An Integrated Analysis of Key Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction in Asian Low-Cost Airlines

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of low-cost carriers (LCCs) has intensified competition in the airline industry, making customer satisfaction a critical determinant of long-term sustainability. AirAsia, as a leading low-cost airline in the ASEAN region, must continuously understand the factors shaping passenger satisfaction. This study aims to examine the influence of service quality, price, convenience, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on customer satisfaction with AirAsia. A quantitative research design was employed using an online survey administered via Google Forms. Data were collected from 150 AirAsia passengers in Asia and analyzed using multiple regression analysis in SPSS. The results indicate that CRM has the strongest positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), followed by price ($\beta = 0.366$, $p < 0.001$) and service quality ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.05$). Convenience shows a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that relational and value-based factors play a more decisive role than functional convenience in the low-cost airline context. The study concludes that prioritizing CRM initiatives, alongside competitive pricing and consistent service quality, is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction and sustaining competitive advantage in the airline industry.

Keywords: Airline Industry; Customer Satisfaction; Customer Relationship Management (CRM); Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs); Service Quality

INTRODUCTION

The airline industry has undergone substantial transformation over the past two decades, particularly with the rapid expansion of low-cost carriers (LCCs) that have reshaped competitive dynamics and consumer expectations. Among these carriers, AirAsia has emerged as one of the most prominent players in the Southeast Asian aviation market. Founded by Tony Fernandes on 20 December 1993 and headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, AirAsia has grown into the largest low-cost airline in the region, operating across ASEAN countries, South Asia, Greater China, and the Middle East. The airline currently serves more than 130 routes, connecting diverse markets and passenger segments through an extensive domestic and international network (Routesonline, 2025). Consistent with its slogan, "Now Everyone Can Fly," AirAsia has positioned itself as a pioneer in democratizing air travel by offering fares that are substantially lower than those of traditional full-service airlines, while simultaneously emphasizing service innovation and customer-centric strategies rather than focusing solely on profitability (Mamrina et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2025).

In recent years, competition within the aviation industry has intensified due to the growing number of LCCs, the strategic responses of full-service airlines, and rapidly rising customer expectations. Today's airline customers are more informed, more price-sensitive, and less loyal to a single brand compared to previous decades (Teoh, Engberg et al., 2023). Even airlines that perform well operationally face persistent challenges in meeting evolving customer expectations, as passengers increasingly evaluate airlines based on multiple criteria beyond basic transportation services. In this context, customer satisfaction has become a central determinant of business sustainability and competitive advantage in service-oriented industries, including aviation (Bing, 2022). When airlines fail to meet or exceed passenger expectations, customer satisfaction deteriorates, which may negatively affect repurchase intentions, word-of-mouth behavior, and long-term brand loyalty (Maisarah et al., 2020).

Given the highly competitive nature of the low-cost airline segment, understanding the factors that shape customer satisfaction is particularly critical. While affordable pricing has traditionally been the core value proposition of LCCs, price alone may be insufficient to sustain customer satisfaction in the long run. Although low fares can attract first-time customers, continued patronage increasingly depends on how well airlines manage service delivery, customer interactions, and relationship-building efforts. Prior studies have shown that when non-price-related service attributes are neglected, customer satisfaction may decline despite competitive pricing strategies (Mohsein et al., 2025). Therefore, a narrow focus on a single determinant provides an incomplete understanding of customer satisfaction in the airline industry, particularly within mature LCC markets.

Despite the growing body of literature on airline service evaluation, several gaps remain. Existing studies often emphasize isolated factors, such as price competitiveness or service quality, without sufficiently examining how multiple determinants jointly influence customer satisfaction in an integrated framework. This fragmented approach limits the ability to assess the relative importance of different factors and obscures potential interactions among service-related, economic, and relational dimensions. Moreover, while convenience is frequently assumed to be a critical determinant of customer satisfaction, its role may diminish in markets where digital booking systems, online check-in, and standardized service processes have become basic expectations rather than sources of differentiation. At the same time, relational elements such as customer relationship management (CRM), which encompass communication quality, responsiveness, and customer engagement, remain underexplored in the context of low-cost airlines, despite their growing relevance in fostering long-term customer relationships.

