

Understanding Customer Satisfaction in Budget Airlines: A Malaysian Case Study

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Tan, L. H., Sim, C. L., Tan, J. H., Tan, J. H., maintain customer trust and market Tan, K. R., Tan, Q. Y., ..., & Kee, D. M. H. advantage. This study aims to examine the (2025). Understanding customer factors influencing customer satisfaction satisfaction in budget airlines: A Malaysian among passengers of low-cost airlines in case study. *International Journal of Tourism Malaysia*. A quantitative research design and *Hospitality in Asia Pacific*, 8(3), 500– was employed using an online 516. questionnaire distributed via social media to frequent travelers, resulting in 150 valid responses. Data were analyzed using regression analysis, with customer satisfaction as the dependent variable and perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust as independent variables. The results show that perceived convenience ($\beta = 0.110$), perceived security and privacy ($\beta = 0.210$), and perceived trust ($\beta = 0.334$) have positive and significant effects on customer satisfaction, while perceived benefits ($\beta = -0.026$) show a minor negative relationship. The model explains 26.5% of the variance in customer satisfaction and is statistically significant ($F = 14.555$, Durbin-Watson = 1.825). These findings highlight the importance of building customer trust, ensuring transaction security, and enhancing convenience to strengthen satisfaction and loyalty. The results provide practical insights for low-cost airlines to improve service quality and sustain competitiveness in Malaysia's aviation market.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Customer satisfaction; Low-cost airlines; Malaysia; Perceived trust; Service quality

INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry plays a vital role in driving global economic development by offering fast, efficient, and affordable transportation that supports international trade and business operations (Mainardes et al., 2021; Namukasa, 2013). In Malaysia, the aviation sector has long been a cornerstone of the nation's economy, contributing approximately 3.5% of the GDP in 2018 and providing essential connectivity both domestically and internationally (AirAsia, 2020). The continuous growth of this sector demonstrates its strategic importance; in 2023, Malaysia's aviation industry exceeded expectations with passenger traffic increasing by an average of 7.6% each quarter during the first three quarters of the year (Semrush, 2025).

Among the key players, AirAsia stands out as Malaysia's dominant low-cost carrier, holding nearly 50% of the market share and representing 60% of total seat capacity (Teoh et al., 2023). With its well-known tagline "Now Everyone Can Fly," AirAsia has democratized air travel by making flights accessible to millions at prices roughly 50% lower than those of full-service airlines (Mayumartiana et al., 2019). Its success stems from a strong emphasis on cost efficiency and customer-centric service innovation. The airline pioneered online booking and SMS ticketing, revolutionizing ticketing convenience while reducing operational costs (AirAsia, 2020). Moreover, AirAsia's ability to maintain quick turnaround times averaging less than 25 minutes and its partnerships with reputable maintenance providers such as GE Engine Services have further strengthened reliability and passenger trust (Gilbert & Wong, 2003; Dike et al., 2023).

Despite its achievements, AirAsia continues to face significant challenges in a highly competitive aviation market, where consumer expectations evolve rapidly and service quality becomes a decisive factor in sustaining brand loyalty (Han & Hyun, 2018; Kusumawardani & Hastayanti, 2020). Customer satisfaction serves as a critical determinant of long-term airline success, influencing retention, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat purchase behavior (Karim & Rabiul, 2024). Factors such as perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust significantly affect the overall satisfaction of airline passengers (Berry et al., 2002; Bélanger & Crossler, 2011). These constructs form the foundation for consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions, underscoring the need for airlines to continuously innovate to meet customer expectations (Chandon et al., 2000; Chattopadhyay, 2019).

Customer satisfaction refers to an individual's post-purchase evaluation of a service relative to initial expectations and competing offerings within the same market (Rastegar-Panah, 2025; Richard, 1980). When a product or service meets or exceeds expectations, customers are more likely to express satisfaction and remain loyal to the brand (Atalik & Arslan, 2009; De Wulf et al., 2001). In the context of AirAsia, enhancing service quality is therefore essential to maintaining consumer satisfaction and strengthening customer loyalty.

This study investigates the factors influencing customer satisfaction with AirAsia's services in Malaysia, focusing on four key determinants: perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust. A quantitative approach was employed to gather primary data from regular AirAsia passengers. The research aims to offer practical insights for improving service quality, reinforcing customer loyalty, and sustaining competitive advantage within the low-cost carrier segment.

