

The Factors That Influence Customer Satisfaction to Use an Airline in Malaysia

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Improving customer satisfaction is key to being competitive in the Airline industry. This research aimed to study the factors that influence customer satisfaction to use Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia. Malaysia Airways Limited began its first commercial flight in year 1947 and was renamed (2025). The factors that influence customer become Malaysian Airline System in year satisfaction to use an airline in Malaysia. 1972. Malaysia Airlines operates scheduled domestic and international flights to more than 1000 destinations across 150 plus countries. A quantitative approach with a survey questionnaire was used for data collection. A total of 100 Malaysia Airlines customers participated in this survey. In this survey, four influencing factors were assessed: airline tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image. Through a comprehensive analysis of customer feedback, personnel quality is the most important factor in improving customer satisfaction to use Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia, followed by empathy and airline image. This survey provides Malaysia Airlines with useful insights into customer perception and guides Malaysia Airlines in improving customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Airline Image; Airline Tangibles; Empathy; Malaysia Airlines; Personnel Quality

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia Airlines is one of the airline companies in Malaysia and a member of the Oneworld Airline Alliance ([Wai et al., 2019](#)). It flights from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) to destinations in 150 countries ([Ping et al., 2019](#)). Malaysia Airlines started its first commercial flight in year 1974 under the name of Malayan Airways Limited. However, in the year 1972, it was known as the Malaysian Airline System (MAS). Malaysia Airlines offers the best way to fly to, from, and around Malaysia, as well as international airlines. Malaysia Airlines can travel to 1000 destinations across 150 plus countries and has access to over 650 airport lounges worldwide. Customers can choose three class layouts which are Economy, Business, and First. Malaysia Airlines is the first airline to prepare Wi-Fi for flights ([Malaysia Airlines, n.d.](#)).

Malaysia Airlines has won many outstanding awards. For example, it had been crowned 'The World's 5-Star Airline' by Skytrax in the years 2009, 2012, and 2013. It has also been recognized as 'Asia's Leading Airline' in the years 2010, 2011, and 2013 by the World Travel Awards. Malaysia Airlines was known as an airline company that included 12,000 employees in 53 cities with talent skills, especially for engineers, pilots, and cabin crew. This is because Malaysia Airlines always prepares flight attendants and computer-based training to boost employees' passion, knowledge, skill, and capability to ensure customer safety, comfort, and satisfaction ([Malaysia Airlines Academy, n.d.](#)). Moreover, Malaysia Airlines has a unique selling point which is the distinctive traditional attire worn by its flight attendants, the sarong kebaya, which not only serves as a uniform but also embodies the airline's deep-rooted pride in Malaysian traditions and culture, thereby enriching the overall passenger experience.

Nowadays, many airlines provide air transportation for customer to travel in their own country or travel to other countries. Therefore, to become the first choice of customers, it is important to increase customer satisfaction to maintain their loyalty. This research endeavor aims to comprehensively explore and analyze the multifaceted factors that influence customer satisfaction within the airline industry, with a specific and focused lens on Malaysia Airlines. The primary objective is to assess the effect of airline tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the second objective of this research is to analyze how the effect of airline tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image on customer satisfaction.

The research framework for this research encompasses several key components. Airline tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image are acting as independent variables to influence customer satisfaction, the dependent variables in this research. Under airline tangibles, the analysis will include the internal design of aircraft in Malaysia Airlines, such as the cleanness of the aircraft, toilets, comfort of seats, and air conditioning. Personnel quality will assess the personnels' attitude, knowledge, responsibility, and personal care for the customers of Malaysia Airlines. Asia Pacific University ([APU, 2022](#)) detailed a partnership between Malaysia Airlines Academy and APU to provide skills enhancement and reskilling programs for MAG's staff to improve personnel quality. Empathy will be evaluated based on the interactions and connections made by the staff with passengers, reflecting the airline's commitment to warm hospitality. Airline image will consider the brand's reputation, and the traditional elements incorporated into the airline's services. A firm that offers a value-for-money experience to customers will increase customer satisfaction and lead to positive word-of-mouth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Airline Tangibles

The service is intangible, thus the customers will first estimate the firm's quality based on tangible facilities, such as the atmosphere, building, and physical layout of the company offices ([Farooq et al., 2018](#)). Tangible assets of airlines are one of the important bases to affect customers' comfort, safety, and satisfaction based on the research done by [Suki \(2013\)](#). Tangibles can be defined as the appearance of the physical assets, surroundings, and facilities of a service company. For example, equipment, machinery, communication materials, and signage ([Suki, 2013](#)).

