

# THE EFFECT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON SAUDI PASSENGER SATISFACTION: THE MODERATOR FOR BUSINESS MODEL

**SALLY MOHAMED AMER**

Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) College of Business, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.  
Email: smsAmer@imamu.edu.sa

**IYAD A. AL-NSOUR\***

Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) College of Media and Communication, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. \*Corresponding Author Email: iaalnsour@imamu.edu.sa

**EMAN ABDELHAMEED HASNIN**

Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) College of Business, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.  
Email: eahasnin@imamu.edu.sa

## Abstract

This study examines the impact of customer experience on passenger satisfaction in the Saudi airline industry, exploring the moderating influence of airline business models, specifically comparing full-service and low-cost carriers. The research employs a quantitative design, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from passengers of major Saudi airlines, including Saudi Airlines, Flynas, and Flyadeal. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through SmartPLS to assess the structural and measurement models and to test direct and interactive relationships. Results indicate that customer experience exerts a strong, statistically significant effect on passenger satisfaction, confirming its pivotal role in shaping perceptions within the airline sector. However, findings show that the airline business model (full-service versus low-cost) does not significantly moderate this relationship, suggesting that the effect of customer experience on satisfaction remains stable across different types of airlines. Based on these insights, the study urges airlines—regardless of business model—to prioritize delivering a seamless, integrated, and customer-focused experience at all touchpoints. Emphasis should be placed on digital transformation, process optimization, and improving employee-customer interactions. This research contributes to the literature by reinterpreting airline type as a business model rather than a firm-specific attribute, and by providing empirical evidence from the Saudi aviation context. It also delivers practical implications aligned with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Saudi Aviation Strategy, particularly by enhancing passenger experience, improving service quality, and advancing the sector's competitiveness.

**Keywords:** Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Full-Service, Low-Cost Carriers, Airline Industry, Saudi Arabia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global aviation industry has experienced substantial structural and operational transformations in recent years, largely driven by rapid technological innovation and escalating competitive pressures. These shifts have compelled airlines to recalibrate their strategic orientations, with a pronounced focus on delivering superior service quality. Within this evolving landscape, customer experience has emerged as a pivotal construct underpinning competitive differentiation and long-term organizational sustainability (Pabla & Such, 2023). Airlines are no longer confined to their traditional role as transportation providers; instead, they are increasingly positioned as experience-centric

service ecosystems that curate seamless and value-rich journeys across all stages of passenger interaction (Mirthipati, 2024).

The proliferation of digital technologies and the ubiquity of social media platforms have fundamentally redefined customer expectations, rendering them more sophisticated, informed, and experience-oriented. Consequently, passengers now assess airlines through a multidimensional lens that extends beyond conventional metrics such as price and flight duration, encompassing the holistic quality of their end-to-end travel experience (Hussain et al., 2014). In response, Customer Experience Management (CEM) has evolved into a critical strategic imperative, enabling organizations to systematically design, manage, and optimize customer interactions in ways that enhance relational value and drive sustained engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

Conceptually, customer experience encapsulates the aggregate of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses arising from a customer's interaction with an organization across multiple touchpoints throughout the service journey. These touchpoints span pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight stages, including booking interfaces, airport services, frontline employee interactions, onboard service delivery, and digital service platforms. Contemporary empirical evidence suggests that these interactions operate in an integrative and interdependent manner, collectively shaping customers' overall perceptions and exerting a direct influence on their evaluation of service quality (Moghadasnian, 2024).

Within this theoretical framework, customer satisfaction constitutes a core evaluative outcome and a key performance indicator for service organizations, reflecting the degree of congruence between customer expectations and perceived service performance (Chonsalasin et al., 2022). In the context of the aviation industry, customer satisfaction assumes heightened strategic importance due to its significant role in fostering customer loyalty, stimulating repeat purchase behavior, and generating positive word-of-mouth. Furthermore, it serves as a critical driver of corporate reputation and financial performance, thereby reinforcing its centrality in sustaining competitive advantage within the airline industry (Murugesan & Balanathan, 2024).

