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Enhancing Customer Loyalty Through Customer Satisfaction of Service Quality and Brand Image in Travel Companies

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how customer satisfaction affects customer loyalty within the travel agency sector in Indonesia, aiming to address gaps in the current literature. This study analyzes the effect of service quality and brand image on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the travel sector in Indonesia, using a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The research shows that in Indonesia's travel agency industry, a strong brand image greatly enhances customer loyalty and satisfaction with total 30 travel agency companies. Travel companies can cultivate long-term loyalty by prioritizing brand reputation and consistently improving customer satisfaction. All dimensions have been tested for reliability, yielding a value of 0.817, and validity, with all five indicators passing the test. The results of the Customer Satisfaction variable test, revealing a GFI of 0.962 and a reliability score of 0.791. These findings indicate the data's validity and reliability for the subsequent measurement phase.

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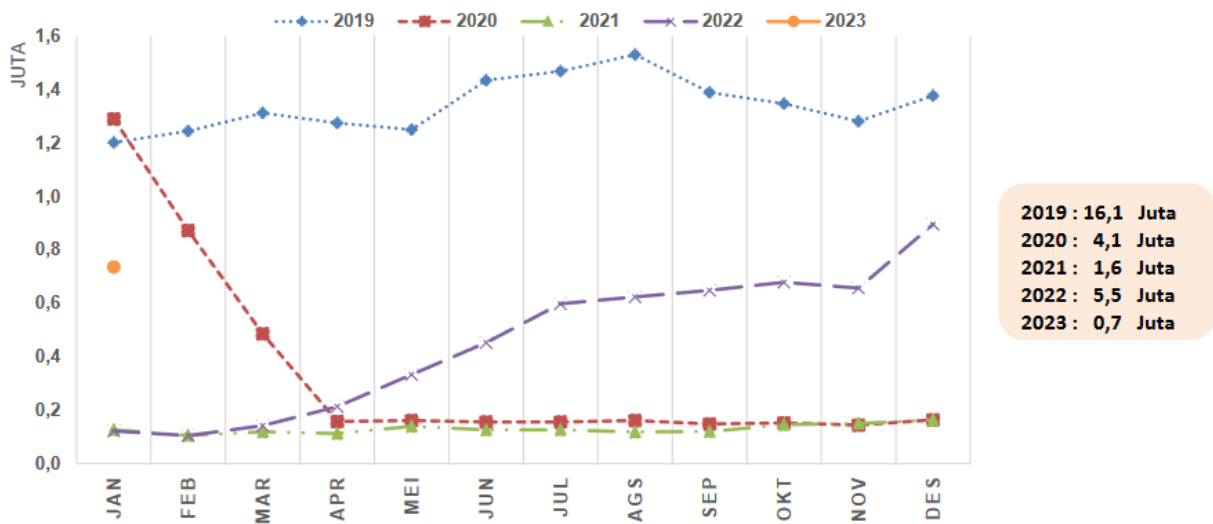
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INTRODUCTION

Travel business in Indonesia is a highly competitive sector. If your customers are loyal to you, you will succeed; otherwise, no matter how hard you work on the destinations there is no hope of success. To boost client loyalty, Indonesian travel agencies should attach great importance to raising the level of customer satisfaction through good service and brand recognition. Since travel companies who supply first-class product quality while also cultivating a solid brand image can manage customer retention and maintain good relationships with consumers for many years [1]. These will directly influence the growth of client loyalty, as well as prepare you to win a leading position in the Indonesian tourism industry [2]. Furthermore, research in the travel industry indicates that people are very often inward-focused in evaluating service companies their assessment of a company's reputation rests heavily on how happy or loyal they feel about it [3]. Therefore,

Indonesian travel agencies should invest more in these areas to attract new customers and retain existing customers Travel agencies in Indonesia can improve customer satisfaction by prioritizing service quality and brand image. This will lead to improving customer loyalty and ultimately its success in business [4].