Airline tangible-related quality traits include cleanliness of airplane interior toilets, quality of the catering and air-conditioning, comfort level of the plane seats, and design of the aircraft. Airlines are paying more attention to increasing the comfort level provided to passengers by developing the aircraft cabin interior to differentiate themselves and obtain a competitive advantage in a highly competitive market ([Hamza et al., 2023](#)). Malaysia Airlines always prepares comfortable seats, entertainment facilities, and spacious legroom for passengers to access. They keep the seat clean and unscented and the seat belt intact. The equipment in the cabin, such as seat adjustment is used flexibly, and the rear passengers are not disturbed when dining. The Wi-Fi service in the cabin keeps the link unblocked, the screen can be used normally, and the air conditioner intelligently adjusts the temperature. On long-haul flights, tall stature, and large size individuals suffer in a small space in the aircraft economy cabins. A research result of the study shows that seat comfort level influences passenger satisfaction and future flying intentions with the same airline for long-haul flights ([Al-Murakshi, 2021](#)). Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H1: Airline tangibles have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Personnel Quality

Services are intangible outcomes of human efforts that can satisfy human needs and can act as an action to exchange for a price ([Alam, 2022](#)). It requires the personnel of the company to contact the customer when delivering service ([Soteriou & Chase, 1998](#)). It is impossible to separate production and consumption in terms of time. It is difficult to set a standard to evaluate the quality of service provided to customers ([Harvey, 1998](#)).

The service is delivered by airline personnel at a company even in the airport, online customer service, and in the aircraft. The job scope of the airline's personnel includes reserve and ticket reservations, providing information on airline service, and providing personnel care with a positive attitude to passengers. The flight crew is important to be familiar with flight safety, service process, communication skills, and contingency ability to solve emergencies. Personnel attention, helpfulness, politeness, and promptitude are some of the key effects on airline passenger satisfaction ([Babbar & Koufteros, 2008](#)). The airline's personnel knowledge and capability can be shown by their way and attitude in facing difficult customers, such as those exhibiting impatient, easily angered, volubly outspoken, and potentially violent behavior. The personnel who have high personnel quality can actively listen to the problems faced by customers, and calmly explain any regulation to the passengers.

The airline personnel with a poor attitude and lack of knowledge to answer customer's questions will negatively affect customer satisfaction. Personnel who lack proper skills and diplomacy in handling the demands of the customers are not suitably trained for the

highly "customer-focused" aspects of their jobs ([Bamford & Xystouri, 2005](#)). Therefore, it is important to have professional pre-job training to prepare high-quality personnel to increase customer satisfaction and comfort ([Sun, 2020](#)). Training in-flight attendants help the personnel to know about their job scope in the workplace, avoid job ambiguity, reduce the risk of facing unexpected accidents on the plane, and ensure harmony and consistency across the entire team ([Musili, 2010](#)). Businesses become competitive in the market when customer satisfaction from high service quality ([Oh et al., 2023](#)). With this theoretical background, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Personnel quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Empathy

As an extensively studied concept in the relationship marketing literature, empathy is regarded as a significant variable for individual consideration among people ([Pohling et al., 2016](#)). Empathy is defined as an individual's capacity to understand another's thoughts, feelings, and experiences, to share their emotional experiences, and to respond to the observed experiences of others ([Wieseke et al., 2012](#)).

