

Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between airline service quality, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty within the context of the budget airline sector. With a growing competitive landscape and diverse passenger demographics, understanding these dynamics is crucial for airlines seeking to enhance customer retention and market positioning. The main objective is to examine how service quality influences passenger satisfaction and subsequently impacts loyalty. The research employed a quantitative approach, gathering data from 500 participants through a structured questionnaire distributed among budget airline passengers. A stratified sampling technique ensured representation across varying demographic profiles. Key findings reveal that while overall satisfaction with airline services is moderate significant strengths lie in flight attendant and ground staff services, highlighting the pivotal role of interpersonal interactions in shaping passenger perceptions. However, areas such as online services and flight schedules show room for improvement, pointing to opportunities for enhancing operational efficiencies and customer experience management. Implications for the airline industry underscore the importance of prioritizing service quality enhancements and personalized customer interactions to foster loyalty. This study contributes new insights into how airlines can strategically align service delivery with passenger expectations to build enduring relationships and competitive advantage. A significant recommendation is to integrate advanced technology for seamless service delivery and real-time passenger engagement, thereby enhancing overall customer experience and loyalty.

Keywords: airline service quality, passenger satisfaction, loyalty, budget airlines, customer experience

Airline services, passenger satisfaction and loyalty among passengers of China Southern Airline

1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization and rapid expansion within the aviation sector, the delivery of exceptional airline services has emerged as a critical factor in guaranteeing passenger satisfaction and cultivating lasting loyalty. This trend holds true on an international scale, where the demand for seamless air travel experiences is steadily increasing (Robinson, 2020). Within China, a nation renowned for its economic prowess and burgeoning aviation market, the emphasis on high-quality airline services has never been more pronounced (Kennedy, 2020; Wong, 2023). Moreover, in regions such as Guangdong Province, which serves as a bustling epicenter of economic activity and international connectivity, the significance of superior airline services, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty have become paramount in driving the sustainability and growth of the aviation industry, both globally and locally.

Airline services encompass the range of amenities provided by airlines to passengers, aiming to meet their needs and expectations throughout the travel experience. Theoretical conceptualizations emphasize the tangible and intangible elements shaping the service encounter and its impact on passenger perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty. Passenger satisfaction refers to the alignment between passengers' expectations and their actual experiences of airline services, rooted in the discrepancy theory. It's influenced by various factors such as service quality and perceived value, significantly shaping passengers' attitudes and behaviors towards the airline. Passenger loyalty, on the other hand, reflects passengers' propensity to consistently choose a particular airline, influenced by trust, perceived value, and switching costs, ultimately contributing to the airline's competitiveness and market share.

The theoretical foundation of this research is anchored in the concepts of airline services, passenger satisfaction and loyalty. Drawing from established literature, passenger satisfaction is defined as the degree to which a passenger's expectations are met or exceeded by the services provided by an airline (Oliver, 1980). Loyalty, on the other hand, refers to a passenger's intention to repeatedly choose a particular airline over its competitors (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978). This study on Airline Services, Passenger Satisfaction and Passenger Loyalty were also based from the previous study of Hife and Ylagan (2022).

The relationship between airline services, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty has been extensively studied in the literature. Research has consistently shown that high-quality airline services lead to greater passenger satisfaction, which in turn enhances passenger loyalty (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Ryu and Han, 2010). Factors such as in-flight comfort, on-time performance, customer service, and loyalty programs have been identified as key determinants of passenger satisfaction and loyalty (Kataria, & Saini, 2020). Previous research has established a clear relationship between service quality, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty in the airline industry. Studies have consistently shown that higher service quality leads to increased passenger satisfaction, which, in turn, fosters greater loyalty and repeat business (Farooq et al. 2018; Sakti, et al. 2021; Sitorus & Yustisia, 2018). However, the specific dynamics of this relationship may vary depending on factors such as airline reputation, market competition, and regional preferences.

Online airline services, though not explicitly addressed in the referenced literature, are inferred to be part of the broader spectrum of service quality attributes impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty (Farooq, et al., 2018; Lestari & Murjito, 2020). In the context of this study, airline services were measured as to the tangible cabin features, flight schedules, ground staff services, flight attendant services, and online airline services aligning to the previous study of Park et al (2020). On the other hand, Customer satisfaction is influenced by

passenger expectation, perceived price and passenger experience, aligning to the previous study of Setiawan, (2021). Passengers evaluate their air travel experience based on the value they perceive in relation to the price they pay for their ticket. If passengers feel that the benefits they receive (e.g., comfort, service quality, convenience). outweigh the price they pay, they are likely to be satisfied (Hapsari et al., 2017).

Conversely, if passengers perceive the price as too high relative to the benefits received, satisfaction may decrease. Perceived value is closely related to both perceived price and passenger experience, as it reflects the overall assessment of the trade-off between cost and benefits (Gao et al., 2021; Ardini et al., 2022). Lastly, The notion of passenger loyalty within the airline industry is multifaceted, encompassing aspects like brand image, passenger engagement, and passessnger intention (Nugroho & Suprapti, 2022). Similarly, both brand image and service quality have been found to directly and indirectly influence loyalty through their impact on customer satisfaction (Hapsari et al., 2017). Passengers form expectations based on the airline 's brand image, engagement interactions, and their intention (Loo, 2020; Putra & Aruan, 2020). When the airline meets or surpasses these expectations, it confirms passengers' positive perceptions and fosters loyalty. Airlines that effectively manage their brand image, engage passengers proactively, and monitoring the passengers' intention are more likely to generate positive disconfirmation, leading to increased loyalty.