A substantial body of recent literature underscores the existence of a robust and positive relationship between customer experience and passenger satisfaction within the aviation industry. The quality of the travel experience encountered by passengers throughout their journey has been consistently identified as a critical determinant of their overall satisfaction with airline services (Hussain et al., 2014). Specifically, enhancements in key experiential dimensions—such as service quality, in-flight comfort, procedural efficiency, and the quality of interpersonal interactions with airline staff—have been shown to significantly elevate customer satisfaction levels (Sun et al., 2024). Empirical studies further demonstrate that effective management of customer experience not only improves satisfaction but also plays a crucial role in fostering customer loyalty, strengthening long-term relational bonds, and enabling airlines to align their service offerings with evolving customer expectations and dynamic market demands (Ng et al., 2020).

Moreover, systematic analysis of passenger experiences and satisfaction metrics provides airlines with valuable strategic insights, facilitating data-driven decision-making processes aimed at optimizing service delivery, enhancing operational performance, and sustaining competitive advantage in an increasingly saturated market (Eshaghi et al., 2024). Within the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the aviation sector is undergoing accelerated expansion, driven by the broader economic and developmental transformations associated with Vision 2030. This growth is reflected in the increasing volume of air passengers, the expansion of flight networks, and significant investments in airport infrastructure. Such developments amplify the strategic importance of customer experience management for airlines operating within the Kingdom, as passenger satisfaction has become a critical lever for competitiveness and market differentiation in a rapidly evolving and highly competitive environment (ACSI, 2024).

Against this backdrop, examining the impact of customer experience on passenger satisfaction in Saudi Arabia becomes both timely and essential. Accordingly, this study seeks to empirically investigate the relationship between travelers' experiences and their satisfaction with airline services. Furthermore, it aims to generate evidence-based insights that can support airlines in enhancing service quality and formulating effective customer experience management strategies, ultimately contributing to higher levels of passenger satisfaction and strengthened competitive positioning in the market (Zhang et al., 2023).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Customer Experience in the Aviation Industry:**

Customer experience has emerged as a central construct in contemporary marketing and service management literature, attracting increasing scholarly attention due to its critical role in shaping customer perceptions and organizational outcomes. It is broadly conceptualized as the cumulative set of perceptions, impressions, and emotional responses formed through a customer's interactions with an organization across multiple stages of service delivery (Abidin et al., 2025). Importantly, customer experience extends beyond the core service offering to encompass all direct and indirect interactions that occur across various touchpoints throughout the customer journey. This journey spans from the initial stage of information search and decision-making, through service consumption, and ultimately to post-consumption interactions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

From a theoretical perspective, Pine and Gilmore conceptualize customer experience as a series of interactions that generate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses, leaving a lasting impact on the customer (Pine & Gilmore, 2019). In a similar vein, Schmitt (2011) emphasizes that customer experience represents the holistic response of customers to a set of stimuli orchestrated by the organization during service or product delivery, ultimately shaping their perceptions and overall impressions. Consequently, modern organizations increasingly adopt experience-centric strategies aimed at designing and managing distinctive customer experiences to enhance satisfaction and foster long-term relational value.

Within the aviation sector, customer experience assumes a particularly complex and multifaceted nature, encompassing the entirety of interactions that a traveler undergoes while engaging with an airline. This experience begins with flight search and ticket booking عبر multiple channels, continues through airport procedures and ground services, and extends to in-flight experiences such as comfort, service quality, hospitality, and interactions with cabin crew, culminating in post-flight services (Wang et al., 2018). Such an integrated and continuous experience plays a decisive role in shaping travelers' evaluations of service quality and their overall satisfaction with the airline (Chen & Chen, 2019).

Recent empirical studies further conceptualize customer experience in aviation as a multidimensional construct comprising functional, emotional, and social components (Manyanga et al., 2022). Key determinants—including service quality, operational efficiency, procedural simplicity, quality of employee interactions, and the effective deployment of digital technologies—collectively contribute to the formation of the traveler's overall experience (Molinillo et al., 2022). Accordingly, customer experience management has evolved into a strategic imperative for airlines, serving as a critical mechanism for achieving service excellence, enhancing perceived value, and sustaining competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic and competitive industry. (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

