

The Impact of Service Quality and Pricing on Customer Satisfaction: An Analysis of Pelni Ships at Makassar Port

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Abstract

Understanding the factors that influence customer satisfaction is crucial for transportation companies to enhance their services and retain customers. This study aims to examine the impact of service quality and price on customer satisfaction, utilizing a sample of 239 passengers of Pelni ships at Makassar Port. Utilizing multiple linear regression analysis, data were collected and analyzed to determine the relationship between these variables. The findings indicate that neither service quality nor price significantly affects customer satisfaction at the 5% significance level. The unstandardized coefficients are 0.035 for service quality and 0.301 for Price, with significance values of 0.242 and 0.182, respectively. The model explains 31.2% of the variation in customer satisfaction (R Square = 0.312), with an Adjusted R Square of 0.306. However, 68.8% of the variation is attributed to other factors not included in this study. The study's limitations include the exclusion of other potential influencing factors and a moderate sample size. Future research should explore additional variables, such as perceived value and customer loyalty, using larger samples and more comprehensive methods. Companies should continue enhancing service quality and reviewing pricing strategies to boost customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1. Introduction

Numerous studies conducted across various transport sectors support the multifaceted and substantial impact of service quality and price on ship passenger contentment. The most significant predictor of passenger satisfaction is ticket price, followed by the quality of information channels and travel experience. These findings collectively underscore the significance of both cost and service quality in shaping passenger perceptions (Rahnama et al., 2024). Similarly, studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between the concept of Port Service Quality (PSQ) and consumer satisfaction in the port sector. The PSQ dimensions, which include outcomes, management, process, image, and social responsibility, all contribute to improving customer satisfaction. Consequently, it is imperative to implement comprehensive service quality management in order to achieve high levels of satisfaction (Thai, 2015).

In the airline industry, tangible elements, empathy, airline image, and price significantly influence perceived service quality, which in turn impacts passenger satisfaction. It is

evident that both service quality and price are critical for fostering long-term customer relationships, as satisfied passengers are more likely to develop brand affection and loyalty and engage in positive word-of-mouth (Boubker & Naoui, 2022). The passenger transportation sector has approved the SERVQUAL instrument, which evaluates service quality across five dimensions. However, a more efficient two-factor model that emphasizes physical and interactive components may be more appropriate. To improve overall contentment, maritime companies must prioritize tangible service quality, just as passengers prioritize the physical aspects of service, such as the condition of the ship and facilities, over interactive elements (Pantouvakis et al., 2008).

Collectively, these discoveries across various modes of transportation underscore the significant influence of both price and service quality on passenger satisfaction. Therefore, in order to meet and exceed passenger expectations, transport operators must implement a comprehensive strategy that combines competitive pricing strategies with high service quality standards. This approach

will ultimately encourage sustainable travel choices and cultivate customer loyalty.

Several studies have delved into this topic, shedding light on the intricate relationship between service quality, perceived price, and passenger satisfaction (Ardini et al., 2022; Gurtoo & Ramu, 2019; Namukasa, 2013; Setiawan, 2023). These studies collectively emphasize the pivotal role that service quality and price play in shaping passenger satisfaction, which ultimately leads to passenger loyalty. Gurtoo & Ramu (2019) highlight the significant factors that mold passenger satisfaction, including passengers' expectations, perceptions of service providers, perceived service quality, and perceived price quality. Moreover, the findings underscore that service quality has a substantial positive impact on passenger satisfaction, which in turn influences passenger loyalty (Setiawan, 2023). Studies have shown that the quality of pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight services in the airline industry significantly influences passenger satisfaction, highlighting the wider significance of service quality across various modes of transportation (Namukasa, 2013).

In the context of cruise passengers, various factors contribute to the overall satisfaction of travelers. Baker (2015) identifies elements like food and beverage offerings on the ship and at destinations, entertainment options, customer service, tours, itinerary, and shopping experiences as strong predictors of the cruise experience and subsequent satisfaction levels. Additionally, Björk et al. (2023) have studied the concept of "dinescape" on cruise ships to understand its influence on customers' attitudes, on-board behavior, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. These insights highlight the multifaceted nature of passenger satisfaction within the cruise industry, where both onboard services and destination experiences play crucial roles in shaping overall satisfaction levels.