To address these limitations, the present study adopts a comprehensive framework that simultaneously examines four key determinants of customer satisfaction in the airline industry: service quality, price, convenience, and CRM. By integrating these variables into a single model, this study seeks to provide a more holistic understanding of how different dimensions collectively influence customer satisfaction toward AirAsia. This approach allows for the comparison of the relative strength of each factor, thereby offering deeper insights into which determinants play a more dominant role in shaping passenger evaluations in a low-cost airline context.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated perspective, which moves beyond single-factor analyses to assess customer satisfaction as a multidimensional construct influenced by both transactional and relational elements. In the context of AirAsia, one of the largest LCCs in the ASEAN region serving a broad and diverse customer base through extensive domestic and international operations, such a comprehensive approach is particularly relevant (Fickry et al., 2020). Rather than focusing solely on operational efficiency or pricing strategies, this study highlights the importance of balancing cost leadership with effective customer relationship practices and service delivery mechanisms. By doing so, it responds to calls in the literature for more nuanced investigations of customer satisfaction in low-cost airline environments characterized by intense competition and increasingly sophisticated consumers.

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study offer valuable implications for airline managers and service providers. By identifying the most influential factors affecting customer satisfaction, airlines such as AirAsia can better allocate resources, refine pricing strategies, enhance service quality, and strengthen CRM initiatives to improve overall customer experience. These insights are particularly useful for designing strategies that not only attract customers through competitive fares but also retain them through effective relationship management and consistent service performance. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the existing literature by extending customer satisfaction research within the airline industry through a holistic and empirically grounded framework, thereby enriching theoretical discussions on service management and relationship marketing.

In summary, this study aims to examine the key factors influencing customer satisfaction toward AirAsia in the Asian aviation market. By integrating service quality, price, convenience, and CRM into a unified research framework, the study advances the understanding of customer satisfaction determinants in the low-cost airline sector. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for industry practitioners while offering a meaningful contribution to airline service research and customer satisfaction theory, thereby supporting the sustainable growth and competitive positioning of LCCs in the evolving aviation landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Underpinning
Theoretical underpinning refers to the foundational framework for understanding and guiding research across various disciplines (Hassim et al., 2024). In this research, the Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT), originally proposed by Oliver in Oh et al. (2022), is employed. According to Vijay (2025), ECT posits that individuals form expectations prior to experiencing a service or product, and after consumption, they compare these expectations with their actual experience. If performance meets or exceeds expectations, confirmation occurs, leading to satisfaction. Otherwise, disconfirmation results in dissatisfaction.

In the context of AirAsia as a LCC within the service industry, ECT is particularly relevant. Passengers generally expect affordable pricing and standard services prior to their travel experience. After the flight, they evaluate the service received, such as service quality, pricing fairness and value, convenience, and CRM against their pre-existing expectations. Customer satisfaction emerges when these service attributes confirm or surpass customers' expectations.

Customer Satisfaction

The notion of customer satisfaction is a central idea in marketing and business strategy; it has been defined as a feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on a product or service performance relative to customers' expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It is an important determinant of business success, as it can ultimately lead to more stable outcomes such as customer loyalty (Wilfred et al., 2024). In the complex and intense airline business, which is clearly an extremely competitive service industry, there is truly nothing considered more essential or important than thoroughly knowing, accurately measuring, and actively working to increase overall customer satisfaction levels. It has been suggested that satisfaction is known to impact customer behavior, including repeat purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth (Wilfred et al., 2024). Recent evidence also shows that the level of service quality has a major influence on customer satisfaction in accordance with Teoh, Gan et al (2023), which in turn is an important mediator towards determining brand loyalty. As such, customer satisfaction represents a key competitive advantage for AirAsia airlines. Customer Satisfaction in the airline business can be affected by various factors that together shape a consumer's perception of the company.

Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

In previous studies, especially in the service and aviation industry, some important factors were found that are considered antecedents of customer satisfaction. The four core dimensions of interest, which we focus on in the context of our research study, are service quality, price, convenience, and CRM measures. These four influential parameters are purposefully chosen and combined to give a fully encompassed coverage of the study area on passenger customer satisfaction, not only along the actual physical in-flight experience but also including signaling anterior pre-passage phases alongside subsequently consecutive post-trip effects.