Customer experience has emerged as a critical strategic determinant for achieving competitive excellence in service-based industries, particularly in sectors where service quality constitutes the core value proposition, such as aviation (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). In the context of intensifying competition among airlines and the continuous escalation of passenger expectations, Customer Experience Management (CEM) has evolved into a central strategic priority. Airlines increasingly invest in designing and managing superior customer experiences to enhance service quality, elevate customer satisfaction, and sustain competitive differentiation (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Pine & Gilmore, 2019). Contemporary literature consistently demonstrates that organizations capable of effectively managing customer experience are better positioned to cultivate long-term customer relationships and strengthen their competitiveness within global markets (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

In the aviation industry, the significance of customer experience is particularly pronounced due to its direct influence on travelers' evaluations of service quality. Passengers tend to assess airline performance based on the cumulative experience encountered throughout the travel journey—from the initial booking process to post-flight interactions (Chen & Chen, 2019).

The quality of interactions across multiple touchpoints, including airport procedures, ground services, and in-flight service delivery, plays a pivotal role in shaping passengers' overall perceptions and final impressions of the airline (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). As such, customer experience serves as a key driver of both customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Extant empirical evidence indicates that positive travel experiences significantly increase the likelihood of repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth, thereby enhancing corporate reputation and strengthening customer acquisition capabilities (Chen & Chen, 2019; Ali & Alfayez, 2024). Moreover, studies in service marketing emphasize that organizations adopting an experience-centric approach consistently outperform those that focus solely on the functional delivery of core services, underscoring the strategic value of experiential dimensions in shaping customer outcomes (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

Beyond its impact on customer-related outcomes, customer experience also contributes to improving the operational performance of airlines. By systematically analyzing passenger experiences, organizations can gain deeper insights into evolving customer expectations and preferences, enabling them to refine service processes and enhance operational efficiency (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Rather, 2021). This becomes particularly relevant in light of the ongoing digital transformation within the aviation sector, where technologies such as mobile applications, electronic booking systems, and self-service kiosks have become integral components of the travel experience (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

The effective integration of these digital solutions not only enhances convenience and procedural efficiency but also plays a crucial role in enriching the overall customer experience and increasing satisfaction levels (Chen & Chen, 2019). Consequently, customer experience has become a foundational pillar of contemporary airline strategies, with firms striving to design seamless, personalized, and value-enhancing travel experiences that align with passenger expectations. In this regard, enhancing customer experience is no longer a complementary objective but a strategic necessity for ensuring organizational success and long-term sustainability in an increasingly competitive aviation landscape (Rather, 2021; Pine & Gilmore, 2019).

## **2.2 The Customer Satisfaction in the Aviation Industry:**

Customer satisfaction is a fundamental construct in marketing and service management literature, widely recognized as a key indicator of organizational performance and service effectiveness. It is commonly defined as the degree of congruence between customers' prior expectations and their perceived performance of the service received. Satisfaction is achieved when service performance meets or exceeds customer expectations, whereas dissatisfaction arises when performance falls short of those expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Oliver, 2014). As such, customer satisfaction serves as a critical evaluative outcome that reflects the ability of service organizations to deliver value and fulfill customer needs (Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Within the aviation industry, customer satisfaction assumes a particularly significant role due to the experiential nature of airline services. It refers to passengers' overall evaluation of their travel experience, which is shaped by multiple service dimensions across different stages of the journey. These include pre-flight processes such as booking and check-in procedures, airport services, in-flight service quality and comfort, as well as the quality of

interactions with airline personnel (Chen & Chen, 2019; Park, Robertson, & Wu, 2004). Consequently, passenger satisfaction is widely regarded as a comprehensive measure of service quality, as it is derived from the cumulative experience encountered throughout the travel journey (Wang et al., 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, customer satisfaction in the aviation context can be understood as a multidimensional cognitive and emotional response that emerges from the comparison between pre-consumption expectations and post-consumption evaluations. This perspective aligns with the expectation-confirmation paradigm, which posits that satisfaction is determined by the extent to which perceived performance confirms or disconfirms prior expectations (Oliver, 2014). Accordingly, more positive travel experiences lead to higher levels of passenger satisfaction, reinforcing favorable perceptions toward the airline (Chen & Chen, 2019). Given its central role, customer satisfaction represents one of the most critical metrics used to evaluate airline performance and service quality. It not only reflects the effectiveness of service delivery but also provides valuable insights into customer perceptions, thereby guiding airlines in improving their services and maintaining competitive positioning in an increasingly dynamic and customer-driven industry (Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Customer satisfaction has become a critical strategic priority within the aviation industry, particularly in light of intensifying global competition and increasing passenger expectations. Airlines increasingly recognize that achieving high levels of customer satisfaction is essential for enhancing their competitive positioning and sustaining market relevance. Consequently, substantial efforts are directed toward improving service quality and enriching the overall travel experience, with the dual objective of retaining existing customers and attracting new ones (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Ali & Alfayez, 2024).