It is very important for customer needs and expectations to provide outstanding services in airlines [5]. Therefore, in order to provide outstanding services, airlines need to work hard to understand their passengers' needs and expectations. In addition, it is critical for travel agencies operating in Indonesia to identify multiple touch points that can influence customer delight and loyalty while understanding passenger demands and expectations [6]. These touchpoints include pre-purchase contacts such as marketing and booking processes, in-flight service delivery and post-service interactions such as customer support and feedback collection shown in figure 1.



Source: <https://kemenparekraf.go.id>

Figure 1. Indonesia's tourism potential in 2023.

Despite the emphasis on customer satisfaction and loyalty in relation to service quality and brand image in prior studies [1], most of the current literature has centered on broad aspects of service quality and brand perception [7]. These researches offer important findings but fail to thoroughly analyze how certain touchpoints in the customer experience (such as before purchase, during travel, after service) impact overall customer loyalty in the intensely competitive travel sector of Indonesia [8]. Additionally, while certain elements of service quality such as tangibles, reliability, and responsiveness have been examined [9]. Further research is necessary to comprehensively grasp the psychological and emotional connections fostered by brand image [10]. The connections between perceived value, firm reputation, and service delivery are crucial factors in determining consumer loyalty in Indonesia, yet their interaction is still not well researched. The need to thoroughly analyze the connections among different touchpoints, service quality factors, and emotional aspects of brand perception explains the existing gap. This lack of information also pertains to the ways Indonesian travel companies can enhance these aspects strategically in order to strengthen client relationships and uphold their competitiveness in the growing travel sector [11].

Service Quality

The level of excellence in services that a business or organization provides is known as service quality [12]. It indicates how well the service meets the client's expectations. Low service quality may lead to unhappy customers and decreased revenue, while high service quality promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty according to Dudek (2019) [13]. Different methods can be utilized to explore the intricate aspect of service quality, which varies depending on the

specific context under examination. It has a crucial impact on determining customer satisfaction and significantly affects the relationship between service delivery and customer happiness [14]. The concept of service quality is extensively studied in the service industry to understand its impact on customer loyalty and satisfaction, highlighting its significance. By prioritizing service quality and brand image, Indonesian tourism companies can build trust, improve customer satisfaction, and foster long-term loyalty. Would you like more tailored recommendations for a specific segment [15].

As stated by Prihartono et al. (2020) [16], it covers all aspects of the customer experience, satisfaction, and the firm's capacity to meet or exceed customer expectations. This involves aspects such as the effectiveness of booking procedures, the quality of lodging and transportation, the friendliness of the employees, and the handling of issues and grievances. The quality of services offered by a travel agency is a key factor in determining its success as it impacts client satisfaction and loyalty [17].

Brand Image

Brand image represents consumers' perceptions of a brand, influenced by factors such as advertising, customer interactions, and the brand's offerings [18]. It includes the brand's identity, personality, and values as well as its overall image. Increased consumer loyalty and purchase intent are linked to a strong brand image, whilst a weak or bad image may have the opposite impact. Brand image closely correlates with brand recognition and loyalty, significantly impacting consumer behavior and purchasing decisions [19].

The goal of using brand image marketing tools and strategies is to improve brand

visibility, recognition, and customer loyalty [20]. Public relations and marketing methods are used to create and preserve a positive brand image, along with fostering community connections. Ensuring high-quality products and services is crucial for reinforcing a positive brand perception. Companies may attempt to enhance their brand image by putting these methods into practice, which will eventually lead to higher consumer loyalty and positive brand equity [21].

Customer Satisfaction

A customer's affirmative response to what they perceive to be a discrepancy between what they had previously expected from a product and its actual performance after using it and interacting with the company is known as satisfaction [22]. The price of the item plays a crucial role in sales conversion, as sales reflect the customer's readiness to pay for the product. Customers generally find satisfaction in products that are reasonably priced [23]. Within the travel and tourism industry, customer satisfaction is positively correlated with travel contentment; younger consumers tend to express higher levels of enjoyment and satisfaction than older consumers, potentially due to the correlation between perceived quality of life and individual travel experiences [24].

Customer Loyalty

Experts in marketing and research stress how crucial it is for all service-oriented businesses to prioritize client loyalty as their main goal [25]. The ease of making sales to existing clientele compared to acquiring new ones underscores the significance of customer loyalty in today's business environment [8]. These loyal clients are essential to a business's success since they increase the size of its clientele, which is why many companies place a high value on boosting client loyalty in order to promote growth. Retaining client

loyalty is still a top strategic goal for managers [2].

