

Research Article

Identifying the Factors that Affect the Passenger's Satisfaction using AirAsia Airline

Farah Ismanazihah Rosli, Fariza Suhada Sulawizi, Farrah Adillah Jefree, Fatin Aisyah Hanani, *Muhamad Nasyat Muhamad Nasir & Mohammed Ruqaimi Bin Remeli

Faculty of Hospitality, Tourism and Wellness, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan

Corresponding email: nasyat.mn@umk.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to determine the effects of service quality, motivation, and involvement on passenger's satisfaction to travel within domestic destinations in Malaysia using Air Asia Airline. The questionnaire survey was distributed among Air Asia passengers and the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In total, 306 respondents have participated in the questionnaire survey. The study found that service quality, motivation and involvement have significant correlations with passenger satisfaction. Therefore, this study helps Air Asia company to improve service quality, particularly in time management, safety, facilities, and comfortability and motivates them to participate among passengers to initiate satisfaction among passengers using Air Asia Airlines.

Keywords: Airlines; Service Quality; Motivation; Involvement; Tourist Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The travel and tourism sector is important since it is the main source of income and is a basis for a country's economic growth. Tourism consists of different industries and one of the most significant industries that contributes to the growth of tourism is air transportation. This is because it helps tourists to travel from one destination to another. A leading low-cost carrier in Asia is Air Asia Airlines. It offers both domestic and international flights. However, the most frequently reported problem with Airasia is that they suddenly cancel, reschedule, and retime passengers' flight reservations (AirAsia, 2022).

Evidently, the Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) claimed that AirAsia company received the most complaints in the first half of 2022 whereby it is consisting of 42.1 percent of all aviation-related complaints surpassing Malaysia Airlines (40.7 percent) and Batik Air (7.9 percent) based on a report release by the Malaysian Aviation Commission's 12th issue

of its bi-annual Consumer Report in the first half of 2022 (MalayMail, 2022). There are various reasons why AirAsia flights are frequently delayed, including bad weather, technical issues, and others (Osman, 2019). Most of the tourists who have an urgent issue would be affected due to the sudden ticket cancellation and flight delay. Moreover, the passengers could not be directly involved in resolving this issue but needed to wait for the retimed flight. Consequently, this situation makes the passengers feel unsatisfied with the airline's services. As a result, the focus of this study is to identify the factors that determine passengers' satisfaction with using Air Asia as their preferred airline to travel around domestic destinations in Malaysia.

Several objectives of this study are established as follows:

1. To investigate the relationship between service quality and passengers' satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred Airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia.
2. To investigate the relationship between motivation and passengers' satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred Airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia.
3. To investigate the relationship between involvement and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred Airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Passenger Satisfaction

In recent years the air transportation industry has changed considerably due to the effects of deregulation on the industry, the growth of various low-cost airline companies, inter-airport competition within different geographical areas, and rapid development in technological advancement have significantly affected the air transportation industry and led to massive changes in airport settings (Lopez-Valpuesta and Casas-Albala, 2023). Thus, the concept of satisfaction plays an important role for any business to sustain long in the market including the air transportation industry. Kotler and Keller (2015) claim that satisfaction is about fulfilling an individual's initial expectations based on the performance of a service offered. Meanwhile, Ali et al. (2021) found that satisfied persons are more likely to behave favorably toward the products and services offered by the business.

Thus, the present study claimed that passenger satisfaction is related to fulfilling passenger's expectations from their experience using the services of the Airline company. Hence, Alonso-Almeida et al. (2015) pointed out that the airline business should examine their passengers' satisfaction levels in order to catch their attention as well as reduce costs and increase profitability. Thus, satisfaction can be said as a primary objective for any business. If results are as expected, the individual is delighted. Otherwise, if the results are not as expected, they will be dissatisfied. Consequently, a business must constantly pay attention to the quality of the goods and services offered to the customer (Subashini & Gopalsamy, 2016) in order to satisfy individual needs and wants.

Service quality

Kotler (2013) asserts that quality should start with the needs of the consumer and end with how they perceive it. In other words, any business that intends to offer services must identify the current needs of the customer in order to guarantee the customer's experience consuming the service. Moreover, Lewis (2010) defines service quality as the extent to which a service

satisfies a customer's needs or expectations. Therefore, offering better services enhances the tourist experience and satisfaction, which draws in more customers and boosts sales for the business. However, it is difficult to evaluate the quality of services as compared to products since it is intangible.