With this, the intention of this research is to provide insights for strategic decision-making within the airline industry and contribute to discussions on service quality and customer loyalty in aviation. Given Guangdong's status as an economic powerhouse and a center for international trade and tourism, understanding passenger preferences and behaviors is crucial, especially with the increasing demand for air travel. Moreover, in light of Guangdong's significant role as an economic hub and a hub for international trade and tourism, understanding passenger preferences and behaviors holds immense importance. As air travel demand continues to rise, especially within rapidly developing regions like Guangdong, there is a pressing need to decipher the intricacies of passenger preferences, expectations, and decision-making processes. Through this research, we seek to shed light on these critical aspects, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on service quality and customer loyalty in the aviation sector.

The rationale behind this study stems from the recognition of the critical role that airline services play in shaping the travel experience and influencing passengers' perceptions of airlines. For stakeholders such as China Southern Airlines, understanding the factors that drive passenger satisfaction and loyalty is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the market and fostering long-term relationships with customers. Moreover, the findings of this study can benefit passengers by informing their choices and expectations when selecting an airline for their travel needs. The scope of this study is focused on analyzing the relationship between airline services, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty, specifically within the context of China Southern Airlines operating in Guangdong Province. While efforts will be made to generalize findings, the specific dynamics of other airlines and regions may not be fully captured. Additionally, this study is limited with the use of quantitative method employing a survey questionnaire. limitations may arise from constraints in data availability, sample size, and external factors such as the post COVID-19 pandemic situation, which may impact the generalizability of the findings.

Objectives of the study - To investigate the relationship between loyalty airline services, passengers satisfaction and loyalty to China Southern Airline services In particular, it evaluated airline services in terms of tangible cabin features, flight schedules, ground staff services, flight attendant services, and online airline services; assessed passenger satisfaction in terms of passenger expectation, perceived price and passenger experience; and assessed passenger loyalty in terms of brand image, passenger engagement, and passenger intention. Furthermore, this tested the significant relationship in assessing airline service to passenger satisfaction and loyalty. Lastly propose a framework on Airline Cabin Service that features enhanced passenger satisfaction and loyalty.

2. Method

Research Design - The research design employed in this study is quantitative in nature, utilizing a survey questionnaire to gather data. Quantitative research aims to quantify phenomena and generate numerical data that can be analyzed statistically. In this case, the survey questionnaire serves as a structured tool to collect responses from participants regarding various aspects of their experiences with China Southern Airlines. Overall, the quantitative research design adopted in this study allows for the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to examine the relationship between various factors affecting passenger satisfaction and loyalty towards China Southern Airlines in Guangdong Province. Through comparative analysis and random sampling techniques, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform strategic decision-making within the airline industry and contribute to the enhancement of service quality and customer loyalty.

Participants of the Study - The respondents of this study are 385 air passengers, the distribution of the respondent are seen in the table below. Rao soft sample size calculator was used in to find out the appropriate sample where the researcher randomly selected based on the tourist arrivals in 2019 the calculated sample size was 385 tourists with the confidence level of 95%. Stratified random purposive sampling is utilized to select participants for the survey, ensuring the representativeness of the sample and enhancing the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of China Southern Airlines passengers in Guangdong Province. Having this randomly selecting participants, the researcher can minimize bias and ensure that the data collected is reflective of the diverse range of passengers who utilize the airline's services.

Data Collection Instrument - The instrument used in the study is adopted from various previous study of Hife, and Ylagan, (2022)., which is subdivided into four parts. Part 1 contains the statements on airline services' degree in terms of tangible cabin features, flight schedules, ground staff services, flight attendant services, and online airline services. This is adapted from the study of Hife, and Ylagan, (2022). Part 2 contains the statements on assessing the passenger satisfaction in terms of passenger expectation, perceived price and passenger experience. This is adapted from the study of Hife, and Ylagan, (2022). Part 3 contains the statements on assessing the passenger loyalty in terms of brand image, passenger engagement, and passenger intention. This is adapted from the study of Hife, and Ylagan, (2022). The instrument has undergone into a face and content validation. Face validation of the instrument was checked by the adviser to check if the questionnaire is aligned with the objectives and it was also submitted to the grammarian to check the correctness of the construct of the wordings. Furthermore, content validation was submitted to three experts from three different airlines in China. . The instrument has also undergone into a pilot testing. The instrument's reliability was checked using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient Test The result of reliability statistics showed that the computed Cronbach's alpha value of 0.988 signifies that the instrument for airline services has strong or excellent internal consistency as well as the questionnaire for passenger satisfaction with the obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.984 and for passenger loyalty, Cronbach's alpha value of 0.984 which signifies excellent in the rule of thumb. Thus, this set of questionnaires is considered valid for use.