From Andayani et. al (2021) [26] suggests that loyal customers demonstrate traits like regular shopping, being willing to try new services, and being less sensitive to price fluctuations. Loyalty is characterized by a steadfast dedication to a brand, evidenced by consistently choosing it over alternatives, even in the presence of potential incentives to switch. This perspective resonates with the definition wherein loyal customers engage in repetitive transactions, underlining the critical importance of efforts to uphold customer loyalty for a company's viability. The notion of loyalty manifests in individuals' continued utilization of a company's offerings [27].

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses quantitative methods with smart PLS as a statistical measure to determine customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction. primary data using questioners and secondary data from interviews and literature searches relevant to the research topic. empirically, the research framework is built from various previous studies for hypotheses to be determined. rimary data were gathered through the distribution of structured questionnaires to a sample of respondents selected based on purposive sampling techniques. The questionnaire was designed to measure key constructs such as perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty using a Likert scale. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test to ensure reliability and validity.

In addition to the primary data, secondary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders and a

review of existing literature, including academic journals, industry reports, and previous empirical studies. These sources provided a comprehensive understanding of the research context and supported the development of the theoretical framework. The research model and hypotheses were constructed based on insights from prior

studies, which identified the significant influence of satisfaction on loyalty in various sectors. The use of SmartPLS enabled the evaluation of both direct and indirect effects within the model, allowing for a deeper understanding of the mediating role of satisfaction that shown in [figure 2](#).

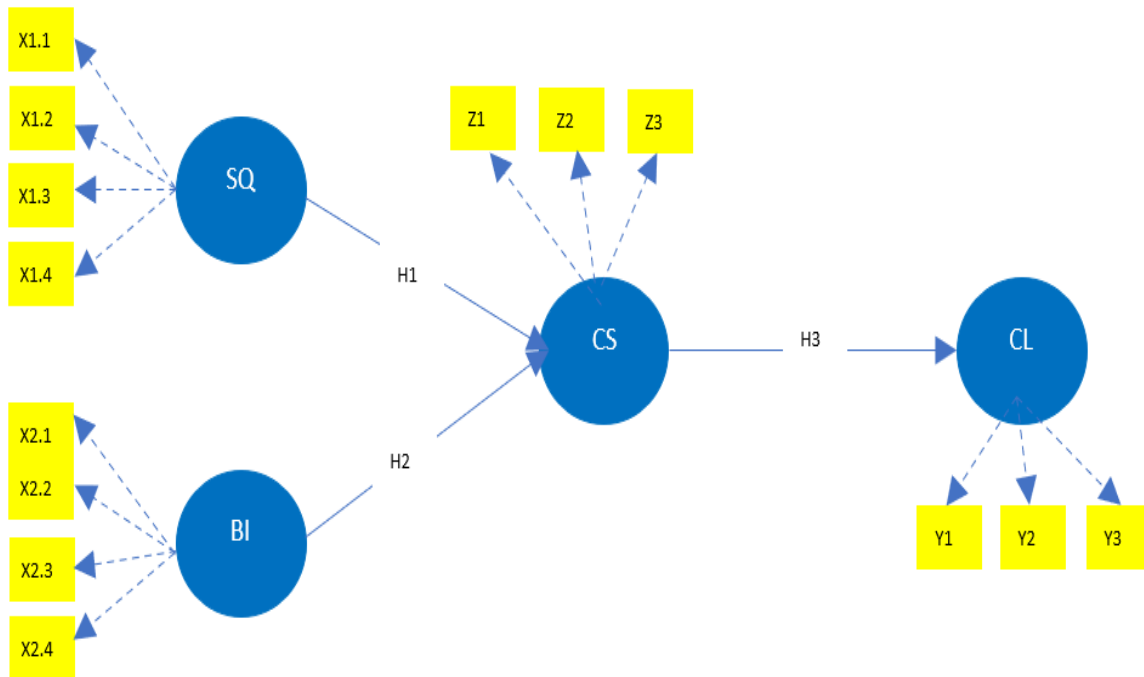


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

- H1: Service Quality contributes positively on Customer Satisfaction
- H2: Brand Image contributes positively on Customer Satisfaction
- H3: Customer Satisfaction contributes positively and significantly on Customer Loyalty

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results and discussions in this study arise because of the phenomenon, gap, and want to know the expected results with the novelty and processing from the distribution of the questionnaire to obtaining results with the help of calculation Analysis techniques assisted by existing SEM PLS software. The data below is a data from tourists as a result of a phenomenon and empirical.