A study conducted by Wang et al. (2020) investigated the effects of functional service quality, technical service quality, comfort, and cleanliness together with service planning and reliability on satisfaction and reuse intention towards urban rail transit in Tianjin, China. Similarly, a group of researchers found that service quality is crucial for the development of satisfaction (Muhamad Nasir, Mohamad, and Ab Ghani, 2021a; Muhamad Nasir, Mohamad, and Ab Ghani, 2021b). However, the current study investigates the effect of service quality offered by AirAsia Airlines on passenger satisfaction. Thus, based on the findings of the past studies, the first hypothesis of the study is established:

H1 There is a significant relationship between service quality and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia.

Motivation

One of the most significant psychological influences on consumer behavior is motivation, which is a person's inner condition or aspirations to achieve an intended goal. In 1918 Woodworth was the first person who introduced the concept of “motivation” (Morris et al., 2022). The motivation refers to an inner drive that makes individuals to take action. Meanwhile, if the need is not satisfied, it will create pressure and the pressure will motivate individuals to take action to alleviate it (Huang, 2023). When a person can create an impulse that develops into a want, which then results in unhappiness until the need is met, that person is motivated (Wu, 2015). In tourism, motivation refers to internal feelings, desires, and thoughts that an individual has, influencing the tourists to travel (Nasir and Wongchestha, 2022). Thus, the present study defined motivation as feelings, desires, and thoughts that an individual has, influencing an individual to travel using a certain Airline company. Tourists choose to travel using certain Airline companies because of their inherent motivation for intangible rewards such as enjoyment, security, and other emotional needs. According to Prachi (2015), other intrinsic motivators include tourists' attitudes toward their knowledge of a person, place, or item, as well as their favorable or negative feelings about it. Moreover, Bayih and Singh (2020) claimed that motivation is an important predictor of developing satisfaction. Similarly, Pestana, Parreira, and Moutinho (2020) refute that motivation is important to initiate satisfaction among individuals. Thus, the second hypothesis is developed as follows:

H2 There is a significant relationship between motivation and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia.

Involvement

Involvement would lead to an increased interest in the goods or services, and eventually, engagement with the company would extend beyond a simple purchase transaction. Involvement is important because it may serve as an active and trustworthy spokesperson for the brand, assist other individuals in identifying their wants for goods and services, determine how the business can meet those needs, and remove barriers between the firm and the tourists. Involvement refers to an individual's participation in local activities, and usage of tourism

products and services, which results in developing positive or negative perceptions of their overall trip experiences (Nasir & Wongchestha, 2022). To be specific, the present study claims that involvement refers to purchasing ticket as well as using the Airline's products and services which results in developing positive or negative perceptions of their travelling experience with the Airline. Moreover, Kim, Woo, and Uysal (2015) and Varshney (2020) claimed that involvement is an important factor in satisfaction. Therefore, the third hypothesis of the study is established:

H3 There is a significant relationship between involvement and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia

Research Framework

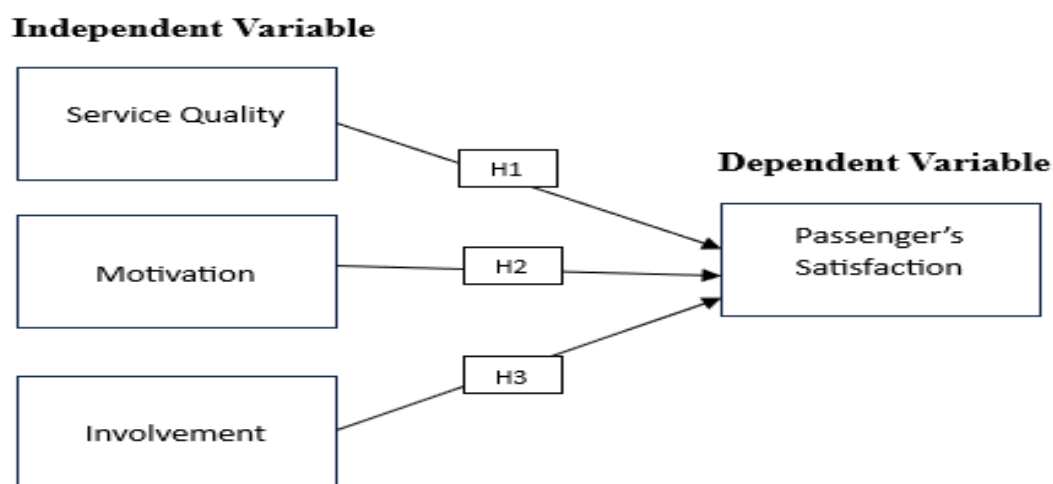


Figure 1. Research Framework

The Figure 1 above shows the research framework used for this study including the independent variables: service quality, motivation and involvement while dependent variable is passenger's satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative is used in this study and it is a measurable investigation of numerical information gathered in an overview to inquire about, utilising strategies, for example, surveys using questionnaires. The purpose of the study is causal research whereby it intends to investigate the effects of independent variables towards the dependent variable. Then, a cross-sectional study is used in this research. The benefits of cross-sectional design include the focus on identifying correlations between variables at a single point in time and the collecting of data only once. In this study, the unit of analysis is individual tourists who travel using Air Asia Airline to domestic destinations in Malaysia.