A growing body of empirical research highlights the significant role of customer satisfaction in fostering customer loyalty within the airline industry. Satisfied passengers are more likely to engage in repeat purchase behavior and to recommend the airline to others through positive word-of-mouth, thereby contributing to the enhancement of corporate reputation and the expansion of market share (Chen & Chen, 2019; Park et al., 2004). In this regard, customer satisfaction functions not only as an outcome of service quality but also as a strategic asset that drives long-term relational value. Beyond its impact on customer loyalty, customer satisfaction plays a vital role in improving airlines' operational performance. By systematically measuring and analyzing passenger satisfaction, airlines can gain valuable insights into customer perceptions, enabling them to identify service strengths and address operational deficiencies. This, in turn, facilitates continuous service improvement and alignment with evolving customer expectations and preferences (Zeithaml et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, customer satisfaction is closely linked to organizational sustainability and long-term success. Airlines that consistently achieve high levels of satisfaction are better positioned to compete effectively, maintain customer retention, and build enduring relationships with their clientele (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of ongoing transformations in the global aviation sector, customer satisfaction has

emerged as a key performance indicator through which airlines assess service quality and refine the overall travel experience. Accordingly, airlines are increasingly adopting a proactive and customer-centric approach, continuously innovating and enhancing their service offerings to achieve superior levels of customer satisfaction. This strategic focus not only strengthens their competitive advantage but also ensures their resilience and sustainability within an increasingly dynamic and experience-driven global market (Chen & Chen, 2019; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

### **2.3 Impact of Customer Experience on Traveler Satisfaction:**

Customer experience has emerged as a central construct in contemporary marketing and service management literature, increasingly recognized as a key determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty across service-intensive industries. This is particularly evident in the aviation sector, which is characterized by high competitive intensity and operational complexity. Customer experience is conceptualized as the holistic aggregation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses that arise from a customer's interactions with an organization across multiple touchpoints throughout the entire customer journey, extending from pre-purchase stages to post-consumption experiences (Verhoef et al., 2009; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Owing to its multidimensional and integrative nature, customer experience has become a focal point of contemporary organizational strategies, given its critical role in enhancing perceived value and enabling the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage in dynamic service markets (Homburg, Jozić & Kuehnl, 2015; Maklan, 2013).

Within the aviation context, customer experience is inherently complex and is shaped by a sequence of interrelated service encounters across multiple stages of the travel process. These stages include flight search and booking procedures, airport and ground services, in-flight service delivery, baggage handling, and post-flight interactions. Each of these touchpoints contributes cumulatively to the formation of the traveler's overall perception of service quality and organizational performance (Park, Robertson & Wu, 2004; Chen & Chang, 2005; Nadiri et al., 2008). Importantly, the evaluation of the travel experience extends beyond tangible service attributes such as seat comfort and onboard amenities. It is also significantly influenced by intangible and experiential dimensions, including the quality of interpersonal interactions with employees, perceived trustworthiness of the airline, and passengers' sense of safety and reliability throughout the journey (Cheng et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023; Ali & Alfayez, 2024). These cognitive and affective components collectively shape passengers' holistic assessments of the airline, reinforcing the notion that customer experience is a multidimensional construct that integrates functional, emotional, and social elements.

A substantial body of literature has examined the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction within the aviation sector, consistently identifying service quality as a primary determinant of both customer experience and satisfaction. Among the most widely adopted frameworks in this domain is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al., which conceptualizes service quality across five key dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles

(Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988; Nadiri et al., 2008). Empirical evidence from the aviation context demonstrates that these dimensions play a critical role in shaping passenger satisfaction, with factors such as adherence to flight schedules, efficiency of service delivery, and quality of customer interactions emerging as particularly influential in passengers' evaluations of service quality (Chen & Chang, 2005; Cheng et al., 2019; Bakır, Atalık & Itani, 2025).