Service Quality

Service quality is widely considered a critical dimension of competitiveness and a major area of attention for both practitioners and researchers. Service quality is commonly characterized by how well the service provided satisfies customers' needs and expectations (Singh et al., 2021). It is broadly defined as the output of a service delivery system that shapes consumer satisfaction and perceptions (Vu, 2021).

The link between service quality and customer satisfaction is well established. This relationship is confirmed within the airline industry. As the entire air transport industry is both an integral body and an important subsector of the general service sector, it also directly serves to crucially contribute towards playing an important role in influencing and ultimately molding customers' attitudes toward their perception and subjective evaluation, therefore determining the final level of customer satisfaction.

The overall service experience is often broken down into three main dimensions: Non-aviation service (such as airport lounge access), ground service (covering check-in procedures and baggage handling), and in-flight service (including cabin crew interaction, seat comfort, and catering). Each of these dimensions significantly influences customers' perceptions of service quality and consequently their overall satisfaction.

In a study focused on AirAsia, it was found that service quality dimensions significantly influenced customer satisfaction (Teoh, Gan et al., 2023). This aligns with broader service industry research in Malaysia, which also identified service quality as a key determinant of customer satisfaction in the ride-hailing sector (Adam et al., 2020).

H1: Service quality is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Price

Price is a fundamental element that reflects the economic value of a product or service provided to customers. It is an instrument that balances the value consumers receive compared to the cost they incur (Wulandari et al., 2024). Customers' subjective perceptions regarding both price fairness and the gained value-for-money are very significant and very important for the long-term success of an airline such as AirAsia, which has intentionally and successfully based its entire brand identity and market position on the strong core promise of being consistently "affordable and accessible" to a wide range of passengers.

Perceived value refers to the evaluation of customers towards the utility of a product or service. It represents an assessment of the added value of a product as observed from the customer's perspective. The perception of customer value considers the services of a business in terms of benefits, quality, and price (Janati & Kusmayadi, 2024). A product or service is considered to have a higher value if consumers feel that the service provided by a particular business is in accordance with the needs and desires of customers compared to its competitors.

Price fairness refers to customers' judgments and emotions about whether cost and benefits considered by customers are fair, acceptable, or reasonable. According to Hameed et al. (2024), price fairness plays an important role in shaping customer perceptions of airlines. If the price offered is reasonable, this will increase the customer's desire to continue using the service. In the airline industry, fair pricing does not only mean cheap ticket prices, but also includes additional policies such as baggage fees, seat selection, and available facilities. Therefore, it is important for airlines to maintain price transparency and provide clear information to customers regarding additional costs (Oktafiani, 2025).

H2: Low price is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Convenience

In the context of an airline, convenience can be defined as how simple and accessible the services are for customers. Convenience can be divided into three important dimensions: decision convenience, access convenience, and post-benefit convenience.

The first and most important pre-flight stage is heavily influenced by decision convenience, which has an impact on the entire passenger experience. Convenience is a practice that saves customers' time and effort during the purchase procedure through an intermediary platform or the airline's official website (Yo et al., 2021).

Access convenience refers to an airline's customer service availability through multiple communication platforms during convenient operating hours, enabling passengers to seek assistance easily. Post-benefit convenience reflects the airline's capability to provide effective follow-up services, including responding to passenger inquiries and resolving issues related to flight bookings or travel experiences. Overall, these convenience dimensions emphasize the ease with which passengers can access assistance and receive support both before and after the flight experience.

AirAsia connects people and communities across more than 130 routes, emphasizing convenience as a key component of its service portfolio. Despite its practical significance, recent studies have frequently disregarded convenience as a separate variable in the airline satisfaction models (Wilfred et al., 2024). This study contends that for LCC passengers who prioritize efficiency and accessibility, convenience stands out as an important and distinct factor influencing overall satisfaction.

H3: Convenience is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
CRM is a comprehensive and predominantly widely implemented strategy, business model, process, or technology approach used to effectively manage and optimize interactions between the company and its customers as well as other stakeholders. This strategic focus reflects the essence of customer orientation. The ultimate, foundational, and overarching objective of this systematic method is two-fold: first, to improve the quality and individualization of services provided to customers; second, to support and succeed largely in maintaining long-term customer relationships, ultimately contributing to improved sales performance and revenue growth.