Furthermore, studies focusing on public transportation systems, such as buses and urban transport, reveal additional dimensions

of passenger satisfaction influenced by service quality and price considerations. Research on urban transport passengers indicates that variables like service quality, price fairness, and innovation significantly impact passenger satisfaction levels (Prabowo et al., 2019). Similarly, an examination of bus transit services from the perspective of elderly passengers emphasizes the importance of perceived service quality in influencing passenger satisfaction, with various dimensions such as reliability, time schedule, route characteristics, and safety playing key roles (Yuan et al., 2019). These studies underscore the diverse factors that contribute to passenger satisfaction in different modes of transportation and demographic segments.

Researchers have explored the influence of service performance on passenger satisfaction and loyalty in public transport systems, demonstrating a positive impact of service quality and passenger satisfaction on passenger loyalty (Suryani et al., 2023). The correlation between service performance, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty underscores the interconnected nature of these variables in shaping passengers' attitudes towards public transport services. Additionally, research on the efficiency of seaports in supporting inter-island transportation highlights the significance of complete facilities, safety, affordability, and convenience in attracting passengers to choose ships as their mode of transport (Dewa et al., 2018). These findings underscore the importance of infrastructure and service quality in enhancing passenger satisfaction and promoting modal choice preferences.

In the airline industry, studies have investigated the relationship between service quality, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty. Research on airline passengers' perceptions using text mining approaches reveals key drivers of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards different airline types and cabin classes (Sezgen et al., 2019). Similarly, an exploration of the effect of passengers' gender and age on the perception

of light rail transit service quality emphasizes the influence of factors such as signage, comfort, speediness, safety, and staff service on passenger satisfaction levels (Ibrahim et al., 2021). These studies provide valuable insights into the nuanced factors that contribute to passenger satisfaction within the aviation sector, highlighting the importance of tailored services to meet diverse passenger preferences.

In conclusion, the influence of service quality and price on ship passenger satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses various dimensions across different modes of transportation. From cruise ships to urban transport systems and airlines, the quality of services, perceived price value, and customer satisfaction play integral roles in shaping passenger experiences and fostering loyalty. By understanding the intricate interplay between these factors, transportation providers can enhance their offerings, meet passenger expectations, and ultimately cultivate a loyal customer base.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The literature on service quality and customer satisfaction encompasses a wide array of studies that delve into the intricate relationship between the quality of services provided and customers' satisfaction levels. Olorunniwo et al. (2006) conducted a study focusing on service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions within a service factory context, aiming to understand how the nature of service quality influences customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The findings from this study shed light on the complex interplay between service quality, customer satisfaction, and subsequent behaviors, emphasizing the importance of operationalized service quality constructs in understanding customer responses.

In a similar vein, Afthanorhan et al. (2019) explored the effects of service quality on customer satisfaction, aiming to identify service quality dimensions that contribute to

customer satisfaction levels. This study highlighted the significance of service quality dimensions in satisfying customers and underscored the direct impact of service quality on enhancing customer satisfaction. Moreover, Wang et al. (2020) focused on the urban rail transit sector in Tianjin, China, investigating the influence of service quality and customer satisfaction on reuse intention. The study emphasized the role of service quality in creating positive customer satisfaction, which, in turn, leads to intentions of reusing the service, highlighting the importance of continuous quality improvement to foster customer loyalty.

Woldemichael (2024) examined the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction within the Ethiopian Electric Utility context, identifying five key service quality dimensions that significantly influenced customer satisfaction. This study underscored the importance of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction levels. Additionally, Saura et al. (2018) delved into the relationship between service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in the freight forwarding industry, highlighting the direct and indirect influences of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty. These findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of customer satisfaction, where service quality acts as a critical determinant of customer loyalty and retention.

Furthermore, the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction extends beyond traditional service sectors to include maritime transport. Thai (2008) explored service quality in maritime transport, identifying key quality concerns related to liner shipping services. The study highlighted the importance of reliability, timeliness, safety, security, cost control, and intermodal management in ensuring customer satisfaction within the maritime industry. Additionally, Filina-Dawidowicz & Gajewska (2018) analyzed the comprehensive service for refrigerated containers in seaports,

emphasizing the role of quality management in enhancing customer satisfaction within port authorities. These studies underscore the importance of service quality in meeting customer expectations and fostering satisfaction in the maritime sector.

The literature review on service quality and customer satisfaction reveals a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing customer perceptions and behaviors across various service industries. These studies, from operationalized service quality constructs to the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction and loyalty, collectively highlight the pivotal role of service quality in shaping customer experiences and fostering long-term relationships with service providers.