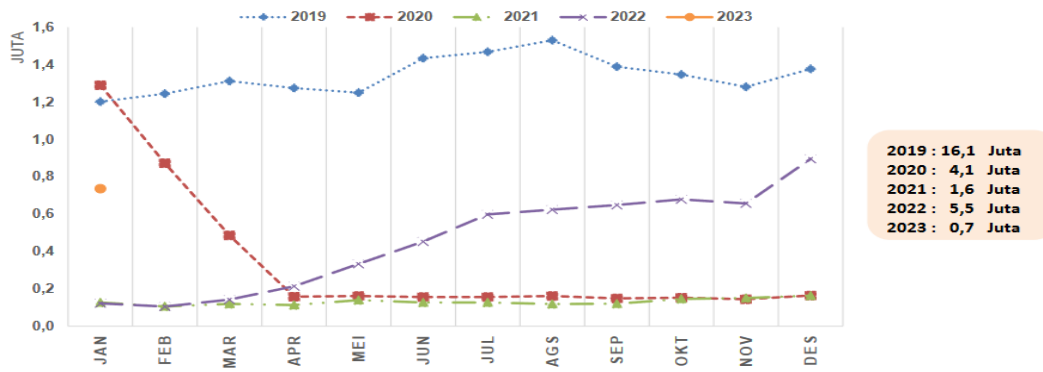


Figure 3. Indonesia's tourism potential in 2023

From the data above in [figure 3](#) with the phenomenon displayed, the calculation results arising from the phenomenon of empirical data above using SEM PLS. The expected results will be outlined where, Evaluating an instrument's validity and reliability is essential as it has a significant impact on the caliber of the data gathered. A substantial loading factor for each variable qualifies an indicator as valid, and a GFI value more than 0.90 indicates that

the research instrument is declared dimensionally valid. On the other hand, if an instrument's build reliability value is higher than 0.70, it is deemed dependable. The following table provides an overview of the validity and reliability test findings for the study instruments.

Table 1. Instrument Test For Service Quality

Indicator	Estimate	Validity Test		GFI	Reliability
		P-Value	Validity		
X1.1	1	0	Valid	0,904 (Valid Unidimensional)	0,760 (Reliable)
X1.2	1,168	0,830	Valid		
X1.3	1,075	0,602	Valid		
X1.4	8,147	0,417	Valid		

Source: SEM PLS 3, 2024

The findings from [table 1](#) indicate positive and statistically significant results across all dimensions, with a GFI value exceeding 0.90 and construct reliability of all indicators above 0.70. Consequently, the

service quality factor is deemed acceptable and exerts a positive impact on shaping satisfaction and loyalty factors among travel agents in Indonesia.

Table 2. Instrument Test for Brand Image

Indicator	Estimate	Validity est		GFI	Reliability
		P-Value	Validity		
X2.1	1	0	Valid	0,951 (Valid Unidimensional)	0,817 (Reliable)
X2.2	4,370	0,302	Valid		

Indicator	Estimate	Validity est		GFI	Reliability
		P-Value	Validity		
X2.3	5,816	0,073	Valid		
X2.4	3,406	0,271	Valid		

Source: SEM PLS 3, 2024

The data preceding [Table 2](#) indicates that all dimensions have been tested for reliability, yielding a value of 0.817, and validity, with all five indicators passing the test. This displays a positive value and a major contribution to boosting consumer pleasure, hence encouraging loyalty. A well-respected brand builds client loyalty by promoting recurring business and

purchases as a result of the satisfaction it provides. Elements like comfort, convenience, and responsive service are pivotal for consumers when selecting a travel agent for their journeys.