However, contemporary research suggests that customer experience in aviation extends beyond operational service quality alone. It is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct influenced by additional factors, including perceived value, trust, and emotional attachment to the airline brand. Perceived value, defined as the customer's evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred, has been shown to exert a significant positive effect on both customer satisfaction and loyalty (Chen & Chang, 2005; Awad-Núñez, González-Cancelas & Camarero-Orive, 2024; Ali & Alfayez, 2024). Similarly, trust plays a pivotal role in strengthening long-term customer relationships, as passengers are more inclined to repeatedly engage with airlines they perceive as reliable, safe, and consistent in service delivery (Cheng et al., 2019; Eshaghi et al., 2024).

In addition to these factors, service marketing literature highlights the importance of positive customer experience in fostering Customer Citizenship Behaviors (CCB), which refer to voluntary, extra-role actions undertaken by customers to support the organization. These behaviors include recommending the airline to others, defending its reputation, and providing constructive feedback for service improvement (Groth, 2005; Yi & Gong, 2013). Within the aviation sector, recent empirical studies indicate that positive travel experiences significantly enhance repurchase intentions, increase the likelihood of positive word-of-mouth, and stimulate favorable online reviews, all of which contribute to influencing the decisions of prospective travelers (Bakır et al., 2024; Dike et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the ongoing digital transformation within the aviation industry has introduced new dimensions to customer experience and satisfaction. The widespread adoption of digital technologies—such as mobile applications, electronic check-in systems, online seat selection, flight tracking tools, and automated customer support—has significantly improved procedural efficiency and reduced the time and effort required from passengers.

These advancements contribute positively to travelers' perceptions of service quality and overall satisfaction (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Zhang et al., 2023). Moreover, the integration of big data analytics and the analysis of online customer reviews enable airlines to gain deeper insights into passenger expectations and identify critical pain points within the travel journey. This data-driven approach supports more informed strategic decision-making, allowing airlines to continuously refine their service offerings, enhance customer experience, and strengthen their competitive positioning in an increasingly dynamic and technology-driven market (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Eshaghi et al., 2024).

Moreover, recent literature emphasizes that enhancing customer experience constitutes a critical driver of competitive advantage within the aviation industry. As travelers become increasingly informed and discerning, their expectations regarding service quality have risen significantly. In parallel, the growing reliance on user-generated content and online reviews has amplified the role of peer evaluations in shaping airline choice decisions (Homburg et al., 2015; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Consequently, airlines are progressively investing in the systematic enhancement of customer experience through multiple strategic initiatives, including the development of advanced digital services, improvement of in-flight hospitality, optimization of airport operational processes, and continuous training of employees to deliver superior customer service.

Building on this perspective, customer experience can be conceptualized as a pivotal explanatory factor in determining customer satisfaction within the aviation sector. It exerts a direct and multifaceted influence on key perceptual constructs, including perceived service quality, perceived value, and trust in the airline. These factors, in turn, shape critical behavioral outcomes such as customer loyalty and repurchase intention. Extant literature consistently demonstrates that airlines capable of effectively managing and orchestrating customer experience across all touchpoints are better positioned to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction and strengthen their competitive standing in the marketplace. This is particularly salient in highly competitive service environments such as the aviation industry, where differentiation is increasingly driven by experiential value rather than purely functional attributes (Verhoef et al., 2009; Homburg et al., 2015; Eshaghi et al., 2024; Ragab et al., 2024).