In the airline industry, service personnel are expected to understand customer needs and proactively offer assistance to help customers feel valued and appreciated. When customers face issues such as flight delays, cancellations, or forced landings, showing immediate concern for passengers can effectively mitigate dissatisfaction caused by negative emotions. Existing literature highlights that empathetic behavior by employees during interactions with customers significantly enhances customer satisfaction. Employees' empathetic communication with customers has been shown to improve satisfaction and loyalty to the service brand, fostering positive word-of-mouth and encouraging repurchase intentions ([Bahadur et al., 2018](#)).

Empathy is also assessed through factors such as punctuality of departures and arrivals, ease of transport to and from the city and airport, compensation for lost or damaged items, care of luggage, flight frequency, and the location of the airline's offices. By ensuring punctual operations, providing efficient services, and delivering a comfortable flying experience, Malaysia Airlines consistently meets or surpasses customer expectations and satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Empathy has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Airline Image

Corporate image is defined as the perceptions of an organization reflected in the associations held in customer memory ([Keller, 1993](#)). Corporate image influences customers' perceptions of the goods and services offered and plays a crucial role in their decision-making process when selecting a company ([Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998](#)).

Research by [Page and Fearn \(2005\)](#) indicates that a negative image adversely affects brand equity, whereas a good image does not necessarily guarantee a strong brand. A well-planned and well-managed corporate image is identified as the most effective marketing strategy for attracting current customers ([Fombrun & Shanley, 1990](#)). [Kurhayadi et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrate that customer loyalty can be enhanced through positive word-of-mouth and exceptional customer experiences. An airline with an established image and reputation is more competitive in retaining current customers and attracting new ones, as customers tend to associate positive experiences with the brand ([Connor & Davidson, 1997](#)). In 2024, Malaysia Airlines received a gold medal for the best customer retention strategy, the best airline brand in Southeast Asia, and the best cabin crew in Malaysia.

A strong reputation fosters the perception among customers that they will receive superior service quality and enjoy a value-for-money experience compared to competitors ([Dowling & Staelin, 1994](#)). Price represents the sum of value a consumer is willing to exchange for the benefits gained from purchasing a product or service. Price-sensitive travelers are more likely to remain loyal to airlines that provide affordable services without compromising quality. Malaysia Airlines has successfully stimulated market demand during the low season through price promotions. For instance, the MHflypass Malaysia promotion allows customers to plan up to three return trips within a year to any domestic destination, encouraging purchases among existing and potential air travelers. Based on these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Airline image has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction, as noted by [Tahir et al. \(2013\)](#), is a customer's perspective based on expectations and then subsequent post-purchase experience. This implies that satisfaction is achieved when the service quality meets or exceeds the customer's expectations. Customer satisfaction represents a measurement of how pleased customers are with a company's service, product, and competencies ([Waebuesar et al., 2022](#)). [Minarti and Segoro \(2014\)](#) defined satisfaction as an attitude, assessment, and emotional response demonstrated by customers after the purchase process. [Yap et al. \(2012\)](#) described satisfaction as an overall customer attitude toward a service provider. [Awwad \(2012\)](#) emphasized that customer satisfaction has become a primary concern for companies and service providers to establish strong and long-term relationships with their customers. According to [Pizam and Ellis \(1999\)](#), one of the most critical goals for a company is retaining and satisfying both current and new customers.

Global evaluations of service experiences have been described as the cognitive evaluation of the overall satisfaction derived from the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that constitute the experience ([Pizam & Ellis, 1999](#); [Tse & Wilton, 1988](#)). [Oliver \(1980\)](#) defined satisfaction as a cognitive state resulting from a comparison of expectations with perceived performance.

[Wong and Sohal \(2003\)](#) asserted that the likelihood of repurchase increases when a company satisfies a greater number of customer expectations during the service. In the airline industry, service quality is a critical factor, as providing excellent service quality to customers is essential for the sector's sustainability ([Atilgan et al., 2008](#)). Hence, delivering superior service quality enhances customer satisfaction, attracting more customers and increasing profitability.