CRM practices may include improving customer knowledge, promoting customer advocacy, and cultivating customer involvement (Ansar & Millanyani, 2024). It is reasonable to assume that these initially lead to customer satisfaction, even though their study connected these CRM practices to customer loyalty and trust, which relies heavily on security and data integrity. The travelling customer's overall and complete experience is significantly shaped and highly influenced by effective and properly implemented CRM practices, which typically include targeted communication strategies and efficient problem-solving through quick and effective complaint handling procedures. According to Nilashi et al. (2023), it highlights that CRM effectiveness is associated with responsive customer service processes, including prompt handling of customer enquiries, personalized engagement, and systematic relationship management. Furthermore, by incorporating feedback mechanisms within CRM systems, companies can address customer concerns properly.

Despite its evident importance, sophisticated CRM has historically not been fully and comprehensively incorporated as a crucial and necessary component in many of the current, existing airline satisfaction models and frameworks. As such, this present research study specifically seeks to thoroughly address and rectify this gap by investigating and analyzing the direct and measurable relationship between strong CRM implementation and high customer satisfaction achievement.

H4: CRM is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework
Figure 1 presents the research framework for this study.

Figure 1. Research Framework
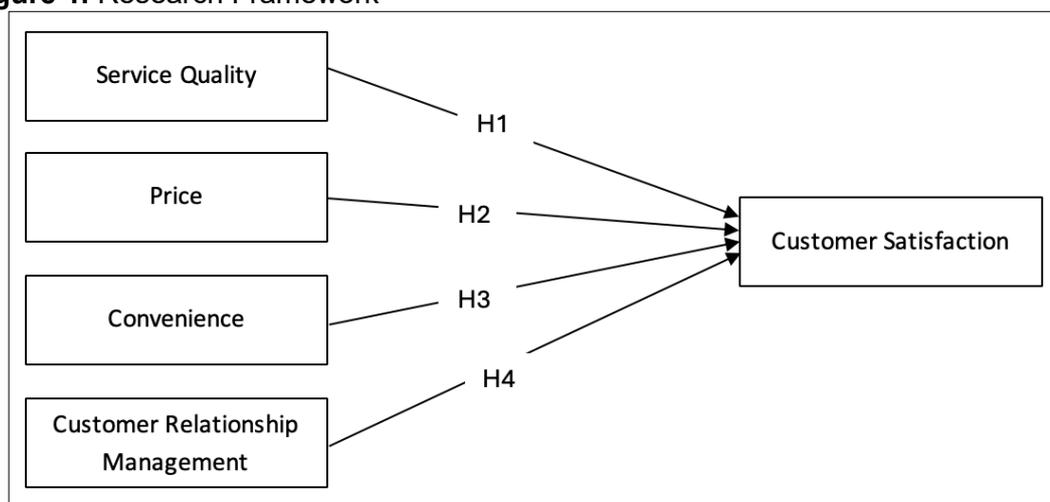
RESEARCH METHOD

Sampling

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach to examine the factors influencing customer satisfaction with AirAsia. The target population comprised individuals in Asia who had flown with AirAsia at least once, ensuring that respondents possessed relevant experience to evaluate the airline's services. A convenience sampling technique was adopted due to its practicality and effectiveness in accessing AirAsia users who were readily available to the researcher. Convenience sampling is a non-probability method commonly applied in consumer behavior research, particularly when the target population is difficult to enumerate (Golzar et al., 2022).

Data were collected from respondents primarily located in Malaysia, reflecting AirAsia's core market. A total of 150 valid responses were obtained and retained for analysis. This sample size exceeds the minimum requirement recommended for multiple regression analysis, thereby providing sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2019). While convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings, it is appropriate for exploratory and explanatory research focused on understanding customer perceptions within a specific market context.

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered via Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp, over a period of approximately one month. This approach enabled efficient data collection from respondents with prior experience using AirAsia services. All completed questionnaires were screened for completeness before analysis. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics, reliability analysis to assess internal consistency, and multiple regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses.

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of six sections: respondent information, service quality, price, convenience, CRM, and customer satisfaction.