Data Gathering Procedure - The researcher used adopted survey questionnaire and sent it via online google form and social media like facebook messenger was used to disseminate the instrument to the participants of the research. Some of the respondents sent the survey screenshot to the researcher as a proof of participation. The data gathering took a month. After the researcher had reached the 385 participants, the instrument was immediately passed to the statistician for the validation and interpretation of the result. With the increasing prevalence of digital communication platforms, the survey research is conducted online to facilitate data collection. Utilizing email invitations and social media platforms, the survey questionnaire is distributed to potential participants, allowing for efficient data collection from a geographically dispersed population of China Southern Airlines passengers. This approach also enables the researcher to reach a larger sample size and gather data from a diverse range of respondents, contributing to the robustness of the study findings.

Data Analysis - Several statistical tools were utilized to meet the objectives of this study. Mean and rank

was then utilized to determine the airline service, passenger satisfaction and loyalty of the respondents. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to establish possible relationships among the variables of this study and lastly a regression analysis was performed to determine predictors for the dependent variable passenger loyalty.

Ethical Consideration - The inclusion of a data privacy act agreement in the survey process demonstrates the researcher's commitment to ensuring the confidentiality and protection of participants' personal information. By providing participants with clear guidelines and explanations regarding the purpose of the survey and how their data will be used, the researcher promotes transparency and fosters trust among respondents. This approach also aligns with ethical standards of research conduct, as it empowers participants to make informed decisions about their participation and provides assurances that their privacy rights will be respected. Furthermore, by explicitly stating that participants' opinions and statements will be treated as strongly confidential, the researcher's decision to keep the study private throughout its duration and to use their real name in the research consent letter adds another layer of transparency and accountability to the research process. Moreover, the researcher's assurance that the identity of participants will not be revealed, except for residents of the barangay where the attraction is located, demonstrates a commitment to protecting participants' privacy rights while also ensuring that the study remains relevant and beneficial to the local community.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1Summary Table for Assessment of Airline Services

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Tangible Cabin Features	3.24	Moderately Agree	3
Flight Schedules	3.19	Moderately Agree	4
Ground Staff Services	3.25	Moderately Agree	2
Flight Attendant Service	3.28	Moderately Agree	1
Online Airline Service	3.14	Moderately Agree	5
Overall	3.22	Moderately Agree	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.50 – 2.49 Agree, 2.50 – 3.49 Moderately Agree, 3.50 – 4.49 Agree, 4.50 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents a summary of the assessment of airline services. The composite mean of 3.22 suggests that respondents moderately agree with the overall quality of the airline services.

Among the indicators of airline services, the highest-ranked are flight attendant service with a mean score of 3.28, followed by ground staff service with a mean score of 3.25, and tangible cabin features with a mean score of 3.24, which respondents moderately agreed with. The highest-ranked flight attendant service indicates that respondents are most satisfied with the service provided by flight attendants, reflecting positively on the airline's in-flight service quality. Respondents also appreciate the assistance and service provided by ground staff at airports. Lastly, moderate satisfaction with tangible cabin features, such as seating, cleanliness, and amenities, suggests that personal interactions with airline staff are a significant positive factor in passenger satisfaction. Maintaining high standards in flight attendant and ground staff services is crucial, and continuous training and development in customer service skills can help sustain and improve these positive aspects.

Previous research has consistently highlighted the vital role that flight attendant service and ground staff service play in shaping the overall airline service experience for passengers(Yu & Hyun, 2019).(Türeli et al., 2019). Flight attendants are the face of the airline, and their ability to provide attentive, courteous, and professional service can significantly impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, the ground staff's effectiveness in assisting passengers at airports, from check-in to baggage handling, can greatly contribute to the smoothness and positive perception of the airline's operations (Matikiti et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the lowest-ranked indicators are online airline service with a mean score of 3.14, followed by flight schedule with a mean score of 3.19, which respondents moderately agreed with. The lower scores for online airline service and flight schedules indicate areas where improvements are needed. Enhancing the online booking

experience and ensuring reliable and timely flight schedules can contribute to higher overall satisfaction. Investing in the development of a more user-friendly and efficient online platform is essential, including improving the booking process, providing comprehensive information, and ensuring the website is accessible and fast. Regularly updating and maintaining the online services can help meet passenger expectations and enhance their overall experience.

Previous research has consistently highlighted the vital role that online airline service and flight schedule play in shaping the overall airline service experience for passengers (Bhuvaneswaran et al., 2018). Enhancing the online booking experience, providing comprehensive information, and ensuring a user-friendly and efficient online platform is crucial for improving passenger satisfaction and maintaining a competitive advantage. Reliable and timely flight schedules also contribute significantly to the overall perception of airline services (Waramontri, 2023). Investing in the development and continuous improvement of online services and optimizing flight schedules can help airlines deliver a superior service experience and foster customer loyalty (Gao & Lu, 2021).

Table 2

Summary Table for Assessment of Passenger Satisfaction

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Passenger Expectation	3.26	Fairly Satisfied	3
Perceived Price	3.31	Fairly Satisfied	1.5
Passenger Experience	3.31	Fairly Satisfied	1.5
Overall	3.28	Fairly Satisfied	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 Not Satisfied , 1.50 – 2.49 Satisfied , 2.50 – 3.49 Fairly Satisfied , 3.50 – 4.00 Very Satisfied

Table 2 presents the summary on the assessment of passenger satisfaction. It can be seen that based on the overall composite mean of 3.28, the respondents are fairly satisfied.