2.2 Price and Customer Satisfaction

The literature on the relationship between price and customer satisfaction encompasses a diverse range of studies that investigate how pricing strategies impact customer perceptions and satisfaction levels. One study by Fredyca (2024) delves into the effects of product quality and price on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction, revealing that both product quality and price have significant positive impacts on customer satisfaction, with product quality further influencing customer loyalty. This study underscores the importance of considering both product quality and price in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty within the selling context.

Similarly, research by Rosadi (2023) focuses on the online transportation services sector, specifically examining the impact of service quality and price on customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that service quality and price significantly affect customer satisfaction, with price demonstrating a higher impact percentage on consumer satisfaction. This study highlights the crucial role of pricing strategies in influencing customer perceptions and satisfaction levels within the context of online transportation services.

Moreover, Setiowati & Ismaya (2022) explore the effects of service quality and price on customer satisfaction in the context of grilled chicken restaurants, revealing that both service quality and price exert significant influences on customer satisfaction. This study underscores the importance of service quality and pricing strategies in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction within the food service industry.

In the hospitality sector, Saputra & Djumarno (2021) investigate the impact of price and service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty at a hotel residence, finding that both price and service quality have positive and significant effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study emphasizes the interconnected nature of pricing strategies and service quality in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty within the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, Haq (2018) examines the determination of price on customer satisfaction, revealing a positive and significant impact of price on customer satisfaction. This study underscores the direct influence of pricing strategies on customer satisfaction levels, highlighting the importance of pricing considerations in enhancing customer experiences.

In the retail sector, Munawaroh & Simon (2023) analyze the influence of store atmosphere, service quality, product quality, and price on customer satisfaction, with a specific focus on the effect of price on customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that price has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction, emphasizing the role of pricing perceptions in shaping customer satisfaction in retail environments.

Overall, the literature review on price and customer satisfaction demonstrates the intricate relationship between pricing strategies and customer perceptions. Studies across various industries highlight the significant impact of price on customer satisfaction, underscoring the importance of

pricing considerations in enhancing customer experiences and fostering loyalty.

2.3 The Theory of Customer Satisfaction

Various theoretical frameworks have extensively studied customer satisfaction, a fundamental concept in marketing and business management. According to Bedua-Taylor et al. (2022), the transaction-specific satisfaction theory intricately links a customer's satisfaction to their experience of specific service aspects, which in turn influences their decision to engage in a transaction. This theory underscores the importance of understanding and meeting customers' expectations in delivering satisfactory service experiences that lead to positive outcomes.

The value-percept theory, developed by Westbrook and Reilly (1983), focuses on how customers evaluate satisfaction based on specific attributes of a business, emphasizing that what consumers want may not necessarily align with what they value (Ing et al., 2019). This theory highlights the subjective nature of customer satisfaction and the importance of aligning business offerings with customer preferences and perceptions to enhance satisfaction levels.

Kotler et al. (2013) defined the customer satisfaction theory, emphasizing that the customer's perception of service and product quality meeting their predetermined expectations shapes customer satisfaction (Haverila, 2023). This theory underscores the role of perceived quality and meeting customer expectations in driving satisfaction levels, highlighting the need for businesses to understand and address customer needs effectively.

The expectancy disconfirmation theory (EDT) is another prominent framework in the field of marketing that seeks to explain customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Azhar et al., 2018). EDT posits that the disconfirmation of customers' expectations influences their satisfaction levels, with meeting or exceeding expectations leading to

higher satisfaction levels and an increased likelihood of repurchase.

The satisfaction-loyalty theory, which combines elements of the expectation-confirmation theory (ECT) and satisfaction-loyalty theory, explores the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Nadya, 2020). This theory suggests that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyalty towards a brand or business, emphasizing the importance of fostering customer satisfaction to drive long-term loyalty.

Studies focusing on customer satisfaction with hotels apply the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction as a dominant framework (Li et al., 2020). This theory considers multiple factors in shaping customer satisfaction levels, including service quality, product quality, and price, highlighting the multifaceted nature of customer satisfaction determinants.

Moreover, theoretical lenses like the expectation-confirmation theory and relationship quality theory often explore the relationship between customer satisfaction and other constructs, such as customer trust, brand equity, and service quality (Mursid & Wu, 2021; Shahzad et al., 2019). These theories provide insights into the complex interplay between customer perceptions, satisfaction, and broader business outcomes.