The respondent information section collected demographic and travel-related data using single-item measures, including gender, age, nationality, social status, frequency of travel with AirAsia, and purpose of travel.

The remaining sections measured the study variables using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), indicating the extent to which respondents agreed with each statement. All measurement items were adapted from established studies to ensure content validity and were organized into relevant sub-dimensions under each construct.

Service Quality was measured using 14 items across three sub-dimensions, adapted from Maisarah et al. (2020) and Phan et al. (2017). These items captured respondents' perceptions of service performance during their interactions with AirAsia. An example item is: "AirAsia employees handle the check-in process in a friendly and professional manner."

Price was assessed using eight items across two sub-dimensions, adapted from Bassey (2014) and El-Adly (2019). These items evaluated respondents' perceptions of price fairness and value for money. An example item is: "AirAsia offers prices that meet my travel needs."

Convenience was measured using 10 items across three sub-dimensions, adapted from Kaura et al. (2015). This construct captured the ease of obtaining information, booking flights, and using AirAsia's services. An example item is: "The information provided by AirAsia makes it easy for me to choose a suitable flight."

CRM was measured using 12 items across three sub-dimensions, adapted from Ali and Alfayez (2024). These items assessed the extent to which AirAsia maintains communication, responsiveness, and long-term relationships with customers. An example item is: "AirAsia values and considers customer feedback."

Customer Satisfaction was measured using five items adapted from Bassey (2014), capturing respondents' overall evaluation of their experience with AirAsia. An example item is: "Overall, I am satisfied with my experience with AirAsia."

All constructs demonstrated high internal consistency, supporting their reliability and suitability for subsequent regression analysis.

Data Analysis Technique
Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of service quality, price, convenience, and CRM on customer satisfaction. Statistical significance was assessed at the 0.05 level.

RESULTS

Table 1. Respondent Profile's Summary (N=150)

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	54	36.0
Female	96	64.0
Age		
Below 18	3	2.0
18-24	83	55.3
25-34	22	14.7
35-44	16	10.7
45-54	21	14.0
Above 55	5	3.3
Nationality		

China	7	4.7
India	11	7.3
Indonesia	1	0.7
Malaysia	130	86.7
Thailand	1	0.7
Social Status		
Employee	61	40.7
Retired	8	5.3
Student	78	52.0
Unemployed	3	2.0
How often do you travel with AirAsia?		
Almost never (One or two times a year)	19	12.7
Frequently (5 or more times a year)	10	6.7
Occasionally (2-4 times a year)	64	42.7
Rarely (once a year or less)	57	38.0
Purpose of travel (most recent AirAsia flight)		
Back hometown	1	0.7
Business	9	6.0
Education	2	1.3
Leisure / Vacation	99	66.0
Study	4	2.7
Visiting friends of family	35	23.3

Table 1 presents the demographic and travel characteristics of the 150 respondents included in this study. The sample is predominantly female, with women accounting for 64.0% of the respondents, while males represent 36.0%. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the 18–24 age group (55.3%), indicating a relatively young sample, followed by those aged 25–34 (14.7%) and 45–54 (14.0%).

Regarding nationality, Malaysian respondents constitute the largest proportion of the sample at 86.7%, with smaller representations from India (7.3%), China (4.7%), and other countries. In terms of social status, students form the largest group (52.0%), followed by employees (40.7%), suggesting that the sample is largely composed of individuals who are either studying or actively employed.

With respect to travel frequency, most respondents report using AirAsia occasionally, traveling two to four times per year (42.7%), while 38.0% travel rarely, and 12.7% report almost never flying with the airline. Only a small proportion of respondents (6.7%) travel frequently. Finally, the primary purpose of travel among respondents is leisure or vacation (66.0%), followed by visiting friends or family (23.3%), whereas business and other purposes account for a relatively small share.

Overall, the respondent profile reflects a predominantly young, Malaysian, and student-oriented sample with moderate travel frequency, primarily motivated by leisure travel.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variables		Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Dependent Variable			
1	Customer Satisfaction	5	0.947
Independent Variable			
1	Service Quality	14	0.978
2	Price	8	0.954
3	Convenience	10	0.968

| 4 | Customer Relationship Management (CRM) | 12 | 0.968 |

Table 2 summarizes the reliability assessment of the research instruments based on Cronbach's Alpha values. The results demonstrate that all constructs achieve alpha coefficients well above the recommended minimum level of 0.70, indicating a high degree of internal consistency among the measurement items and confirming the reliability of the scales employed in this study.