Among the indicators of passenger satisfaction, perceived price and passenger experience rank the highest, both with a mean score of 3.31, indicating that respondents are fairly satisfied. The overall fair satisfaction suggests that respondents are generally content with their airline experience. The high satisfaction with perceived price indicates that passengers believe they are receiving good value for the cost of their tickets, which is crucial for maintaining competitive advantage in the airline industry. As perceived price ranks highest, this indicates that respondents feel they are getting good value for their money. This suggests that the airline's pricing strategies align well with passenger expectations and perceived valu Moreover, passenger experience ranks equally high, reflecting that respondents are fairly satisfied with the overall quality of their travel experience. This includes various aspects such as comfort, service quality, and overall satisfaction during their flights. The high score for passenger experience underscores the importance of delivering a positive and enjoyable travel experience. This includes factors like the comfort of the cabin, the friendliness and professionalism of the staff, and the overall quality of the flight. As supported by previous research Agarwal and Gowda (2021)., the airline should focus on maintaining exceptional service quality and value offerings to sustain high levels of passenger satisfaction and loyalty. Ensuring consistently superior in-flight experiences, such as comfortable cabin environments, attentive and responsive staff, and high-quality amenities, can help the airline meet or exceed passenger expectations (Utomo & Salim, 2021). Furthermore, aligning pricing strategies with passenger perceptions of value can reinforce the airline's positioning as a provider of excellent service at a fair cost (Messner, 2020).

Meanwhile, among the indicators of passenger satisfaction, the lowest-ranked is passenger expectation, with a mean score of 3.26, which is interpreted as fairly satisfied. Passenger expectation is the lowest-ranked indicator among the metrics assessed, though it still falls within the fairly satisfied range. This suggests that while passengers generally feel their expectations are being met, there may be some areas where the airline could improve to better align its service delivery with passenger anticipations. The slightly lower score for passenger expectation compared to other factors indicates that there may be a gap between what passengers expect and the

actual experience they receive. To enhance overall satisfaction and build stronger customer loyalty, the airline should strive to more effectively address passenger expectations. This may involve gaining deeper insights into the evolving needs and preferences of its customer base, and then tailoring its service offerings accordingly.

Aligning to the previous study related to expection of the airline passenger, the airline should strive to more effectively address passenger expectations(Mutalib et al., 2020). This may involve gaining deeper insights into the evolving needs and preferences of its customer base, and then tailoring its service offerings accordingly to better meet their expectations(Wojuade & Onatade, 2020). The passenger experience more closely with passenger expectations, the airline can optimize satisfaction levels and differentiate itself in the competitive domestic travel market (Bellizzi et al., 2020).

Table 3

Summary Table for Assessment for Passenger Loyalty

	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Brand Image	3.21	Moderately Agree	3
Passenger Engagement	3.28	Moderately Agree	1
Passenger Intention	3.25	Moderately Agree	2
Overall	3.22	Moderately Agree	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree, 1.50 – 2.49 Agree, 2.50 – 3.49 Moderately Agree, 3.50 – 4.49 Agree, 4.50 – 5.00 Strongly Agree

Table 15 presents the summary of the assessment of passenger loyalty. The moderate overall agreement based on the overall composite mean of 3.22 indicates that while respondents generally exhibit loyalty behaviors, there are opportunities for the airline to strengthen certain aspects of its brand perception and engagement strategies.

Among the indicators of passenger loyalty, the highest on the ranking is passenger engagement with the mean score of 3.28, followed by passenger intention with a mean score of 3.25 which is moderately agreed by the respondents. Respondents demonstrate a strong sense of engagement with the airline, indicating an emotional attachment and a high level of involvement with the carrier's loyalty programs and positive service interactions. Respondents express enthusiastic intentions to recommend the airline to family and friends, a clear willingness to fly with the airline again in the future, and even a readiness to pay a premium price for the airline's offerings compared to competitors. These findings suggest the airline has been successful in fostering a deep connection with its passenger base, one that goes beyond mere transactional considerations and taps into more emotional and psychological drivers of loyalty. By continuing to provide personalized services, enhancing its loyalty program benefits, and nurturing meaningful interactions with passengers, the airline can further deepen these emotional connections and cultivate a more robust and long-lasting loyalty among its customer base.

As supported by previous study of Chonsalasin et al (2020)., passenger engagement and intention are key drivers that significantly influence airline passenger loyalty. Strengthening these aspects can help the airline foster a more committed and devoted customer base that is willing to actively advocate for the brand, return for future business, and even accept a premium pricing model (Cui, 2019). Furthermore, the airline should also focus on improving key factors like core-product and service-encounter quality, brand image, trust, and customer love, as they have been shown to impact airline repurchase and overall loyalty, particularly when considering differences between full-service and low-cost carriers (Han et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, among the indicators of passenger loyalty, the least on the ranking is the brand image with the mean score of 3.21 which is moderately agreed by the respondents. The moderate agreement on brand image suggests there is room for the airline to further strengthen its brand perception among passengers. Enhancing the airline's brand reputation, visibility, and positive associations within the market could be impactful strategies. Specific steps the airline could consider include increasing brand visibility through targeted marketing campaigns and advertising, ensuring consistently positive customer experiences that reinforce the brand's values and reputation,

and effectively communicating the airline's unique strengths, services, and commitment to passenger satisfaction. By proactively addressing any gaps in brand image perception, the airline can cultivate stronger emotional connections and loyalty among its passenger base. Elevating the brand image can help the airline stand out in a competitive market and solidify its position as the preferred choice for air travel.