AirAsia has consistently emphasized digital innovation and technological enhancement to improve customer experience. Recent initiatives include contactless check-in, biometric verification, and seamless online booking systems, all of which aim to make flying safer, more hygienic, and more convenient (AirAsia, 2020). Meanwhile, AirAsia.com faces competition from platforms such as Skyscanner.co.th, ThaiAirways.com, and Skyscanner.net, which target similar customer segments seeking affordable and convenient travel solutions (Semrush, 2025). Consequently, understanding and improving customer satisfaction remain crucial for AirAsia to sustain its market leadership.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics in the aviation industry. By analyzing empirical data from AirAsia passengers, this study provides valuable insights into the airline's service performance and customer perceptions. These findings can help management identify operational improvements and refine customer engagement strategies, ensuring AirAsia continues to meet and exceed passenger expectations in an increasingly competitive regional market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the most important part of the business, and this is a key factor to help business success. Customer satisfaction can be used to measure whether a company's products and services fulfill the customer's expectations as well. Companies measure customer satisfaction constantly with surveys and feedback analytics to ensure products or services meet customer expectations (Rastegar-Panah, 2025). If customer satisfaction is high, it will lead to repeat business, positive word-of-mouth, and profit for the business. On the contrary, low customer satisfaction will lead to bad complaints, negative reviews, negative word-of-mouth, and loss of business (Rastegar-Panah, 2025). Majeed et al. (2022) found that the customer repurchase intention is not influenced by customer satisfaction. According to Bahri (2020), the notion of consumer satisfaction in marketing takes a central and important position because customer satisfaction can serve to link processes culminating in purchase.

Furthermore, Chattopadhyay (2019) stated that customer satisfaction is dynamic and relative. This is because only the idea of "customer-centric" can improve customer satisfaction and help companies retain customers. Miao et al. (2022) have explained that customers who are satisfied will have a higher likelihood of repurchasing and recommending to others. Consumer fulfillment response can be determined by customer satisfaction, and it is an adjudication of a company's products and services (Burodo et al., 2022; Richard, 1980). According to Musafir (2017), consumer satisfaction indicates that a vendor has totally and efficiently met customer expectations have been met. Hence, consumer satisfaction is the outline of the consumer's view about the products and services provided by vendors. Therefore, companies must always focus on customer satisfaction to improve customer loyalty and ensure that customer expectations are met promptly.

Perceived Convenience

The concept of convenience has been used in marketing since it combines both goods and services. Convenience in marketing theory contains the classification of products. Based on Seiders et al. (2005), consumer convenience can be defined as the "service convenience". It presents that consumers' time and effort costs of buying or using a service are related. For instance, ease of transaction, time savings, and location are the

skeleton of convenience. [Kee et al. \(2023\)](#) found that using an online shopping platform is superior since it is efficient during the transaction process. Furthermore, due to consumers' purchase decisions being difficult to evaluate, it means the perceived convenience of consumers is low ([Zeithaml et al., 1996](#)).

According to [Berry et al. \(2002\)](#), transaction convenience indicates that consumers' perceived convenience is high and they use little effort when making a transaction. [Kee et al. \(2022\)](#) highlighted that a product or service is considered convenient when it saves consumers' time. If convenience saves customers' time and effort, it will speed up customer intention to repurchase ([Zeqiri et al., 2023](#)). Consumers usually gravitate towards brands that provide convenience, such as accessibility, service speed, and ease of use. In addition, [Sabeh et al. \(2024\)](#) have explained that a factor that influences customer satisfaction is the convenience of using apps. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1: Perceived convenience is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Perceived Benefits

[Kee et al. \(2023\)](#) highlighted that perceived benefits are an essential factor that affects customer satisfaction. Perceived benefits imply the beliefs about the positive effect, and behavior in response to a perceived serving is related ([Chandon et al., 2000](#)). Perceived benefits will influence customer choice of airline when traveling, such as comfort, cleanliness, and a variety of menu options. In addition, [De Wulf et al. \(2001\)](#) stated that if customers perceive low or no benefit when consuming, marketing investments may not yield any profit or become lost. [Kee et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized that consumers are more likely to have an active attitude toward online shopping the more benefits they have perceived. Thus, if customers perceive higher benefits than their effort and cost, then a positive word-of-mouth can be expected.