The theoretical landscape of customer satisfaction encompasses a diverse range of frameworks that seek to elucidate the factors influencing customer perceptions, behaviors, and loyalty. By drawing on these theoretical perspectives, businesses can gain a deeper understanding of customer satisfaction dynamics and tailor their strategies to effectively meet and exceed customer expectations.

3. Research Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach which aims to analyze the relationship between the variables studied.

Variables in this research include service quality (X1) and price (X2) and their relationship with customer satisfaction (Y). Service quality indicators include tangible, assurance, empathy, reliability, and responsiveness, while price variables are measured based on affordability, suitability of price to quality, competitiveness, and compliance of price to benefits.

The data used is quantitative data obtained through a survey of Pelni ship customers at Pelindo Regional 4 Makassar Branch in the period from February to April 2024. The population in this research is all Pelni ship passengers departing from Pelindo Regional 4 Makassar Branch during that period. Based on calculations using a purposive sampling technique, a sample size of 239 respondents was obtained, which was considered representative to describe the population.

Data analysis methods in this research include descriptive statistical analysis to describe sample characteristics and research

variables, as well as regression analysis to test the proposed hypothesis. Customer satisfaction is measured using indicators of conformity to expectations, intention to reuse the service, and willingness to recommend. The collected data was analyzed using statistical software to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. This approach is expected to provide a clear understanding of the influence of service quality and price on customer satisfaction.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 Research Results

Multiple linear regression analysis examines the linear relationship between several independent variables and the dependent variable. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is positive or negative, and to estimate the value of the dependent variable when the independent variables fluctuate.

Table 1. Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	10,454	1,524		6,861	,000
	Service Quality	,035	,030	,063	1,173	,242
	Price	,301	,029	,559	10,321	,182

Based on the regression analysis table, it can be seen that the independent variables (Service Quality and Price) do not significantly affect the dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction) at a 5% significance level. This means that changes in Service Quality and Price do not substantially affect Customer Satisfaction within the sample used. The constant value is 10.454 with a standard error of 1.524. The t-value for the constant is 6.861 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000. This indicates that the constant is statistically significant at a 99% confidence level, meaning that under conditions where all independent variables are zero, the customer satisfaction value is 10.454.

The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the Service Quality variable is 0.035, with a standard error of 0.030. The obtained t-value is 1.173 with a significance value of 0.242. Since the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that Service Quality does not significantly affect Customer Satisfaction at the 5% significance level. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.063 indicates that the impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction is relatively small compared to other independent variables.

The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the Price variable is 0.301, with a standard error of 0.029. The obtained t-value is 10.321 with a significance value of 0.182. Although the

t-value is quite high, the significance value is greater than 0.05, indicating that Price does not significantly affect Customer Satisfaction at the 5% significance level. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.559 indicates that Price

has a relatively large impact on Customer Satisfaction compared to the Service Quality variable, but this impact is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Correlation and Determination Coefficients

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted RSquare	Std. Error of theEstimate
1	0,558 ^a	0,312	,306	2,156

The R Square value of 0.312 indicates that 31.2% of the variation in customer satisfaction can be explained by variations in service quality and price. This indicates that the regression model has moderate predictive power. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.306 accounts for the number of independent variables in the model, providing a more accurate picture of the model's predictive power when additional variables are added. This means that the regression model used can explain about one-third of the total variation in customer satisfaction based on these two independent variables. The remaining 68.8% is explained by other factors not included in this model. The Adjusted R Square value is 0.306. Adjusted R Square is the value adjusted for the number of variables in the model, providing a more accurate picture of the model's predictive power when the number of independent variables increases. The value of 0.306 indicates that after accounting for the number of independent variables, the model still explains about 30.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction. Adjusted R Square is lower than R Square due to the adjustment for the number of independent variables in the model. The Standard Error of the Estimate is 2.156. This value indicates the standard error

of the regression model's estimate. The smaller this value, the better the model is at predicting the dependent variable. In this context, a standard error of 2.156 indicates the extent to which customer satisfaction predictions tend to deviate from their actual values.

Based on these regression analysis results, it can be concluded that the model consisting of Service Quality and Price as independent variables can explain 31.2% of the variation in Customer Satisfaction. The Adjusted R Square indicates that even with adjustments for the number of variables, the model still explains about 30.6% of that variation. The Standard Error of the Estimate of 2.156 indicates the level of error in predicting customer satisfaction. While this model provides a fairly good explanation of the variation in customer satisfaction, other factors that might influence customer satisfaction are not included in this model. Overall, although the Service Quality and Price variables are not statistically significant in the regression model (based on the significance values), this model still provides meaningful insights into the relationship between independent and dependent variables. However, further research may be needed to identify other factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. coefficient (Beta) of 0.063 indicates that the impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction is relatively small compared to the Price variable.