Data Collection, Sampling and Data Collection Instrument

Data collection is a technique for gathering information from various sources in order to produce complete and reliable data. Data for this inquiry were gathered using a questionnaire survey through Google Forms. This type of study is often less expensive and simpler to manage than other approaches because it is standardized. The sampling method is a strategy for choosing a small sample from a large population for the study. This study chooses a non-probability sampling, namely, purposive sampling to select the samples of the study. Purposive sampling is where only selected respondents with certain criteria or characteristics are qualified to become the samples of the study. Thus, in the Google form, there is a section called as the screening section to filter whether the respondents qualify to become the respondents of the study or otherwise. This section will identify whether the respondents are (1) at the age of 18 years and above (2) domestic passengers who travel within any state in Malaysia (3) passengers who are experiencing rendering and purchasing Air Asia's products and services (4) Travelled with AirAsia airline in the last 3 years ago.

The questionnaire is designed with six sections including screening questions sections. The first section starts with the screening section. The second section is related to service quality offered by airline adapted by (Surahman, Yasa, & Wahyuni, 2020) consisting nine items. The third section is about motivation of passengers consisting five items adapted from (Nasir, & Wongchestha, 2022). The fourth section is related to involvement consisting of five items adapted from (Wang, 2014). The fifth section is about passenger's satisfaction consisting of four items adapted from (Surahman, Yasa, & Wahyuni, 2020). The last section is about the demographic profile of the respondents. All items used to measure the variables are using 5-point Likert scale.

Data Analysis

This study used four different types of data analyses: reliability analysis, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, and Pearson Correlation analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Item
1. Service Quality	0.89	9
2. Motivation	0.89	5
3. Involvement	0.96	9
4. Passenger's Satisfaction	0.97	4

The Table 1 above is the reliability analysis of the items in measuring the intended variable. Generally, the Cronbach's Alpha for all items is more than 0.7, indicating an acceptable consistency in measuring the variables.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents

Respondents Profile	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	148	48.4
	Female	158	51.6
Race	Malay	260	85.0
	Indian	11	3.6
	Chinese	16	5.2
	Others	19	6.2
Marital Status	Single	267	87.3
	Married	39	12.7
Education Level	Diploma	50	16.3
	Bachelor Degree	186	60.8
	Master's Degree	68	22.2
	Doctor of Philosophy	2	0.7
Occupation	Government	28	9.2
	NGO	50	16.3
	Self-employed	26	8.5
	Private Sector	195	63.7
	Student	7	2.3

Based on the Table 2 above, most of the respondents are male (52%) and Malay (85%). Most of them are bachelor's degree holders (60.8%) and work in the private sector (63.7%).

Table 3. Item Mean and Standard Deviation

Items	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Service Quality			
Operating hours exactly according to the set time.	306	3.53	0.962
AirAsia staff help passengers who face any problems related to the Airline.	306	3.81	0.886
Spacious and convenient Airline facilities.	306	3.76	0.951
AirAsia staff provide information needed by passengers.	306	3.84	0.815
AirAsia staff prioritize passenger safety.	306	4.03	0.841
AirAsia staff give full attention to passengers.	306	3.91	0.831
AirAsia staff pay attention to passenger comfort.	306	3.90	0.828

AirAsia staff help passengers' needs.	306	3.92	0.847
AirAsia staff inform the exact service time.	306	3.69	0.943
Motivation			
Using AirAsia Airlines to travel is fun.	306	3.72	0.886
Using AirAsia Airlines to travel is very entertaining.	306	3.75	0.883
Using AirAsia Airlines to travel makes me happy.	306	3.77	0.862
AirAsia provides various promotions during his holidays.	306	3.86	0.902
Using AirAsia Airlines to travel is exciting.	306	3.84	0.849
Involvement			
Using AirAsia Airlines is important to me.	306	3.56	0.908
Using AirAsia Airlines is interesting for me.	306	3.64	0.888
Using AirAsia Airlines is relevant to me.	306	3.72	0.890
Using AirAsia Airlines is exciting to me.	306	3.74	0.881
Using AirAsia Airlines is meaningful for me.	306	3.65	0.852
Using AirAsia Airlines is an attractive notion to me.	306	3.71	0.862
Using AirAsia Airlines is valuable to me.	306	3.67	0.894
Using AirAsia Airline is demanding a certain amount of involvement from me.	306	3.66	0.907
Using AirAsia Airlines is necessary for me.	306	3.69	0.929
Passenger's Satisfaction			
The feeling of pleasure using this AirAsia Airline.	306	3.68	0.830
Using AirAsia Airlines exceeds my expectations.	306	3.62	0.868