[Blattberg and Neslin \(1993\)](#) found that sales promotions and discounts are the only benefits motivating consumers to respond and purchase. This is because consumers feel it can save a lot of money. Based on [Felix and Rembulan \(2023\)](#), promotions and discounts will improve customer satisfaction. [Padmalini et al. \(2021\)](#) found that AirAsia always updates its e-commerce website with information about flights, promotions and discounts, and travel packages. The more benefits are provided to customers, the higher customer satisfaction, and the more the consumer is willing to purchase. As a result, we predict the following hypothesis:

H2: Perceived benefits are positively related to customer satisfaction.

Perceived Security and Privacy

[Maisarah et al. \(2020\)](#) highlighted that safety is an extremely important part of the airline business as it travels around the world in the air. If safety is not checked thoroughly, it will be dangerous to passengers. Therefore, passengers probably pay a lot of attention to safety. Based on [Atalik and Arslan \(2009\)](#), customer satisfaction is impacted by airline safety. Hence, airline companies need to ensure airline flights are safe and mark safety instructions clearly. Airline passengers believe safety is the top preference when choosing an airline ([Gilbert and Wong, 2003](#)). [Maisarah et al. \(2020\)](#) found that customers' safety included the emergency doors, safety equipment kit, safety belt, and seat.

Furthermore, [Elliott and Soifer \(2022\)](#) emphasized that information privacy is the right and desire of someone to control over personal information themselves. According to

Clarke (1999), personal space has four dimensions. Privacy of the persons, privacy of personal behavior, privacy of personal communications, and privacy of personal data are the four dimensions of personal space. Thus, airline companies must protect customers' private information and ensure the payment system is secure. Padmalini et al. (2021) found that AirAsia will have some regulations and guidelines to protect customers' personal information. The following hypotheses have been formulated:

H3: Perceived security and privacy are positively related to customer satisfaction.

Perceived Trust

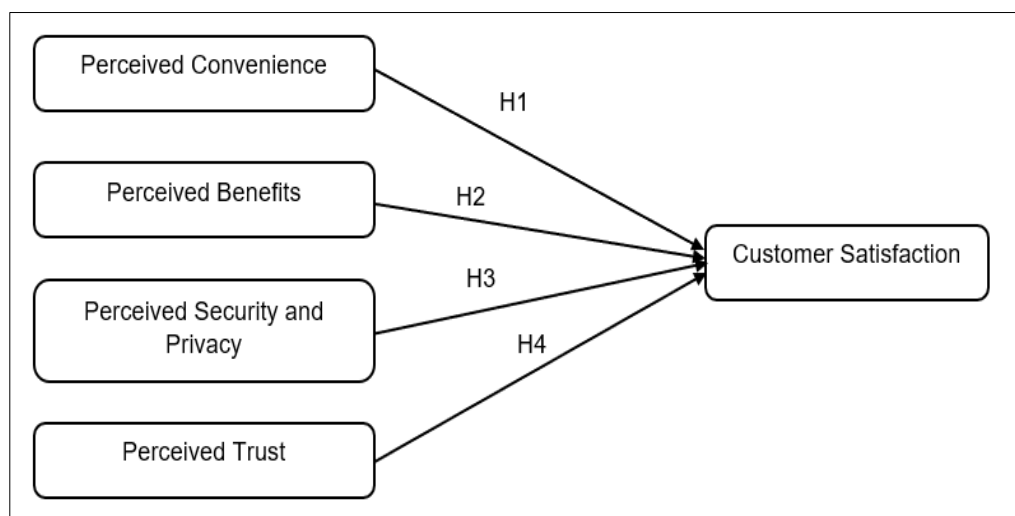
Trust means customers have high confidence in a seller's service. Reliability and integrity of the seller will let customers trust and repurchase (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Kee et al. (2023) highlighted that perceived trust is the most important element influencing consumer satisfaction. Thus, the service of company improvement will let customers be more confident and trust the company. According to Moorman et al. (1992, as cited in Soleimani, 2022), trust is defined as the willingness of consumers to rely on an exchange partner, such as a seller or vendor. Kee et al. (2022) highlighted that perceived trust is the degree to which a person has faith in another person to conduct their duties without taking any advantage. Moreover, Kalogiannidis (2021) stated that trust is essential to organizational effectiveness and that trust will increase the profit of a business. Trust is developed when a company is concerned with meeting the customers' expectations promptly and producing goods or services that provide value for them (Chanpariyavatevong et al., 2021). High expectations of passengers will impact customer satisfaction in booking tickets. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H4: Perceived trust is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the research framework that has been used in this study. The independent variables are perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust. The dependent variable in the study is customer satisfaction.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