Customer satisfaction, as the dependent variable, exhibits a very strong reliability level, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.947 derived from five indicators, suggesting that the items measure the construct consistently. For the independent variables, service quality shows the strongest reliability performance, achieving an alpha value of 0.978 across 14 items. The price construct also reflects excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.954 based on eight items. In addition, both convenience and CRM present equally high reliability coefficients of 0.968, measured through 10 and 12 items, respectively.

Taken together, these findings indicate that all constructs are measured with a high level of consistency, supporting the suitability of the instruments for further statistical analysis and reinforcing the validity of the regression results discussed in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis

Customer Satisfaction Towards AirAsia Variables Entered (R² Change = 0.831)		Beta
1	Service Quality	0.168*
2	Price	0.366***
3	Convenience	0.059
4	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	0.427***

Note: N = 150; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the effects of service quality, price, convenience, and CRM on customer satisfaction toward AirAsia. The model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.831, indicating that 83.1% of the variance in customer satisfaction is collectively explained by the four independent variables.

Among the predictors, CRM exerts the strongest positive influence on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. This finding suggests that effective customer engagement, communication, and relationship-building initiatives play a critical role in enhancing customer satisfaction.

Price is the second most influential determinant ($\beta = 0.366$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H2. The result indicates that competitive and perceived fair pricing significantly contributes to customers' overall satisfaction with AirAsia's services.
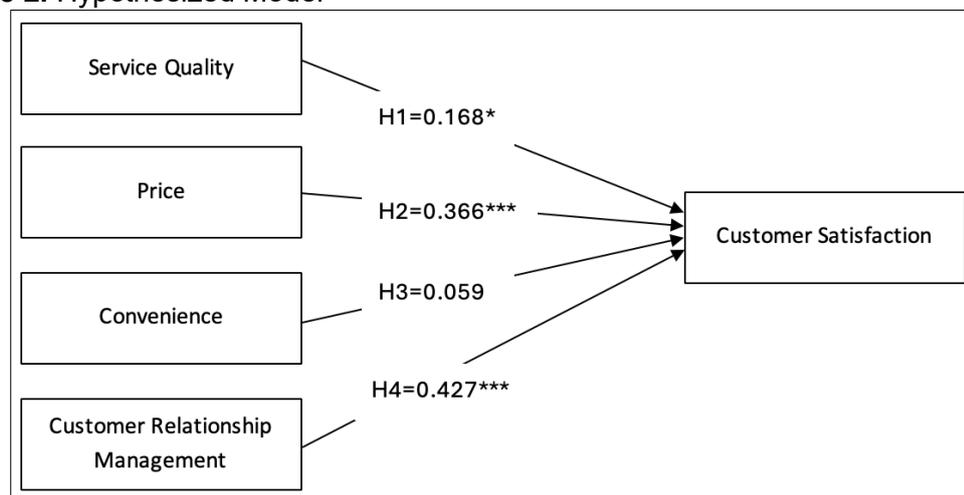
Service quality also shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.05$), thereby supporting H1. Although its effect size is smaller than that of CRM and price, service quality remains an important contributor to customer satisfaction.

In contrast, convenience does not exhibit a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$). As a result, H3 is rejected. This finding suggests that convenience may be perceived as a basic or expected feature in the airline industry, rather than a differentiating factor that directly enhances customer satisfaction.

Overall, the results indicate that CRM, price, and service quality are significant predictors of customer satisfaction, with CRM emerging as the most influential factor, while convenience does not play a decisive role in shaping customer satisfaction toward AirAsia.

Figure 2 presents the hypothesized model for this study.