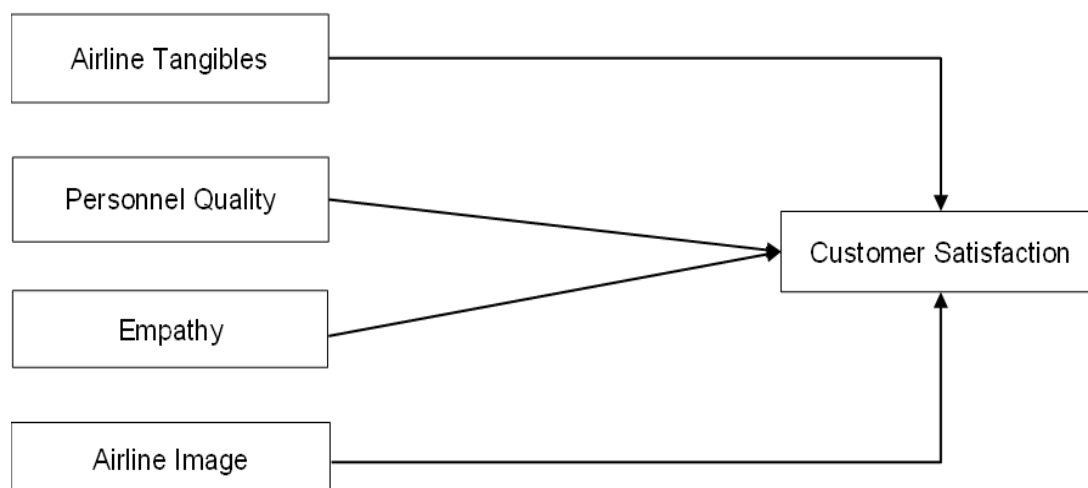
Customer satisfaction serves as one of the key indicators of an airline's competitiveness. With the rapid evolution of the competitive business environment, customer expectations and demands are continually rising, creating challenges for many companies, especially airlines, in retaining their customers ([Ali & Raza, 2017](#)). Furthermore, the inability to understand customers' actual needs serves as a significant barrier for airlines in delivering high-quality service. The competitive market landscape has compelled airlines to prioritize cost reduction to achieve operational efficiency. However, this approach often results in the compromise of service quality and customer satisfaction ([Boetsch et al., 2011](#)).

Gaps in the Existing Literature

The existing research on the factors that influence customer satisfaction in using Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia has several gaps that warrant further exploration. Previous

literature reviews have not extensively examined this topic, as it was commonly assumed that customers did not prioritize their satisfaction in using Malaysia Airlines. Additionally, many Malaysia Airlines have not placed significant emphasis on their service quality efforts. Therefore, further investigation into this area is necessary.

Figure 1. Research Framework



The hypotheses in [Figure 1](#) form the basis of the research model proposed by the authors and provide a framework for investigating the relationships between the effect of airline tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image on customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

Quantitative research methods were employed to examine the relationship between the key variables influencing customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia. A questionnaire was administered using Google Forms to collect data from individuals with experience selecting Malaysia Airlines as their airline service provider. The questionnaire was distributed via social media platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram to gather responses ([Kee et al., 2023](#)). Data were collected from 100 respondents using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure diversity.

Measures

The study assessed the relationship between the variables Airline Tangibles, Personnel Quality, Empathy, and Airline Image on Customer Satisfaction using a five-point Likert scale. This scale ranged from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) to measure respondents' level of agreement. All survey items used in this research were adapted from prior research by [Ali et al. \(2015\)](#). A detailed list of survey items for each construct is provided in the Appendix.

Demographic data were gathered using single-statement items to determine the respondents' characteristics, including gender, age, education level, and purpose of travel. Airline tangibles were measured using a six-item scale, with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.840, indicating high reliability. A sample item from this construct is, "How satisfied are you with the cleanliness and modern appearance of the aircraft?" Personnel quality was assessed through a seven-item scale focusing on the quality of Malaysia Airlines' staff, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.912. An example of an item is, "How satisfied are you with the accuracy of reservations and ticketing transactions?"