Table 3. Instrument Test For Customer Satisfaction

Indicator	Estimate	Validity Test		GFI	Reliability
		P-Value	Validity		
Z1	0,605	0,410	Valid	0,962 (Valid Unidimensional)	0,791 (Reliable)
Z2	1	0	Valid		
Z3	0,427	0,458	Valid		

Source: SEM PLS 3, 2024

[Table 3](#) displays the results of the Customer Satisfaction variable test, revealing a GFI of 0.962 and a reliability score of 0.791. These findings indicate the data's validity and reliability for the subsequent measurement phase. In general, the indicators suggest that

consumers express satisfaction with the convenience of service and their overall memorable travel experiences. Additionally, they feel valued and appreciated by the hospitality extended by travel agents in Indonesia.

Table 4. Instrument Test For Customer Satisfaction

Indicator	Estimate	Validity Test		GFI	Reliability
		P-Value	Validity		
Y1	1	0	Valid	0,947 (Valid Unidimensional)	0,815 (Reliable)
Y2	0,620	0,484	Valid		
Y3	0,413	0,408	Valid		

Source: SEM PLS 3, 2024

The evaluation of the Customer Loyalty variable in [Table 4](#) provides information on the credibility of its aspects. Based on the findings, customers tend to assess their contentment, with aspects such as comfort and safety being significant in building loyalty when it comes to exploring

different tourist spots in Indonesia. They indicate a probability of using the same travel agency for their upcoming vacation plans. By integrating comfort, safety, and a strong loyalty strategy, tourism companies can increase customer satisfaction and encourage repeat bookings. tourism

companies can boost customer trust, increase satisfaction, and secure long-term loyalty, ensuring sustainable business growth. These examples show how

prioritizing comfort, safety, and loyalty can drive customer satisfaction and repeat business in the tourism industry [2].

Discussion

From the results of data analysis with the help of SEM PLS software to see the influence between the variables that exist, the results are obtained with the description below in [figure 4](#).

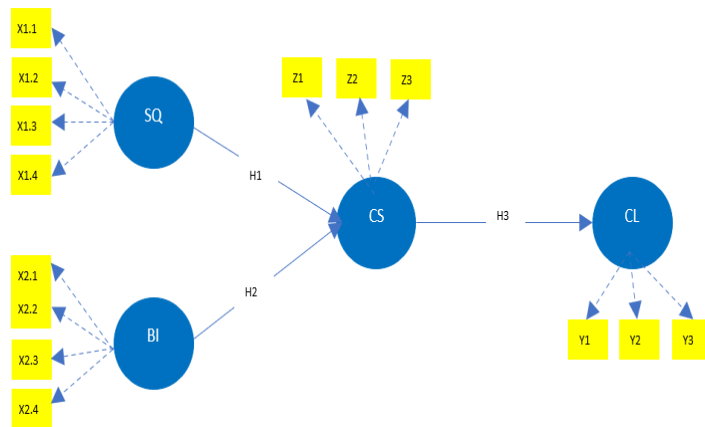


Figure 4. SEM PLS Result

The impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Table 5. The impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
The Importance of Service Quality	In the travel industry in Indonesia, service quality is a top priority, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Good service quality can improve customer satisfaction, maintain loyalty, and help companies survive in market competition	(Yuniarso et al., 2021)
Service Quality Factors	Factors such as company image, competitiveness, courtesy, responsiveness, accessibility, and competence affect service quality and customer satisfaction.	(Kuo et al., 2013)
Relationship Service Quality & Customer Satisfaction	Service quality plays an important role in influencing customer satisfaction, which in turn affects customer loyalty. Travel companies can use these findings to improve their service and operational strategies.	(Wydyanto & Hamdan, 2020)

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
Sustainability & Innovation	Continuous improvement in service quality is important to meet the changing needs of customers and maintain competitiveness in the Indonesian tourism industry.	(Keni et al., 2020).