4.2 Research Discussion

Based on the regression analysis results, the unstandardized coefficient for the Service Quality variable is 0.035 with a significance value of 0.242. This value is greater than 0.05, indicating that Service Quality does not significantly affect Customer Satisfaction at the 5% significance level. The standardized

The first hypothesis test (H1), which states that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Satisfaction, is not supported by these research findings. The significance value of 0.242 is greater than 0.05,

indicating that the effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction is not statistically significant. This may be due to other more dominant factors influencing customer satisfaction that are not included in this research model. The analysis results show that although the direction of the effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction is positive, this effect is not statistically significant.

The unstandardized coefficient for the Price variable is 0.301 with a significance value of 0.182. This value is also greater than 0.05, indicating that Price does not significantly affect Customer Satisfaction at the 5% significance level. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.559 indicates that Price has a relatively larger impact on Customer Satisfaction compared to the Service Quality variable, but this impact is also not statistically significant.

The second hypothesis test (H2), which states that Price has a negative and significant effect on Customer Satisfaction, is not supported by these research findings. The analysis results show that the effect of Price on Customer Satisfaction is positive, not negative, and this effect is not statistically significant.

These results differ from some previous studies that have highlighted the significant impact of Service Quality and Price on Customer Satisfaction. For instance, studies by Gurtoo and Ramu (2019) and Setiawan (2023) emphasize the pivotal role of Service Quality in shaping Customer Satisfaction, which ultimately leads to customer loyalty. Similarly, research by Namukasa (2013) in the airline industry underscores the significance of service quality in influencing passenger satisfaction.

However, the findings of this study align with research by Yuan et al. (2019) on bus transit services, which suggest that various dimensions such as reliability, time schedule, and safety play key roles in influencing passenger satisfaction, indicating that factors beyond service quality and price are also crucial.

Moreover, research on public transportation systems by Suryani et al. (2023) demonstrates the positive impact of service performance on passenger satisfaction and loyalty, reinforcing the idea that multiple elements contribute to overall satisfaction. The correlation between service performance, passenger satisfaction, and loyalty underscores the interconnected nature of these variables in shaping passenger attitudes towards transport services.

Although the regression model used can explain part of the variation in Customer Satisfaction, the analysis results show that neither Service Quality nor Price significantly affects Customer Satisfaction. This means that there are other factors that may be more dominant in influencing Customer Satisfaction that are not included in this model.

Further research is needed to identify other factors that can influence Customer Satisfaction. Additionally, using a larger sample and more comprehensive analysis methods may provide deeper and more accurate results regarding the relationship between Service Quality, Price, and Customer Satisfaction.

5. Closing

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the regression analysis results, this study concludes that the variables Service Quality and Price do not have a significant effect on Customer Satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient for the Service Quality variable is 0.035 with a significance value of 0.242, indicating that its effect on Customer Satisfaction is not statistically significant. Similarly, the Price variable has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.301 with a significance value of 0.182, which also indicates no significant effect on Customer Satisfaction.

The regression model used can explain 31.2% of the variation in Customer Satisfaction based on the R Square value. However, 68.8% of the variation in Customer Satisfaction is explained by other factors not included in this model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.306

also indicates an adjustment for the number of variables in the model, suggesting that this model still explains about 30.6% of that variation. Thus, although Service Quality and Price are not statistically significant, this model still provides insights into the relationship between independent and dependent variables, and further research is needed to identify other more dominant factors influencing Customer Satisfaction.

5.2 Suggestion

Although service quality did not show a significant effect in this study, it is still important for companies to continuously evaluate and improve the quality of services provided. This approach can enhance positive perceptions from customers. Additionally, companies need to review their pricing strategies to ensure alignment with the quality of services provided. Competitive pricing that matches the benefits received by customers can enhance satisfaction and customer loyalty. Further research is recommended to include other variables that may be more relevant and have a significant impact on customer satisfaction, such as perceived value, customer loyalty, or psychographic factors. Using more comprehensive research methods, such as structural equation modeling (SEM) and longitudinal analysis, along with larger and more diverse samples, is also suggested to obtain deeper and more accurate results.

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