Empathy was evaluated using a six-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.879. One sample item from this construct is, "Do the number of flights meet your travel needs and demands?" For airline image, a three-item scale was employed, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.774. An illustrative item from this scale is, "How would you rate the image or reputation of the airline company?"

The level of customer satisfaction was measured using a four-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.890. A representative item for this construct is, "Choosing Malaysia Airlines as an airline service was a wise choice." These carefully designed scales ensured reliability and validity in capturing the respondents' perceptions and satisfaction levels.

RESULTS

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Profile (N=100)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	24	24
Female	76	76
Age		
Under 20	33	33
21-30 years old	58	58
31-40 years old	3	3
41-50 years old	2	2
Above 50 years	4	4
Education Level		
School	1	1
High school	9	9
Bachelor's degree	82	82
Master's degree	6	6
Other	2	2
Purpose of Visit		
Business	19	19
Education	55	55
Medical	1	1
Visiting friends and family	25	25

Source: Processed Data (2024)

[Table 1](#) shows that of 100 respondents, 76% (N=76) of the respondents are female and 24% (N=24) are male. The majority of respondents (N=58, 58%) were between the ages of 21 and 30, followed by 33 respondents (33%) under the age of 20. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree (N=82, 82%). The author believes that the distribution of network questionnaires is because the author regards universities as the starting point of distribution and dissemination. Finally, in terms of the purpose of the visit, 55 respondents (55%) chose to use Malaysia Airlines for education, followed by business (N=25, 25%) and visiting friends and family (N=19, 19%), and only 1 respondent said he/she flew Malaysia Airlines for medical reasons. This may be because most of the interviewees are students, and most of the students' hometowns are far from the university campus, so they choose to fly to school.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha, and Zero-order Correlations for All Study Variables

Variables		1	2	3	4	5
1	Airline Tangibles	0.840				

2	Personal Quality	0.922**	0.912			
3	Empathy	0.912**	0.935**	0.879		
4	Airline Image	0.879**	0.912**	0.913**	0.774	
5	Customer Satisfaction	0.896**	0.938**	0.926**	0.904**	0.890
Number of items		6	7	6	3	4
Mean		3.8150	4.0300	3.8167	3.9200	3.9225
Standard Deviation		0.67082	0.67901	0.73798	0.68349	0.72622

Note. N=100; *p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p <0.001. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha.

[Table 2](#) outlines the descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlations among the study variables. The Cronbach's alpha values for airline tangibles (0.840), personal quality (0.912), empathy (0.879), and airline image (0.774). The coefficient alpha of the four perceived components ranges from 0.774 to 0.912, indicating that all variables have internal consistency reliability. The internal consistency is calculated using Cronbach's alpha value with a minimum criterion of 0.7 recommended by [Hair Jr et al. \(2021\)](#). The reliability of the questionnaire can be measured. It can be seen from the data in the table that there is a significant positive correlation between airline tangibles, personal quality, empathy, airline image, and customer satisfaction. This means that there is a strong correlation between all the variables. However, since personal quality ($r = 0.938$, $p < 0.01$) and empathy ($r = 0.926$, $p < 0.01$) are the highest among the five variables, it shows that personal quality and empathy have a particularly strong relationship with the overall level of customer satisfaction toward Malaysia Airlines.

Table 3. Regression Results

Variables		Satisfaction
1	Airlines Tangibles	-0.017
2	Personnel Quality	0.411***
3	Empathy	0.319**
4	Airline Image	0.203*
R ²		0.711
F Value		58.390
Durbin-Watson Statistic		2.069

Note: N = 100; *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

[Table 3](#) shows the regression analysis which is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between the independent variables, airline tangibles, personal quality, empathy, and airline image toward the dependent variable, customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia. In this case, the analysis highlights which factors significantly influence customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia.