The study utilized a quantitative research design to investigate customer satisfaction among passengers of low-cost airlines in Malaysia. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram using Google Forms. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for gathering quantitative data. After data cleaning to remove incomplete or invalid responses, 150 valid responses were retained for analysis. This sample size was considered adequate for statistical analysis based on the general rule of a minimum of five to ten observations per estimated parameter in regression analysis, ensuring sufficient statistical power and representativeness of the target population.

The online questionnaire comprised six sections: (1) demographic profile, (2) perceived convenience, (3) perceived benefits, (4) perceived security and privacy, (5) perceived trust, and (6) customer satisfaction. Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, education level, occupation, and monthly income were collected using single-statement items. Descriptive statistics were applied to summarize the respondent profiles.

To ensure measurement reliability, internal consistency for each construct was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), with a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability. All non-demographic variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), allowing respondents to express varying degrees of agreement.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 to perform descriptive and inferential analyses, including regression analysis to test the research hypotheses. For future research or higher-tier publication (e.g., Scopus Q3 and above), advanced modeling techniques such as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) or covariance-based SEM (AMOS) could be employed to validate the proposed paths and provide stronger empirical support for the relationships among constructs.

RESULTS

The Google Forms has been distributed online to 150 respondents. All the outcomes of data and results were studied in this section. The survey contains six sections on demographic profile, perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, perceived trust, and customer satisfaction with AirAsia.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile Summary (N=150)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
19 years old and below	6	4.0
20 - 29 years old	105	70.0
30 - 39 years old	19	12.7
40 - 49 years old	14	9.3
50 - 59 years old	5	3.3
60 years old and above	1	0.7
Gender		
Male	57	38.0
Female	93	62.0
Ethnicity		
Malay	47	31.3

Chinese	69	46.0
Indian	34	22.7
Educational Level		
Primary School	2	1.3
Secondary School	17	11.3
Diploma	20	13.3
Bachelor's Degree	105	70.0
Master's Degree	6	4.0
Ph.D. Degree	0	0
Occupation		
Student	104	69.3
Private Sector	23	15.3
Government Sector	11	7.3
Unemployed	6	4.0
Self-employed	6	4.0
Monthly Income		
B40 (less than RM 5,250)	114	76.0
M40 (RM 5,251 – RM 11,819)	33	22.0
T20 (more than RM 11,820)	3	2.0

From Table 1, the majority of the respondents were between 20 and 29 years old (N=105, 70.0%), while there was only 1 respondent aged 60 years old and above (N=1, 0.7%). There were 38.0% (N=57) and 62.0% (N=93) of male and female respondents, respectively. From the ethnicity, 46.0% (N=69) of the respondents are Chinese, followed by 31.3% (N=47) of Malay respondents and 22.7% (N=34) of Indian respondents. The majority of respondents possess a bachelor's degree (N=105, 70.0%), a distribution likely influenced by the method of survey. Specifically, the online survey was initially distributed through the university, which may have skewed the demographic towards individuals with higher educational qualifications. This distribution pattern is further corroborated by the occupation data, where a significant proportion of respondents are categorized as "student" (N=104, 69.3%). Besides, a predominant number of respondents were categorized as B40 and reported a monthly income below RM 5,250. There were 76% which is equivalent to 114 respondents was in the B40 category, whereas only 2% (N=3) of respondents were in the T20 category, whose monthly income was above RM 11,820.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, and Zero-Order Correlations of All Study Variables

Variables		1	2	3	4	5
1	Perceived Convenience	0.712				
2	Perceived Benefits	0.550**	0.782			
3	Perceived Security and Privacy	0.511**	0.708**	0.721		
4	Perceived Trust	0.542**	0.694**	0.544**	0.777	
5	Customer Satisfaction	0.384**	0.415**	0.429**	0.490**	0.763
Number of Items		5	5	5	5	3
Mean		4.0907	4.0013	4.0720	3.9293	4.0956
Standard Deviation		0.53071	0.64068	0.52343	0.64345	0.60243