A clear explanation in [table 5](#) of this discussion where, In Indonesia's tourism industry, the travel agency sector holds significant importance. During the ongoing disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, travel agencies should prioritize the quality of service to ensure client satisfaction above all else [\[4\]](#). Travel companies can enhance customer satisfaction by providing top-notch services, which are vital for keeping clients and staying ahead in the market [\[28\]](#). This study aims to examine how service quality affects customer satisfaction in Indonesia's travel agency sector. The study will investigate how various factors, such as corporate image, competitiveness, civility, responsiveness, accessibility, and competence, impact service quality and customer satisfaction [\[23\]](#).

The results of this research will assist travel companies in Indonesia to pinpoint growth opportunities and create plans to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, the research will explore how customer satisfaction influences the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty [\[3\]](#). These results will provide valuable knowledge for travel

agencies in Indonesia, helping them understand the importance of service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction. This will enable them to make informed decisions regarding their business operations and customer service strategies. To ensure resilience and client satisfaction, travel agents must prioritize service quality [\[26\]](#).

This study highlights the significance of service quality in the travel agency sector of Indonesia. It emphasizes the significance of service quality in influencing customer satisfaction and, ultimately, customer retention. Travel agencies have the potential to enhance their services to exceed customer expectations by focusing on aspects such as corporate image, competitiveness, politeness, responsiveness, accessibility, and competence [\[2\]](#). As a result, this will improve the overall success and sustainability of travel businesses in Indonesia's tourism sector. Continuous improvements in service quality are crucial as the industry evolves to meet changing consumer needs and to stay competitive in the long run [\[1\]](#).

The impact of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

Table 6. The impact of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
The Importance of Brand Image	Brand image has an important role in influencing customer satisfaction in the Indonesian travel agency industry. This emphasizes the importance of travel agencies improving their brand image to create customer satisfaction.	Radiah et al., (2021), [5] Andari et al. (2019) [27]

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
Indirect Impact on Loyalty	Path analysis shows that the indirect effect of brand image on loyalty through customer satisfaction is greater than the direct effect.	(Prihartono et. al, 2020) [16]
Strategies for Travel Agents	Travel agents can improve customer satisfaction by building a strong brand image, creating a positive impression, and ensuring long-term loyalty.	(Indriyanti & Irene, 2021),[19]

Explanation in narrative discussion in [table 6](#). The brand image plays a crucial role in influencing customer satisfaction in Indonesia's travel agency industry. According to a study conducted by Radiah et al., (2021)[5], the importance of brand image on customer satisfaction is emphasized. Andari et al. (2019) [27] also support this claim by identifying a significant impact of brand image on customer satisfaction in the industry. Furthermore, the path analysis findings show that the indirect effect of brand image on loyalty, facilitated by customer satisfaction, outweighs its direct influence. This shows that brand image not only impacts customer satisfaction but also indirectly influences loyalty by affecting satisfaction [16]. Therefore, it is crucial for Indonesian travel agents to prioritize enhancing their brand image to enhance customer satisfaction and cultivate loyalty. Travel agencies can create a strong and unforgettable impression on customers by focusing on improving their brand image,

resulting in increased customer satisfaction levels [19]. Hence, it is crucial for travel agencies in Indonesia to focus on building a strong and positive brand image to enhance customer satisfaction and foster loyalty. The research results highlight the importance of brand image in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty in Indonesia's travel agency industry [24]. Travel companies focusing on building a robust and positive brand image can enhance customer satisfaction and foster lasting consumer loyalty. Travel companies must consistently monitor and enhance customer satisfaction, uphold a positive brand image, and secure long-term customer loyalty in order to uphold their reputation [6]. This underscores the importance of Indonesian travel companies making strategic investments in managing their brand image in order to enhance overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The Impact of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

Table 7. The impact of Brand Image on Customer Satisfaction

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
Importance of Customer Satisfaction	Customer satisfaction holds significant value in Indonesia's travel agency industry, especially given the diverse and dynamic market conditions.	Sarker et. al (2021) [2]
Key Factors Influencing Satisfaction	Factors such as reservation procedures, client satisfaction, travel experiences, and post-trip	Dudek et al. (2019) [13]