Figure 2. Hypothesized Model

Service Quality — H1=0.168* — Customer Satisfaction
Price — H2=0.366*** — Customer Satisfaction
Convenience — H3=0.059 — Customer Satisfaction
Customer Relationship Management — H4=0.427*** — Customer Satisfaction

DISCUSSION

This research examines the determinants of customer satisfaction toward AirAsia by analyzing the effects of service quality, price, convenience, and CRM within the low-cost airline sector. By incorporating multiple explanatory variables into a single analytical framework, the study contributes to the airline service literature by illustrating how these factors influence customer satisfaction with varying degrees of importance. The results offer meaningful theoretical insights and practical guidance for LCCs operating in increasingly competitive and customer-driven aviation markets.

Influence of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction (H1)
The findings indicate that service quality has a positive and statistically significant relationship with customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.168$, $p < 0.05$), thereby supporting H1. This outcome aligns with prior research suggesting that service quality remains a fundamental component in shaping passengers' evaluations of airline services (Singh et al., 2021). Elements such as ground handling, non-aviation services, and in-flight experiences contribute to customers' perceptions of whether the airline delivers an acceptable level of performance.

Nevertheless, compared with other predictors in the model, the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction is relatively modest. This suggests that within the LCC environment, service quality is more likely to operate as a baseline requirement rather than a dominant source of satisfaction. Passengers expect a minimum standard of service, and once this threshold is met, further improvements may not substantially enhance overall satisfaction. This supports the notion that LCC customers tend to place greater emphasis on value-related and relational aspects than on premium service features when forming satisfaction judgments.

Influence of Price on Customer Satisfaction (H2)
Price emerges as the second most influential determinant of customer satisfaction, with a beta coefficient of $\beta = 0.366$ ($p < 0.001$), thus confirming H2. This finding reinforces the

value-for-money perspective, which posits that customer satisfaction is shaped by the comparison between perceived benefits and the costs incurred. Consistent with earlier studies, perceived price fairness and value play a central role in influencing satisfaction within the airline industry (Janati & Kusmayadi, 2024; Wulandari et al., 2024).

For an LCC such as AirAsia, pricing strategies remain a core element of its competitive positioning. Customers evaluate not only base ticket prices but also the transparency and flexibility of charges related to ancillary services, including baggage allowances, seat selection, and priority boarding. The availability of flexible fare options enables passengers to align their travel choices with budget constraints, thereby enhancing perceived value and satisfaction. These findings indicate that while competitive pricing attracts customers, it also contributes significantly to sustaining satisfaction after the purchase decision.

Influence of Convenience on Customer Satisfaction (H3)
In contrast to expectations, convenience does not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.059$, $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of H3. Although the relationship between convenience and satisfaction is positive, its impact is relatively weak and insufficient to exert a meaningful influence on overall satisfaction levels.

This result suggests that convenience-related attributes, such as ease of access to information, booking processes, and post-purchase procedures, are increasingly regarded as standard features rather than differentiating factors in the airline industry. With the widespread adoption of digital platforms, mobile applications, and online service systems, convenience has become an expected norm rather than a source of competitive advantage. This finding is consistent with Wilfred et al. (2024), who argue that convenience often loses explanatory power in airline satisfaction models due to its ubiquitous presence across competing carriers.

It is important to note that the non-significant effect of convenience is not attributable to measurement deficiencies, as the construct exhibited high internal consistency in the reliability analysis. Instead, the result reflects a contextual shift in customer expectations within mature low-cost airline markets, where satisfaction is increasingly shaped by value-based and relational considerations.

Influence of CRM on Customer Satisfaction (H4)
CRM is identified as the most influential predictor of customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong support for H4. This finding underscores the growing importance of relational and post-purchase factors in determining customer satisfaction in the low-cost airline context. Given the operational constraints faced by LCCs, which limit the extent of personalized in-flight services, customers tend to place greater importance on how effectively airlines communicate, respond to issues, and manage customer relationships.

Key CRM dimensions, including website security, responsiveness, customer orientation, and problem-solving capability, play a crucial role in fostering trust, safeguarding customer information, and sustaining ongoing engagement. This result is consistent with Nilashi et al. (2023), who reported a positive association between CRM practices and customer satisfaction. Effective CRM enables airlines to manage service failures more efficiently, incorporate customer feedback, and maintain long-term relationships despite standardized service offerings.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding extends expectation–confirmation theory by highlighting that when core service attributes are standardized or limited, customer

satisfaction is more strongly influenced by post-consumption experiences such as service recovery and relationship management. In this context, CRM serves as a strategic mechanism that offsets service limitations inherent in low-cost airline operations, thereby exerting a stronger impact on customer satisfaction than traditional service quality attributes. This suggests that investment in CRM analytics and service recovery systems may yield higher satisfaction returns than incremental service upgrades.