#### **2.4 The Impact of the Business Model on the Relationship between Customer Experience and Traveler Satisfaction:**

Recent literature increasingly positions customer experience as a primary determinant of passenger satisfaction within the aviation sector. However, this relationship has often been theorized as contingent upon the airline's business model, distinguishing between full-service carriers, which emphasize comprehensive service offerings, and low-cost carriers, which prioritize operational efficiency and cost minimization. Contrary to these assumptions, the findings of the present study indicate that the impact of customer experience on passenger satisfaction remains both strong and consistent across different airline models. This suggests a fundamental shift in how travelers evaluate air services, moving beyond structural differences in service provision toward a more experience-centric assessment. This finding aligns with the study by Hapsari et al. (2023), which demonstrates that customer experience across all stages of the travel journey—including booking processes, ground services, and in-flight experience—constitutes the most influential factor in shaping customer satisfaction, irrespective of airline type. Similarly, Park et al. (2023) emphasize that passengers increasingly evaluate their experiences based on the overall quality of interactions with the service, rather than the airline's classification or operational model. This reinforces the notion that experiential value has become the dominant criterion in customer evaluation. Furthermore, the findings are supported by Dike et al. (2024), who highlight the critical role of both functional and

emotional dimensions of customer experience—particularly reliability and empathy—in shaping traveler satisfaction. These dimensions transcend traditional distinctions between airline models, indicating that core experiential attributes are universally valued by passengers. In a similar vein, recent IATA reports (2024) reveal that global travelers are placing increasing importance on elements such as seamlessness, efficiency, and procedural ease—key components of customer experience that can be effectively delivered across both full-service and low-cost carriers. While earlier studies, such as Chen and Chen (2010), suggested significant differences in perceived service quality between traditional and low-cost airlines, contemporary evidence points to a gradual convergence in these perceptions. This convergence can be attributed to several factors, including the standardization of baseline service quality, the widespread adoption of digital technologies, and the improved management of customer touchpoints across the industry. As argued by Becker and Jaakkola (2020), customer experience has evolved into a holistic construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, thereby surpassing the explanatory power of traditional operational distinctions associated with airline business models.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the influence of customer experience on passenger satisfaction in the aviation sector is no longer constrained by the airline's business model—whether full-service or low-cost—but has evolved into a universal and overarching determinant. This shift underscores the growing strategic importance of customer experience management as a core priority for all airlines, irrespective of their operational positioning. This finding further suggests that competitive excellence in the aviation industry is no longer primarily driven by the nature or scope of service offerings, but rather by the quality, consistency, and integration of the experience delivered across all customer touchpoints. In this context, airlines are increasingly required to adopt holistic, customer-centric strategies that prioritize seamless interaction, personalized service delivery, and experiential value creation. Ultimately, the ability to design and manage superior customer experiences has become a critical success factor for achieving higher levels of passenger satisfaction, strengthening competitive positioning, and ensuring long-term sustainability in an increasingly dynamic and experience-driven aviation market.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design and Methodology:**

This study adopts a descriptive causal research design, combined with the analysis of relative frequencies, to examine the relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction within the aviation sector in Saudi Arabia. This design enables a systematic and comprehensive investigation of the causal influence of customer experience on passenger satisfaction levels. A quantitative research approach is employed, as it is most suitable for the objectives of the study, involving structured data collection, transformation of responses into numerical form, application of statistical techniques, and derivation of empirical conclusions (Malhotra, 2021).

### 3.2 Population and Sampling:

The target population of this study comprises customers of major airlines operating in Saudi Arabia, specifically Saudi Arabian Airlines, Flynas, and Flyadeal. According to recent statistics, Saudi Arabian Airlines served approximately 35 million passengers, while Flynas and Flyadeal served 10.9 million and 8 million passengers, respectively, in 2024 (Argaam, 2024). Based on standard sample size determination procedures, the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 386 respondents, assuming a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and a population proportion of 50% (Calculator.net). To enhance the reliability, robustness, and generalizability of the findings, the sample size was increased to 750 respondents, all of whom are Saudi passengers residing in the city of Riyadh. The unit of analysis in this study is the individual Saudi traveler who has used any of the selected airlines during the specified study period.