Note: N = 150; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, measures of reliability, and zero-order correlations among the study variables. As observed, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the four perceived factors range from 0.712 to 0.782, indicating a high internal

consistency reliability level for all variables. The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability serves as a tool for evaluating the consistency of a questionnaire, acting as an indicator of the variables' stability. The zero-order correlations reveal essential relationships between the variables. For example, perceived convenience and benefits have the highest positive correlation at 0.782, indicating that the other tends to increase as one factor increases. This suggests that consumers who find AirAsia convenient will also perceive it as providing more incredible benefits. In addition, the four factors (perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust) collectively influence customer satisfaction with AirAsia in Malaysia.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

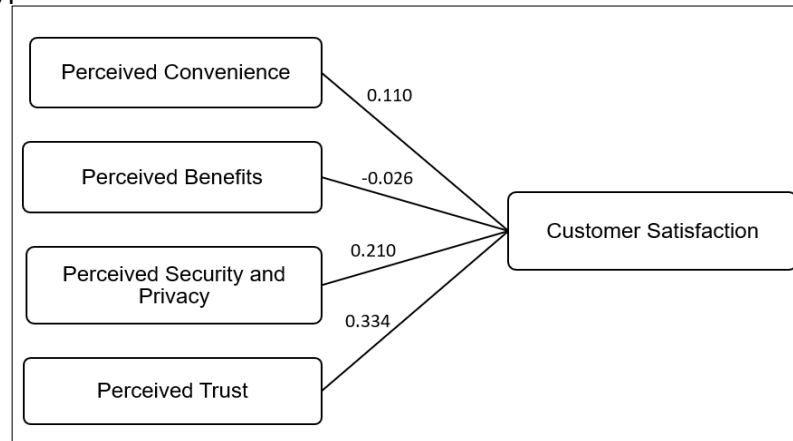
Variables		Customer Satisfaction
1	Perceived Convenience	0.110
2	Perceived Benefits	-0.026
3	Perceived Security and Privacy	0.210
4	Perceived Trust	0.334
5	Customer Satisfaction	
R ²		0.265
F Value		14.455
Durbin-Watson Statistic		1.825

Note: N = 150; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 3 represents the regression analysis. Customer satisfaction is the dependent variable, while perceived convenience, perceived benefits, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust are the independent variables. Perceived convenience (0.110), perceived security and privacy (0.210), and perceived trust (0.334) have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, as indicated by their positive coefficients. Perceived trust has the highest positive impact on customer satisfaction, followed by perceived security and privacy; perceived convenience has the least positive effect on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, perceived benefits (-0.026) have a negative relationship with customer satisfaction, as shown by its negative coefficient. However, the negative value is minimal and close to 0, suggesting that perceived benefits do not directly impact customer satisfaction. Thus, hypotheses H1, H3, and H4 are supported because the independent variables positively correlate with customer satisfaction. Hypothesis H2 is not supported because perceived benefits have a slight negative impact, which is not meaningful. The model explains that the independent variables can explain 26.50% of the variance in customer satisfaction. The F value (14.555) suggests that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that the independent variables collectively influence customer satisfaction. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.825), which is close to 2, suggests no significant autocorrelation exists in the residuals, which means the regression results are reliable.

The results of the hypothesized model are illustrated in **Figure 2**, which presents the structural relationships among the study variables.

Figure 2. Hypothesized Model



DISCUSSION

This study examined various factors that influence customer satisfaction in AirAsia. The research findings indicate that perceived trust plays a significant role in increasing the customer satisfaction of AirAsia in Malaysia. The finding of this study emphasizes the critical role of perceived convenience in fostering customer satisfaction with AirAsia in Malaysia. Among these factors, perceived convenience, perceived security and privacy, and perceived trust emerge as three significant factors that positively affect customer satisfaction, while perceived benefits emerge as factors that negatively affect customer satisfaction.