According to a previous study Anwar and Andrean (2021)., passengers' perceptions of an airline's quality, brand image, and price significantly and positively influenced their purchase decisions. Airline's perceived quality and brand image were found to have a positive and significant impact on passengers' purchase decisions (Chonsalasin et al., 2020). Therefore, the airline should focus on enhancing its brand image and service quality to drive greater passenger loyalty and advocacy (Han et al., 2021).

Table 4

Relationship of the Airline Service to Passenger Loyalty

	r _{xy}	p-value	Interpretation
Tangible Cabin Features			
Brand Image	.912**	.000	Significant
Passenger Engagement	.920**	.000	Significant
Passenger Intention	.925**	.000	Significant
Flight Schedules			
Brand Image	.917**	.000	Significant
Passenger Engagement	.950**	.000	Significant
Passenger Intention	.950**	.000	Significant
Ground Staff Service			
Brand Image	.940**	.000	Significant
Passenger Engagement	.980**	.000	Significant
Passenger Intention	.982**	.000	Significant
Flight Attendant Service			
Brand Image	.913**	.000	Significant
Passenger Engagement	.973**	.000	Significant
Passenger Intention	.964**	.000	Significant
Online Airline Service			
Brand Image	.945**	.000	Significant
Passenger Engagement	.951**	.000	Significant
Passenger Intention	.964**	.000	Significant

Legend: Correlation is significant at 0.05 alpha level

The regression analysis in Table 4 underscores that all examined aspects of airline service—tangible cabin features, flight schedules, ground staff service, flight attendant service, and online airline service—are significantly related to passenger loyalty across brand image, passenger engagement, and passenger intention. The correlation coefficients range from .912 to .982, all with p-values of .000, signifying very strong to exceptionally strong relationships. These findings suggest that improvements in these specific areas can lead to enhanced

passenger loyalty, emphasizing the importance of high-quality service in fostering a loyal customer base. Each factor shows a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 alpha level, indicating strong associations with passenger loyalty. Thus, the correlation between responses on airline service and passenger loyalty shows that all dimensions of both variables have high correlation to each other. This indicates that the higher the agreement of the respondents on airline service provided to them, the higher is their level of loyalty.

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the airline's tangible cabin features and various aspects of passenger loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .912 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the better the tangible cabin features provided by the airline, the stronger the association with passengers' brand image and their loyalty to the airline. Similarly, the correlation coefficient of .920 with a p-value of .000 suggests that the tangible cabin features are very strongly linked to passenger engagement, as passengers are more likely to feel invested in and connected to an airline that offers a high-quality in-cabin experience. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .925 with a p-value of .000 demonstrates a very strong connection between the airline's tangible cabin features and passengers' intention to remain loyal, highlighting the importance of maintaining a comfortable, well-equipped, and visually appealing cabin environment in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty (Chonsalasin et al., 2020).

The correlation coefficient of .917 with a p-value of .000 indicates that there is a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the airline's flight schedules and passengers' brand image perceptions. This suggests that when an airline offers reliable, convenient, and well-timed flight schedules, it can positively shape passengers' overall impression and perception of the airline's brand. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .950 with a p-value of .000 reveals an exceptionally strong and significant association between the airline's flight schedules and passengers' level of engagement. This implies that passengers are more likely to feel invested in and connected to an airline that provides high-quality, dependable flight scheduling, as it allows them to better plan and rely on their travel experiences. Similarly, the correlation coefficient of .950 with a p-value of .000 reflects an exceptionally strong and significant link between the airline's flight schedules and passengers' intention to remain loyal.

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the airline's ground staff service and various aspects of passenger loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .940 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the better the ground staff service provided by the airline, the stronger the association with passengers' brand image and their overall perception of the airline's brand. Similarly, the correlation coefficient of .980 with a p-value of .000 suggests an exceptionally strong and significant link between the airline's ground staff service and passenger engagement, as passengers are more likely to feel invested in and connected to an airline that offers high-quality service interactions with its ground staff. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .982 with a p-value of .000 demonstrates an exceptionally strong and significant connection between the airline's ground staff service and passengers' intention to remain loyal, highlighting the critical importance of maintaining excellent ground staff service in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty (Nghiêm-Phú, 2019).