Feeling satisfied with the services provided by AirAsia Airlines.	306	3.78	0.847
Overall, I feel satisfied with AirAsia Airlines.	306	3.79	0.839

Based on Table 3 above, in terms of service, the most crucial part required by the passengers is safety ($m=4.03$) and facilitating what passengers need ($m=3.92$). This means that the passengers want the condition of all airplanes are maintained at the highest quality to ensure their safety during the flight as well as AirAsia airline staff assisting them with what they need in terms of flight information, etc. The highest means for motivation is various promotions during his holidays. In other words, passengers are looking for the lowest fares or cheap flights every time they travel to save their money. Subsequently, the passengers believe that using AirAsia is exciting ($m=3.74$) because AirAsia's system is friendly especially to manage their flights. Most of them are feeling satisfied using AirAsia's products and services.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable	Analysis	Satisfaction
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	0.842
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	306
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	0.865
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	306
Involvement	Pearson Correlation	0.875
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	306

The result in Table 4 indicates that there are positive significant correlations between service quality, motivation and involvement toward passenger satisfaction since the values for all correlations are less than 0.05 ($p<0.05$). Moreover, all independent variables (service quality, motivation and involvement) have a strong correlation with passenger satisfaction with a magnitude of more than 0.80.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

In general, this study has extensively researched the determining factors, namely, service quality, involvement, and motivation influencing passenger satisfaction using AirAsia Airlines as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia. A total of 306 respondents who were at least 18 years old responded to complete the questionnaire. 306 data were analyzed using SPSS analysis including reliability analysis, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, and Pearson Correlation analysis.

Based on the findings of the study, it was found that there is a correlation between service quality and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia Airlines as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia. It is aligned with the finding by Wang et al. (2020), which is indicated that passengers' satisfaction and reuse intention of urban rail transportation strongly rely on the factor of service quality. This means that the passengers are looking for high-quality services offered by AirAsia Airlines such as operating hours according to the set time (including reducing flight delay), helpful and informative Air Asia staff to assist the passengers, safety of passengers and spacious and convenient Airline facilities which could result in high satisfaction among passengers. Hence, H1 is supported. Moreover, it was found that there is a correlation between motivation and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia Airlines as a preferred airline to travel to domestic destinations in Malaysia. This is consistent with the findings by Subrahmanyam (2017), whereby motivation is an important factor that influences satisfaction. This means that it is a must to initiate the internal feelings of passengers to travel with AirAsia Airlines by making the travel experience with the airline to be fun, entertaining, and exciting with various promotional kit by the airline. As a result, they will be more satisfied. Thus, H2 is supported. Subsequently, it was found that there is a significant correlation between involvement and passenger satisfaction using AirAsia as a preferred airline to travel to the domestic destinations in Malaysia. This finding is aligned with the research by Kim, Woo, and Uysal (2015), whereby engaging in tourism activities will improve their life satisfaction. This means that the passengers are expected to be involved from the initial stage of consuming the service by AirAsia Airline such as choosing the most suitable ticket in terms of price, time, promotions, etc. until they have landed to the intended destinations. This will make them to be more satisfied. Thus, H3 is supported.

Practically, it is important to make passengers satisfied and happy with the service provided by the airlines because satisfied passengers will reduce complaints about the services provided by the airline. Hence, resolving issues such as flight cancellation, rescheduling, and retime flights would make passengers feel pleased when they travel with AirAsia Airlines to the other domestic destinations in Malaysia. Moreover, great jobs and economic progress are among the objectives of this research. The unemployment rate has increased from day to day. To ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth, more work must be done to increase employment opportunities, particularly for young people, and even reduce informal employment and labor market inequality. Additional work must also be done to support a safe and secure work environment and to increase access to financial services (Sustainable Development Goals, 2022). Therefore, if Air Asia company is able to maintain the highest quality of services to the passengers, it would ensure their continuity in rendering AirAsia services. This could help the company to generate income and provide more job opportunities to the people. Hence, this study helps to achieve several SDG goals such as (1) no poverty, (2) zero hunger (3) good health and well-being and (8) decent work and economic growth.

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