nature of the airline industry, an expanded analysis of how cultural differences impact customer expectations and perceptions of service quality could provide more tailored insights. This could help airlines better understand and cater to diverse customer bases.

3. Incorporate a Low-Cost Carrier Perspective

The research could delve deeper into the unique dynamics of the low-cost carrier market. Exploring how service quality impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty in this segment could offer valuable insights for budget airlines operating under different constraints and customer expectations.

4. Include a Broader Range of Demographic Variables

While the study includes gender, age, and income demographics, incorporating additional variables such as nationality, frequent flyer status, or purpose of travel (business vs leisure) could provide a more nuanced understanding of customer satisfaction drivers.

5. Longitudinal Study Recommendation

Suggest a longitudinal study to observe changes in customer expectations and satisfaction over time, especially considering the fast-evolving nature of the airline industry.

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