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the airline's flight attendant service and various aspects of passenger loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .913 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the better the flight attendant service provided by the airline, the stronger the association with passengers' brand image and their overall perception of the airline's brand. This suggests that passengers' impressions of the airline's brand are strongly influenced by their interactions and experiences with the flight attendants, who serve as crucial representatives of the airline. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .973 with a p-value of .000 suggests an exceptionally strong and significant link between the airline's flight attendant service and passenger engagement. This implies that passengers are more likely to feel invested in and connected to an airline that offers high-quality, attentive, and personalized service from its flight attendants, as these interactions can foster a sense of loyalty and commitment from air travelers. Additionally, the correlation coefficient of .964 with a p-value of .000 reflects a very strong and significant connection between the airline's flight attendant service and passengers' intention to remain loyal. This highlights the critical role that flight

attendant service plays in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty, as positive experiences with cabin crew can contribute to a traveler's willingness to continue choosing the airline for future trips (Han et al., 2021).

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between the quality of the airline's online service and various aspects of passenger loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .945 with a p-value of .000 indicates that the better the online service provided by the airline, the stronger the association with passengers' brand image and their overall perception of the airline's brand. This suggests that passengers' impressions of the airline's brand are strongly influenced by their experiences interacting with the airline's online platforms, which serve as crucial touchpoints for information, booking, and other service interactions.Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .951 with a p-value of .000 suggests an exceptionally strong and significant link between the airline's online service and passenger engagement. This implies that passengers are more likely to feel invested in and connected to an airline that offers a high-quality, user-friendly, and reliable online experience, as these interactions can foster a sense of trust and commitment from air travelers. Additionally, the correlation coefficient of .964 with a p-value of .000 reflects a very strong and significant connection between the airline's online service and passengers' intention to remain loyal. This highlights the critical role that the airline's online service plays in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty, as positive digital experiences can contribute to a traveler's willingness to continue choosing the airline for future trips (Han et al., 2020).

Table 5 illustrates the relationship between passenger satisfaction and passenger loyalty, highlighting the strength and significance of various factors influencing loyalty. The correlation coefficients (rxy). and p-values provided indicate the degree of association between different aspects of passenger satisfaction and loyalty, with all relationships being statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level.

Table 5

	r_{xy}	p-value	Interpretation	
Passenger Expectation				
Brand Image	.919**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Engagement	.960**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Intention	.959**	.000	Significant	
Perceived Price				
Brand Image	.921**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Engagement	.957**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Intention	.951**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Experience			-	
Brand Image	.926**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Engagement	.962**	.000	Significant	
Passenger Intention	.956**	.000	Significant	

Legend: Correlation is significant at 0.05 alpha level

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between passengers' expectations of the airline's brand image and their loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .919, with a p-value of .000, indicates that the higher passengers' expectations are regarding the airline's brand image, the stronger the association with their overall loyalty to the airline. This suggests that meeting or exceeding passengers' brand expectations is a crucial factor in cultivating long-term loyalty. The correlation analysis also demonstrates an exceptionally strong and significant link between passenger engagement and loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .960, with a p-value of .000, implies that the more engaged and invested passengers feel in the airline, the more loyal they are likely to be. This highlights the importance of fostering a sense of connection and commitment from passengers through positive service experiences and interactions. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient of .959, with a p-value of .000, reflects a very strong and significant relationship between passenger intention to remain loyal and their actual loyalty behavior. This indicates that passengers' expressed willingness to continue choosing the airline for future travel is closely aligned with their actual loyalty, underscoring the reliability of this metric in predicting long-term customer retention(Mikulić et al., 2017; Han et al., 2021).

The correlation analysis reveals that there is a very strong and statistically significant relationship between

passengers' perceptions of the airline's pricing in relation to its brand image and their overall loyalty to the airline. The correlation coefficient of .921, with a p-value of .000, indicates that the more favorable passengers' views are regarding the airline's pricing relative to its brand positioning, the stronger their loyalty and commitment to the airline. This suggests that fair and reasonable pricing, aligned with the airline's brand image and value proposition, is a critical factor in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty. Furthermore, the correlation analysis demonstrates an exceptionally strong and significant link between passengers' perceptions of the airline's pricing and their level of engagement with the brand. The correlation coefficient of .957, with a p-value of .000, implies that when passengers perceive the airline's pricing as aligned with its brand image and value, they are more likely to feel invested in and connected to the airline, which can foster a stronger sense of loyalty and commitment. Additionally, the correlation coefficient of .951, with a p-value of .000, reflects a very strong and significant connection between passengers' perceptions of the airline's pricing and significant connection between passengers' perceptions of the airline's pricing and significant connection between passengers' perceptions of the airline's pricing and their intention to remain loyal. This highlights the critical role that pricing plays in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty, as passengers' willingness to continue choosing the airline for future travel is closely tied to their views on the fairness and value of the airline's pricing structure(Sarpong, 2021).

The correlation analysis reveals a very strong and statistically significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of the airline's brand image and their overall loyalty. The correlation coefficient of .926, with a p-value of .000, indicates that the more favorable passengers' views are regarding the airline's brand positioning, the stronger their loyalty and commitment to the brand. This suggests that meeting or exceeding passengers' brand expectations is a crucial factor in cultivating long-term passenger loyalty. The correlation analysis also demonstrates an exceptionally strong and significant link between passenger engagement and their loyalty to the airline. The correlation coefficient of .962, with a p-value of .000, implies that the more engaged and invested passengers feel in the airline, the more loyal they are likely to be. This highlights the importance of fostering a deep sense of connection and commitment from passengers through positive service experiences and interactions, which can contribute to their willingness to continue choosing the airline for future travel. Furthermore, the correlation analysis reflects a very strong and significant relationship between passenger intention to remain loyal and their actual loyalty behavior. The correlation coefficient of .956, with a p-value of .000, indicates that passengers' expressed willingness to continue choosing the airline is closely aligned with their demonstrated loyalty over time. This underscores the reliability of passenger intention as a metric in predicting long-term customer retention and loyalty (Han et al., 2021).