As shown in [Table 3](#), the significant value for airline tangibles is 0.838, which is greater than 0.5. This indicates that airline tangibles are not significant and have a negative impact on customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia ($\beta = -0.017$). This led to the rejection of H1.

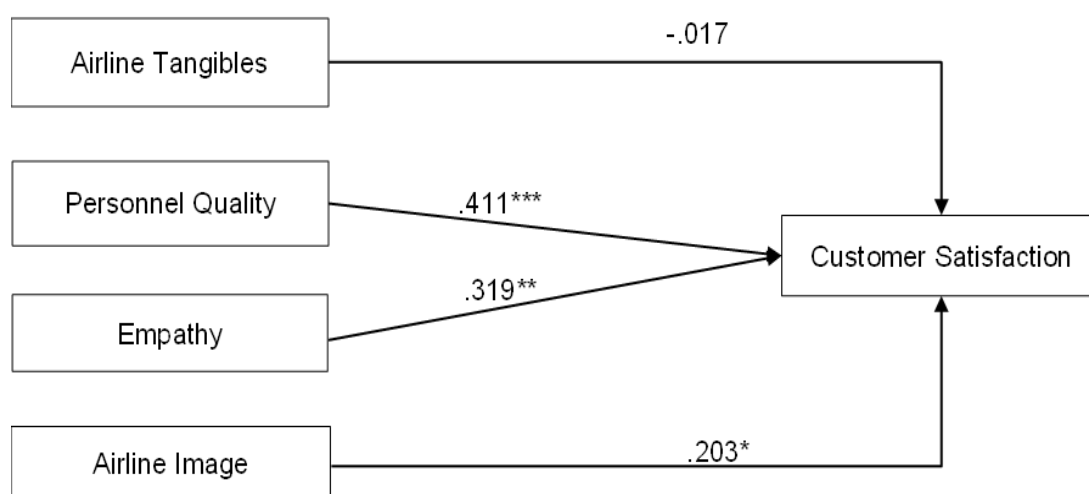
On the other hand, the significant value for personal quality is <0.001, indicating that it is significant and positively related to customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.411***$). This has supporting H2. Similarly, the variables empathy and airline image are also positively related to customer satisfaction, with significant values of 0.004 which is less than 0.01 ($\beta = 0.319**$), and 0.042 which is less than 0.001 ($\beta = 0.203*$), respectively, supporting H3 and H4.

Personal quality is the most critical factor impacting customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines, as it has the highest beta value ($\beta = 0.411^{***}$). This result suggests that Malaysia Airlines should focus on improving this factor. For instance, investing in professional training for employees can enhance the quality of service and increase customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the R Square value is 0.711, which shows that 71.1% of the variance in customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia is explained by the independent variables. This demonstrates a strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

[Figure 2](#) below demonstrates the hypothesized model of this research.

Figure 2. Hypothesized Model



DISCUSSION

This research examines the various factors influencing customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines in Malaysia. The study establishes that airline image, airline tangibles, personnel quality, and empathy have both positive and negative relationships affecting customer satisfaction. Analysis reveals that personnel quality is the most critical variable, demonstrating a strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction, followed by empathy and airline image. In contrast, tangible airline elements exhibit a negative correlation in determining customer satisfaction.

Personnel quality emerges as the most significant determinant of customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines, as evidenced by its highest beta value. This variable encompasses factors such as communication skills, staff attitudes, and the services provided by airline personnel in diverse settings, including on aircraft and at customer service counters. Attributes like attentiveness, helpfulness, and politeness are particularly impactful on passenger satisfaction ([Babbar & Koufteros, 2008](#)). Maintaining and enhancing personnel quality through professional pre-job training is essential to meet customer demands and expectations ([Timsal et al., 2016](#)). For instance, in-flight attendant training equips personnel to handle unexpected situations effectively, mitigating risks, and further enhancing passenger satisfaction ([Musili, 2010](#)).