Perceived Trust on Customer Satisfaction

Perceived trust is the most influential factor in enhancing customer satisfaction in AirAsia Malaysia. According to [Alrawad et al. \(2023\)](#), trust is a sign of security acquired by interactions with customers. The regression analysis of this study shows that perceived trust has the strongest positive relationship with customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.334$), which means that perceived trust plays a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction. This is consistent with a previous study ([Uzir et al., 2021](#)), which hypothesized that trust has a direct and positive effect on customer satisfaction, and is supported by the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.179^*$). A supporting study from [Kusumawardani et al. \(2020\)](#) stated that the hypothesis of “there is a significant influence of trust toward customer satisfaction” is supported by a high critical ratio of 5.483. Another previous study ([Shabankareh et al., 2024](#)) found that customer trust significantly enhances repurchase intention of airline customers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This hypothesis is supported by the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.689$). Therefore, customer trust will increase the intention to repurchase and then the customer satisfaction with AirAsia.

Based on this study, customers have high expectations for effective solutions for delayed or missing baggage. Therefore, AirAsia should implement an efficient system for baggage tracking by using RFID technology or AirAsia apps to allow passengers to track baggage status instantaneously. Besides that, AirAsia can also invest in advanced scheduling software to enhance the reliability of flight schedules by accurately anticipating delays and providing real-time updates to passengers if changes occur. According to [Mainardes et al. \(2021\)](#), services provided by airport service providers are one of the important parts of passengers’ experiences, and they can influence the trust of users of airport services. Hence, AirAsia should train its staff regularly to provide a consistent service quality so that customer satisfaction can be improved. However, several suggestions mentioned above involve a high cost, including the training cost and

technology cost. The company may increase the system maintenance costs since the high frequency of system errors in the application or software may reduce customer trust (Rosli et al., 2024).

Perceived Security and Privacy on Customer Satisfaction

The second most crucial factor affecting customer satisfaction in AirAsia Malaysia is perceived security and privacy. The regression analysis of this study shows that perceived security and privacy have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.210$), which means that they also play a vital role in shaping customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with a previous study from Kim et. al. (2021) that shows perceived privacy protection has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. It is represented with a standardized path coefficient of 0.190 (significant at $p < 0.001$). Although the coefficient is relatively smaller compared to other paths, it still highlights the importance of privacy protection in enhancing customer satisfaction. Another supporting previous study (Mombeuil & Uhde, 2021) found that perceived privacy positively and significantly influences continuous use intention (Beta = 0.365; p-value = 0.000) while perceived security accounts for 23.8% of variance in continuous use intention ($R^2 = .238$, $F(1; 467) = 145.573$, $p = 0.000$).

To improve perceived security and privacy of transactions in AirAsia's platforms, AirAsia can introduce two-factor authentication (2FA) for customer accounts during logins and payments, such as allowing biometric verification options, which are fingerprint or facial recognition, for AirAsia mobile app users. Besides that, AirAsia can implement real-time fraud detection systems to monitor transactions. However, customers unfamiliar with technology might feel inconvenienced and time-consuming during the system's errors or false fraud alerts. Besides that, AirAsia can introduce IoT-based smart cabin sensors to track the real-time condition of seats, seatbelts, and safety equipment. Sensors are able to detect seat belt fastening or malfunction components of the airplane so that the cabin crew can notify the alerts immediately and take prompt action. However, its setback is high installation and maintenance costs. Additionally, some unforeseeable technical problems or even fake alarms may affect the flights (Jimenez & Resurreccion, 2023).

Perceived Convenience on Customer Satisfaction

The third most crucial factor affecting customer satisfaction with AirAsia is perceived convenience. Previous studies highlight that convenient services, such as efficient ticket payment systems, significantly enhance customer satisfaction (Mayumartiana et al., 2019). Similarly, Banerji et al. (2023) found that convenient time arrangements play a critical role in passengers' decision-making when choosing an airline. Accurate control of flight schedules is crucial for customers with strict work and time management requirements (Teoh et al., 2023). In addition, the quality of service an airline provides also significantly influences customer satisfaction. For instance, a survey of consumer complaints conducted between January 1 and June 30, 2018, revealed that 4.1% of respondents cited refunds due to poor customer service (Teoh et al., 2023). These findings emphasize the importance of improving convenience-related factors to increase customer satisfaction.