All examined factors—passenger expectation, perceived price, and passenger experience—show a significant relationship with passenger loyalty across brand image, passenger engagement, and passenger intention. The correlation coefficients are exceptionally high, ranging from .919 to .962, all with p-values of .000, emphasizing that improvements in these areas can substantially enhance passenger loyalty. The significant relationships suggest that focusing on enhancing brand image, engaging passengers effectively, and understanding passenger intentions, especially concerning price and overall experience, can lead to increased loyalty among passengers.

Table 6

Regression Analysis of Airline Services and Passenger Satisfaction as Predictors of Passenger Loyalty

Predictor Variable	Dependent Variable	R-square	Std.error	Beta	p-value	Interpretation
Flight Schedule	Passenger Loyalty	.967	.035	.146	.000	Predictor
Ground Staff	Passenger Loyalty	.967	.055	.433	.000	Predictor
Flight Attendant Service	Passenger Loyalty	.967	.036	.170	.000	Predictor
Online Service	Passenger Loyalty	.967	.037	.250	.000	Predictor

Legend: Model Fit, F:2776.356,p-value: .000

Table 6 displays the results of the regression analysis conducted on the variable of passenger loyalty. The findings suggest that the level of passenger satisfaction does not have a substantial impact on loyalty. However, precise parameters of consensus on airline services strongly forecast passenger allegiance. The parameters

encompassed in this context are the flight schedule, ground staff services, flight attendant service, and internet service. The computed p-value of the model is .000, indicating that it is statistically significant and very appropriate for this analysis. In addition, the model's calculated r-square is .967, indicating that 96.7% of the variation in passenger loyalty can be explained by changes in the stated dimensions. The high r-square value indicates a robust correlation between these elements of airline service and passenger loyalty.

Specifically, this analysis demonstrates that general satisfaction does not have a direct impact on loyalty. However, the timeliness and convenience of flight schedules, the efficiency and helpfulness of ground staff, the quality of service provided by flight attendants, and the effectiveness of online services are crucial determinants. Enhancements in these domains are expected to greatly increase passenger loyalty. The significance of these findings is vital for airlines seeking to enhance loyalty among passengers. Airlines can effectively cultivate stronger passenger loyalty by prioritizing the optimization of flight schedules, boosting the training and performance of ground crew and flight attendants, and strengthening online service platforms. By adopting this focused strategy, airlines may effectively distribute their resources and efforts to the most influential areas, resulting in the highest possible level of customer retention and satisfaction.

Passenger loyalty is a crucial aspect of the airline industry, as it directly impacts the profitability and competitiveness of airlines (Cui, 2019). The regression analysis presented in Table 6x suggests that while passenger satisfaction is not a significant predictor of loyalty, certain dimensions of airline service can significantly predict a respondent's loyalty. Further analysis is needed to understand the specific relationships between these service dimensions and passenger loyalty. Supporting literature suggests that airline service quality, including factors such as flight schedule, staff performance, and online services, is a key driver of passenger loyalty (Nghiêm-Phú, 2019; Shen & Yahya, 2021).

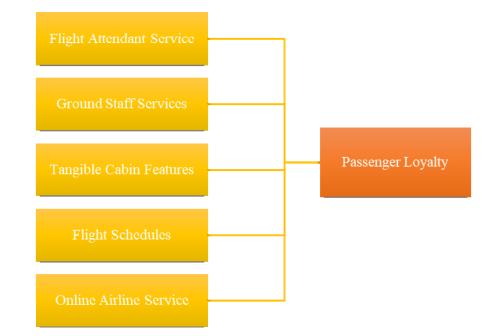


Figure 1. Xue Yang's Proposed framework Airline Service and Passenger Loyalty

As an output of the study, framework highlights the integration of airline service, and loyalty that highlights and interrelationship based from the results of the regression analysis conducted on the variable of passenger loyalty having the airline service as the preditctor. As shown in the figure, reflects the interrelationship among airline service, satisfaction and loyalty, which in the result it was revealed that the higher the respondents' agreement with the airline's service, the higher their level of satisfaction. Similarly, the higher their agreement with the airline's service, the higher their level of loyalty. Furthermore, the higher their level of satisfaction, the higher their level of loyalty. This implies that improving service quality and customer satisfaction are key to building passenger loyalty. Consistently delivering exceptional service that meets passenger expectations, airlines can enhance satisfaction levels, cultivate loyalty, and achieve sustainable growth in a competitive market.