Aspect	Discussion	Reference
Analyzing Consumer Behavior	assistance play a critical role in shaping overall customer satisfaction. A deep understanding of consumer behavior and loyalty drivers is essential. This can involve methods such as focus groups, detailed interviews, and survey analysis.	Lai et. al (2014) [25]
Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors	Cultural and socioeconomic factors, including economic conditions and travel habits, significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Indonesian context.	Purbaningsih et al., (2022) [12]
External Influences	External factors like economic circumstances and travel patterns affect loyalty behaviors and should be factored into satisfaction and loyalty analyses.	Andari et al., (2019) [27]
Tailored Strategies for Companies	By closely studying customer traits and preferences, travel companies can create customized strategies that align with their customers' expectations and foster loyalty.	Zamer et al., (2019) [3]

A complete explanation of the [Table 7](#), In the travel agency industry in Indonesia, customer satisfaction is very important, especially in the diverse and constantly evolving market [2]. Understanding the specific factors that lead to travelers' satisfaction is more important than just fulfilling their needs [13]. These components may include different aspects such as the reservation procedure, client satisfaction, journey adventures, and assistance after the trip [25]. Studying the intricate details of consumer behavior and the reasons behind their loyalty to a specific travel agency is essential for gaining a better understanding of how customer satisfaction impacts loyalty. To discover what drives loyalty, this research could involve focus groups or detailed interviews along with analyzing survey data. Moreover, it is essential to take into account the cultural and socioeconomic factors in the Indonesian context that could impact consumer satisfaction and loyalty [12].

This involves considering external factors such as economic circumstances and travel patterns that could impact the loyalty behaviors of Indonesian travelers, as well

as understanding their specific preferences and expectations [27]. By carefully examining these traits, the research results can offer a strong foundation for Indonesian travel companies to create tailored strategies that truly resonate with their customers. Ultimately, this could result in a more profound and valuable understanding of how customer satisfaction drives loyalty among Indonesian travel companies [3].

Relationship between Independent Variable and Dependent Variable

The results of the multiple regression analysis show that customer satisfaction and service quality have an impact on loyalty passengers, the dependent variable. The value of the regression coefficient indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Statistical Significance

Based on the F-statistical test results in ANOVA analysis, the regression model shows significant statistical relevance as a whole. A p-value slightly exceeding the pre-set level of significance hints at a potential connection between the

independent and dependent variables; nevertheless, further inquiry is required to solidify the findings. Explanation of Variation Rate: The R Square and Adjusted R Square values suggest that around 20.4% of the variability in Loyalty Passenger can be accounted for by Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality in the model. This indicates that regression models provide a moderate level of accuracy in describing changes in the dependent variables. The importance of customer satisfaction and service quality: The study's results show that client contentment and service quality significantly affect customer loyalty. This highlights the importance of focusing on enhancing customer loyalty, service quality, and customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the importance of service quality in the travel agency sector in Indonesia and its impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Travel agencies can enhance their services to meet or surpass customer expectations by concentrating on elements such as corporate reputation, competitiveness, friendliness, promptness, availability, and skill. This improvement is crucial for the survival and long-term success of travel companies operating in Indonesia's tourism industry. Continuous efforts to enhance service quality are vital in meeting evolving client demands and staying competitive due to the dynamic nature of

the industry. The findings of the research emphasize the significant impact of brand image on customer loyalty and satisfaction within the travel agency sector in Indonesia. Travel companies can enhance customer satisfaction and cultivate loyalty by prioritizing the development of a strong brand image. Maintaining a favorable brand reputation and securing lasting customer loyalty necessitates consistent monitoring and enhancement of customer satisfaction levels. It highlights the importance of Indonesian travel companies investing strategically in brand image management to boost customer loyalty and satisfaction levels. The study's results provide Indonesian travel companies with a solid base for developing personalized strategies that match their customers by exploring these areas further. Ultimately, this could lead to a more profound and beneficial comprehension of how client satisfaction impacts loyalty in the travel agency sector in Indonesia. Future research should explore the role of digital transformation in enhancing service quality, particularly the impact of AI-driven customer service, online booking systems, and virtual reality (VR) experiences on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, studies could examine the effectiveness of personalized marketing strategies and data-driven customer relationship management (CRM) in predicting and fulfilling customer expectations.

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