Performance-based incentives are recommended as a strategy to sustain high personnel quality at Malaysia Airlines. For example, the "Employee of the Quarter" program could

reward top-performing employees who achieve the highest customer satisfaction ratings with benefits such as bonus payments, extra days off, or gift certificates. Such initiatives foster a culture of excellence, boosting motivation, employee morale, and customer service quality. However, this approach carries the risk of contributing to employee stress and burnout, particularly if staff feel pressured to consistently meet high expectations. To mitigate this, implementing a wellness program can help employees balance their work responsibilities with mental health, ensuring sustained performance and well-being.

The second most crucial factor influencing customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines is empathy. In the airline industry, empathy is a vital emotional quality, as employees must understand customers' needs and provide appropriate solutions. For instance, when a flight is delayed, staff should demonstrate concern and patience by offering clear explanations and sincerely apologizing. Employees who fail to empathize with customers risk harming customer satisfaction. Additionally, empathic behavior during communication with customers has been shown to enhance satisfaction and loyalty to the service brand ([Bahadur et al., 2018](#)). To address this, Malaysia Airlines should prioritize hiring employees with high emotional intelligence (EI) and intelligence quotient (IQ), as the combination of EI and IQ has been shown to improve organizational effectiveness and job satisfaction ([Caruso, 1999](#)). Incorporating advanced technology can also enhance service quality and communication. For example, transparent communication through multiple channels can promptly notify passengers about delays, cancellations, or schedule changes, providing clear reasons for disruptions to demonstrate respect for passengers' time. AI-powered chatbots or virtual assistants could further aid passengers in planning their journeys, including handling transfers and alternative transportation options. However, implementing such high-technology facilities may face financial constraints, necessitating a thorough cost-benefit analysis before adoption.

The third significant factor influencing customer satisfaction in the airline industry is the airline image. A poor airline image negatively affects brand equity, reducing customer satisfaction ([Page & Fearn, 2005](#)). Conversely, maintaining a positive reputation ensures that customers perceive better service quality and enjoy a value-for-money experience compared to competitors ([Dowling & Staelin, 1994](#)). This positive perception can enhance customer trust in Malaysia Airlines, fostering brand loyalty and increasing profitability. One way to improve the airline's image is by adopting fuel-efficient aircraft. Replacing fuel-intensive models with newer aircraft, such as the Boeing 787, can substantially reduce fuel consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This strategy positions Malaysia Airlines as environmentally responsible, appealing to eco-conscious travelers and building goodwill among sustainability-focused consumers. However, this transition poses the risk of operational disruption. Integrating new aircraft into the fleet may affect existing flight schedules due to the time needed for pilot training, certification, and operational adjustments. To minimize such disruptions, the company could schedule aircraft replacements during periods of lower travel demand, ensuring a smoother transition and maintaining service reliability.

On the other hand, airline tangible factors, such as seat quality, are less and not significant in influencing customer satisfaction compared to other variables. Customers tend to focus more on employee qualities, such as professionalism and attitude, as well as the company's reputation. This may be because the customer only takes a short flight and they are price-sensitive users. Therefore, personnel quality, empathy, and maintaining a positive airline image are more important than tangible elements. However, Malaysia Airlines should improve its airline tangibles to provide value for money for all customers. For example, Malaysia Airlines can implement an upgraded smart in-flight entertainment (IFE) in aircraft. It allows passengers to download the Malaysia Airlines

app where they can preselect their IFE options like movies, type, television programs, and regional content before flying. A relevant and entertaining experience for the passengers will increase the overall passenger satisfaction which can be achieved especially in long or overnight flights. There was a risk that compatibility issues may arise between the upgraded IFE system and the aircraft's existing hardware. It requires additional investments in infrastructure upgrades. This problem can be solved by partnering with reputable IFE vendors with experience in deploying similar systems for airlines.