Airline Service Quality and Satisfaction: It is vital for Airlines to enhance service quality across all dimensions to meet and exceed passenger expectations, thereby increasing satisfaction levels. This involves prioritizing service quality improvements across all touchpoints, including cabin services, ground operations, and digital interactions. Establishing clear service standards and operational procedures will ensure consistency and reliability in service delivery. Additionally, providing ongoing training for cabin crew and ground staff can enhance their skills in customer service, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Finally, implementing efficient processes to minimize delays, ensure safety, and improve overall service efficiency should be a key focus.

Satisfaction and Loyalty: To foster higher levels of satisfaction, airlines should provide personalized experiences and reliable services, which can lead to enhanced passenger loyalty and advocacy. Satisfied passengers are more likely to become loyal customers. Strategies to foster satisfaction include offering personalized experiences based on passenger profiles and preferences, such as frequent flyer status, travel history, and special occasions. Consistently delivering on promises regarding flight schedules, customer service responsiveness, and in-flight amenities can also contribute to satisfaction. Additionally, creating positive emotional experiences through attentive service, proactive communication, and empathy towards passenger needs can be effective. Implementing loyalty programs that recognize and reward frequent flyers with exclusive benefits, upgrades, and personalized offers can further enhance satisfaction and loyalty.

Airline Service Quality and Loyalty. When airlines consistently provide high-quality service, passengers are more likely to be satisfied with their travel experiences. This satisfaction extends beyond the flight itself to interactions with airline personnel, booking processes, and post-flight services. Thus, satisfied passengers are more inclined to choose the same airline for future travel needs. Loyalty is built over time as passengers accumulate positive experiences and interactions with the airline. When passengers are satisfied with their experiences, they are more likely to choose the airline for future travel needs due to positive past experiences and reliable service. They may also share their positive experiences with friends, family, and colleagues, enhancing the airline's reputation through word-of-mouth. Passengers may also actively promote the airline through social media, reviews, and testimonials, further contributing to brand visibility and customer acquisition.

The underscores several key practical and managerial implications for enhancing airline service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty. Practically, airlines should focus on improving service delivery across all aspects, from in-flight services to digital interactions, aiming to elevate passenger satisfaction and stand out in a competitive market. Personalizing customer experiences based on feedback and data can further bolster satisfaction and loyalty, while continuous training for staff ensures consistent high-quality service delivery. Technological integration, including advanced booking systems and personalized customer service tools, can streamline operations and enhance overall passenger satisfaction. Managerially, strategic investments in service quality, loyalty programs, and crisis management protocols are crucial for maintaining competitive advantage and fostering long-term passenger loyalty.

In summary, the quality of airline services directly influences passenger satisfaction and loyalty. By consistently delivering exceptional service that exceeds customer expectations, airlines can foster loyalty, increase repeat business, and strengthen their brand reputation. Investing in service quality improvements, listening to passenger feedback, and adapting to changing customer preferences are essential strategies for enhancing loyalty in the competitive airline industry. This customer-centric approach not only drives growth but also sustains long-term success in an evolving market landscape.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the significant findings drawn from the study, the following were concluded: Airline services

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reflect a general but not outstanding satisfaction with the various aspects of service provided by the airline. The highest scores for flight attendant service and ground staff service highlight these areas as strengths, suggesting that personal interactions with airline staff are a significant positive factor in passenger satisfaction. However, the lower scores for online airline service and flight schedule indicate areas where improvements are needed. Since the passengers are generally fairly satisfied with their airline experience, with perceived price and passenger experience ranking highest in satisfaction, this implies for the airline company and its employees the need to ensure providing an excellent service that would lead to guest delight. There is a positive sentiment towards engagement and intentions to remain loyal and focusing on enhancing brand image and fostering deeper engagement can further strengthen passenger loyalty and advocacy. This strategic focus can lead to increased customer retention and positive word-of-mouth, contributing to long-term business success for the airline. The higher their agreement with the airline's service, the higher their level of loyalty. Furthermore, the higher their level of satisfaction, the higher their level of loyalty. This implies that improving service quality and customer satisfaction are key to building passenger loyalty. A framework and loyalty has been proposed, for continuous improvement of the airline services and boosting passenger loyalty.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following were recommended: The Airline Information technology department may prioritize enhancing website usability, speed, and information accuracy. Ensure the booking process is intuitive and provides comprehensive information. The Airline traffic control management may address concerns by improving reliability and providing timely updates to passengers. Implement effective communication strategies during delays or schedule changes to mitigate passenger dissatisfaction. The Human Resource Management may strengthen training programs to maintain high standards of service delivery. Emphasize prompt responsiveness, friendliness, and knowledgeability to enhance passenger experiences during interactions. The Airline safety and security Management may focus on improving perceptions of safety, reliability, and overall reputation among passengers. Highlighting the airline's safety records, customer testimonials, and community involvement can positively influence brand perception. The Airline Marketing Department may develop targeted loyalty programs and benefits tailored to frequent travelers. Offer exclusive rewards, priority services, and personalized experiences to cultivate deeper engagement and increase repeat business. The Airline Management may utilize the findings linking higher service agreement with increased satisfaction and loyalty to inform strategic decisions. Allocate resources towards initiatives that directly impact service quality and customer experience improvements. Future researchers may conduct further study to confirm the result using another method such as qualitative to further have an in-depth analysis relating to airline service, satisfaction and loyalty.

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