CONCLUSION

This research investigates the key drivers of customer satisfaction within the airline industry, using AirAsia as the study context. Previous research related to AirAsia has largely concentrated on service quality and pricing dimensions. In contrast, the present study broadens the scope of analysis by simultaneously incorporating CRM and convenience into a unified framework. The results indicate that service quality, price, and CRM play significant roles in shaping customer satisfaction, while convenience demonstrates a comparatively weaker influence.

Among the variables analyzed, CRM stands out as the strongest determinant of customer satisfaction. This finding highlights the importance of security measures, effective complaint handling, and customer-focused practices in strengthening relationships and encouraging long-term customer loyalty. The results imply that CRM should be regarded as a central component of airline customer satisfaction models rather than a secondary support mechanism. In addition, price perception shows a strong positive association with customer satisfaction, suggesting that customers feel more satisfied when the value received corresponds to the price paid. This finding aligns with the low-cost operational model adopted by AirAsia and emphasizes the importance of clear and equitable pricing policies. Service quality also contributes positively to satisfaction by fulfilling customer expectations through dependable ground and in-flight service delivery.

Although convenience exhibits a positive relationship with customer satisfaction, its impact is relatively modest compared with other factors. This indicates that customers may view convenience as a standard requirement rather than a distinctive attribute that enhances satisfaction. Consequently, efforts to improve convenience alone are unlikely to generate substantial gains in satisfaction unless accompanied by improvements in CRM, pricing strategies, and service quality.

Customer satisfaction continues to be a crucial factor influencing competitiveness and long-term viability in the service sector, particularly in the airline industry. Customers who are satisfied are more inclined to engage in favorable word-of-mouth behavior, which can strengthen brand image and organizational performance. Based on the empirical findings, AirAsia should place greater emphasis on CRM initiatives by enhancing customer engagement, strengthening data protection, and improving responsiveness to customer concerns. At the same time, the airline should sustain competitive and transparent pricing policies while maintaining consistent service standards.

In summary, this study confirms that customer satisfaction is a vital contributor to sustainable growth in the airline industry. By integrating CRM with traditional determinants such as price and service quality, AirAsia can cultivate more robust and long-lasting customer relationships. The findings offer both theoretical insights for airline customer satisfaction research and practical recommendations for managers seeking to implement customer-oriented strategies in an increasingly competitive aviation environment.

LIMITATION
Although this study offers meaningful insights into customer satisfaction with AirAsia, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, while the sample size of 150 respondents is sufficient for exploratory purposes, it may not adequately reflect the full diversity of airline passengers. Customer evaluations may vary based on travel frequency, as regular flyers tend to develop more refined service expectations compared to passengers with limited flight experience.

Second, the study is based on self-administered survey data, which are inherently vulnerable to potential biases such as social desirability and recall bias. Respondents may unintentionally report perceptions that align with perceived norms or expectations rather than their actual service encounters, which may affect data accuracy and weaken the study's internal validity.

Third, the research focuses exclusively on the Asian airline market, thereby limiting the applicability of the findings to other regions. Differences in consumer behavior, regulatory frameworks, and competitive conditions in markets such as Europe or North America may lead to different satisfaction determinants. Future studies may benefit from adopting cross-national or cross-regional comparisons to enhance the generalizability of the results.

In addition, this research adopts a cross-sectional design, capturing customer perceptions at a single point in time. Such an approach restricts the ability to observe changes in satisfaction levels or identify long-term effects of service improvements and pricing strategies. Longitudinal research designs are recommended for future studies to provide deeper insights into how customer satisfaction evolves over time.

Lastly, this study examines only a limited number of predictors, including service quality, price, convenience, and CRM. Although these factors are critical, future research could extend the model by incorporating additional variables such as technological adoption, digital service innovation, environmental sustainability initiatives, and broader market conditions. Expanding the scope of analysis would contribute to a more holistic understanding of customer satisfaction in the airline industry.

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

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