To improve convenience, AirAsia could regularly conduct surveys or collect customer feedback to identify pain points, monitor key performance indicators such as complaint rates and app ratings, and implement comprehensive staff training programs to ensure high service quality. Additionally, the responsiveness and efficiency of AirAsia's existing AI-powered chatbot could be further enhanced to handle customer queries more effectively, particularly for time-sensitive issues like refund requests or flight changes. While these improvements are crucial for enhancing perceived convenience, they may

increase operational costs, such as investments in refining chatbot technology and conducting staff training. However, the long-term benefits, such as increased customer satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations, can outweigh the initial expenses, strengthening AirAsia's competitive position in the airline industry.

Perceived Benefits on Customer Satisfaction

This study reveals that perceived benefits do not significantly influence customer satisfaction with AirAsia in Malaysia, with a regression coefficient of -0.026. Perceived benefits in this study include menu variety, promotional pricing, seat comfort, cleanliness of facilities, maintenance of facilities, staff, and communication. Previous studies have found that perceived benefits, such as food services and promotions, can positively influence customer satisfaction (Han & Hyun, 2018; Namukasa, 2013). However, our study failed to show a positive effect of perceived benefits on customer satisfaction.

A possible explanation for this study could be the limited sample size, such as sample size (N = 150), which may not be sufficient to generalize the findings. Additionally, the specific variables used to measure perceived benefits may not be aligned with the expectations of AirAsia's target customers. For instance, low-cost airline customers may prioritize punctuality, value of money, location over comfort, and additional services like food options or facility maintenance (Dike et al., 2023). As such, perceived benefits related to additional services may have a diminished impact on customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explores the major determinants influencing customer satisfaction with AirAsia in Malaysia. It can provide valuable insights into the dynamic customer experience in the low-cost airline industry. The findings underscore the pivotal role of perceived trust, security and privacy, and convenience as key factors enhancing customer satisfaction of AirAsia. Perceived trust, security and privacy, and convenience are positively related to customer satisfaction. Among these, perceived trust has the greatest effect on customer satisfaction, indicating that customers trust the brand of AirAsia and are satisfied with their choices to purchase from AirAsia. Similarly, this study shows that security and privacy provided by AirAsia, such as ensuring flight and transaction safety, are important to enhance customers' confidence and satisfaction. On the other hand, convenience may be less significant, but it remains an important factor in customer satisfaction. Efficient online booking system, convenient flight schedule, ease of transactions, and service inquiry are vital to encourage a nice trip for passengers by the efficiency and reliability provided by AirAsia.

Interestingly, this study revealed that perceived benefits, including elements like promotional pricing, comfort, and available facilities, do not significantly influence customer satisfaction. This suggests that AirAsia should focus on achieving a higher value on operational excellence and cost-effectiveness compared to extra benefits or facilities. This finding also emphasizes how crucial it is to match service offerings with customer expectations.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study are able to provide valuable and actionable recommendations for AirAsia to enhance customer satisfaction. AirAsia should mainly focus on strategies such as strengthening trust through consistent service quality, upgrading security and privacy standards as well, and improving operational processes. Furthermore, feedback mechanisms and performance evaluations should be established regularly to allow the timely diagnosis of customer-sensitive issues and then improve customer satisfaction. All in all, there are important areas of attention for AirAsia

to consolidate its market and support the growing demands of its customers within the progressively competitive airline industry.

LIMITATION

First, the small sample size of 150 respondents limits the generalizability of the findings and may limit the accuracy and reliability of the results. To address this limitation, future studies should increase the sample size to more than 200 respondents to improve accuracy and reliability. Second, the questionnaire was prepared only in English, which may have posed challenges for respondents with lower English proficiency. This could have affected their ability to understand and accurately respond to the questions thoroughly. As our target respondents come from diverse age groups and backgrounds, providing multi-language versions of the questionnaire would make it more accessible and convenient for all respondents. Third, the scope of the questionnaire was limited to specific variables under perceived benefits, such as menu variety, promotional pricing, seat comfort, cleanliness of facilities, maintenance of facilities, staff, and communication. Future research could refine and expand the questionnaire to include additional variables under perceived benefits or other factors influencing customer satisfaction, such as punctuality, affordability, and service efficiency. Lastly, the study was conducted in Malaysia. Cross-cultural studies are recommended to better understand the factors influencing customer satisfaction with AirAsia. Such studies can compare findings across different countries, offering broader insights into customer satisfaction in various cultural contexts.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the study, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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