Overall, the study provides insights for Malaysia Airlines in the airline industry, customer satisfaction is strongly affected by personnel quality, followed by empathy and airline image. Airline tangibles are having less effect on customer satisfaction. Companies need to pay more attention to maintaining or improving the strength of personnel quality, empathy, airline image, and airline tangibles.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to determine and measure the key drivers of customer satisfaction with Malaysia Airlines. The research focused on four main variables which are personnel quality, empathy, airline image, and airline tangibles. The results show that personnel quality emerged as the most significant driver, highlighting how employee skills, attitude, and professionalism play a role in the way perceptions are formed. Empathy was significant, especially in how employees handled customer complaints during the disruptions and acted as the second important variable in affecting customer satisfaction. Airline image was the third variable that was positively associated with brand perception that contributed towards promoting customer trust and satisfaction. Moreover, airline tangibles did not come out to be significant has indicated that although tangibles such as seat comfort, cleanliness, and in-flight amenities are critical, they do not lead the customer satisfaction in airline companies to the same levels of personnel and empathy.

The findings of this research have provided insight and important implications in two folds. First of all, the study brings great insights for airline administrations to improve the experience and loyalty of the customer. It helps the administration focus on enhancing the quality of personnel, fostering empathy, and building a strong airline image. Malaysia Airlines can better meet customer expectations and distinguish itself in a competitive market. Better experiences yield an increase in perceived satisfaction and retention of Malaysia Airlines customers. Next, the study also has broader implications for the airline industry. Findings are not only for Malaysia Airlines but also hold relevance to the industry, as airlines can learn from prioritizing human factors-personnel and empathy over physical amenities-tangibles. While airlines are investing heavily in technology and operational efficiency, the findings indicate that soft skills, such as empathy and staff professionalism, are just as important to enhancing the customer experience. This can drive an industry-wide move toward more humanized and personalized service delivery. With increasing competition among airlines worldwide, employee training, customer emotional attachment, and brand image are emerging as benchmarks for quality service.

From the study findings, several recommendations to Malaysia Airlines can be applied to improve customer satisfaction. First, for the short-term strategy, Malaysia Airlines can enhance its real-time feedback system. Design an application feature or introduce real-time rating collection using in-flight entertainment systems where a passenger can rate various elements of the service, such as empathy and professionalism on the part of personnel at the end of every flight. The result of the feedback will affect the "Employee of the Quarter" program to choose the employee with high personnel quality to reward extra bonuses and lead to motivation to improve in the next quarter. Next, invest in AI-

powered technology that will analyze passenger behavior and preferences. Use data to create personalized experiences for each passenger. An app provides virtual assistants, notifications, and valid reasons when any delay or problem is faced by customers to improve customer satisfaction. Moreover, the sustainability aspect of the marketing campaign will be focused on practices under the immediate influence of the passenger such as carbon offsetting schemes and the use of sustainable materials for in-flight catering services. Replace older aircraft with greener alternatives will attract sustainable-conscious consumers and increase the airline's image. Last but not least, upgraded smart IFE in aircraft provided entertainment for customers to avoid feeling bored when taking a flight. Customers can preselect the movie they like by downloading the airline apps.

LIMITATION

There are several limitations found in this report. First of all, the selected sample size is rather smaller, in comparison with other online surveys by choosing more than 100 respondents. Future research should collect data from more respondents to get a more valid prediction. The research conducted at the university caused major respondents to be young people and caused a lack of respondents from elder people or frequent business travelers. Future research should separate the research question through the different platforms in different levels of an aged respondent to get a better analysis of their satisfaction. Next, this research only adopts the quantitative research method cause lack of qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews which might provide richer insights into customer satisfaction factors. Moreover, this research collected self-reported data through a Likert scale questionnaire may cause biases such as social desirability or limited introspection. The use of cross-sectional design has collected data at one time and cannot capture the changes in customer perceptions or behaviors over time. The study focused only on Malaysia Airlines in the airline industry, hindering broader conclusions. Exploring other chains and industries could help compare findings.

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N/A

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest because before writing this paper, he has negotiated with all parties who are involved in this paper. For instance, when selecting this research paper topic, we have consulted ideas from our partners, who also agree with this one. If they do not agree with it, we will change it, until we get a consensus at last.

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