### 3.3 Sampling Technique:

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across the three airlines and to improve the accuracy of the results. The population was divided into strata based on a common characteristic—namely, passengers who have traveled on any of the selected Saudi airlines during the study period. This approach ensures that each subgroup within the population is proportionally represented, thereby reducing sampling bias and enhancing both the external validity and generalizability of the study findings. Stratified sampling is particularly appropriate in this context, as it allows for capturing potential variations across different airline users while maintaining overall sample representativeness (Malhotra, 2021). Accordingly, the sample was distributed proportionally across the selected airlines as follows:

**Table 1: Distribution of Random Cluster Sample**

Company	Total Number of Passengers in 2024 (In Millions)	Sample Size	Ratio in The Cluster
Saudia	35	487	<b>%64.9</b>
Nas	10.9	152	<b>%20.2</b>
Adeal	8	111	<b>%14.9</b>
Total	53.9	750	<b>%100</b>

### 3.4 Measurement of Variables:

The study variables—customer experience (independent variable) and customer satisfaction (dependent variable)—were measured using a five-point Likert scale, which is widely adopted in service and marketing research for capturing respondents' attitudes and perceptions. The scale ranges from (1) "very low degree" to (5) "very high degree", reflecting the extent of respondents' agreement with each statement. Specifically, the response categories were coded as follows: (5) Very high degree, (4) High degree, (3) Moderate degree, (2) Low degree, and (1) Very low degree. This scaling approach enables the quantification of subjective perceptions, facilitating statistical analysis and comparison across respondents.

### **3.5 Data Collection Tool and Procedures:**

The primary data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, designed to capture respondents' perceptions of customer experience and their level of satisfaction with airline services. The questionnaire consisted of a series of statements requiring respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on the predefined Likert scale. Data were collected from a randomly selected sample of Saudi airline passengers in the city of Riyadh. The survey was administered through a mixed-mode approach to enhance response rates and data diversity. Specifically, questionnaires were distributed through:

- Face-to-face interactions at major airline hubs and airports in Riyadh, and
- Online distribution using digital platforms, where the questionnaire link was shared via WhatsApp to reach a broader segment of travelers.

The questionnaire was developed and administered using Google Forms, enabling efficient data collection and management. To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument, the initial version of the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of academic and industry experts. This process aimed to assess the content validity and clarity of the items, ensuring their relevance to the study objectives and their appropriateness for the target population.

## **4. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY:**

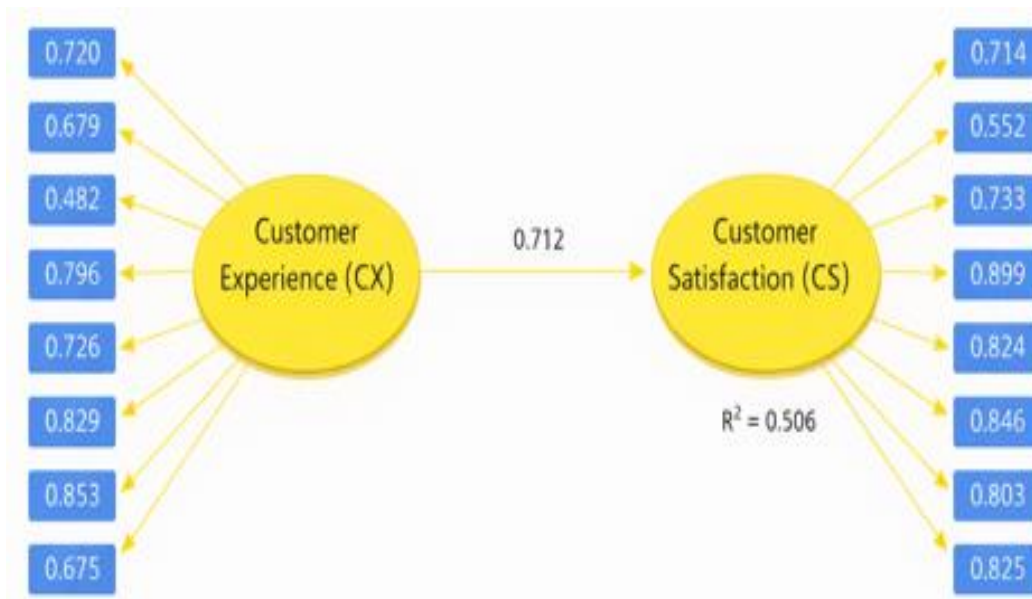
### **A. Structural Model Assessment:**

At this stage, the structural model was evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement items associated with the study constructs. A comprehensive assessment was conducted to examine the adequacy of all measurement items and their contribution to the overall model.

Following the guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2024), indicator reliability was assessed based on factor loadings, with a recommended threshold of 0.70 or higher for retaining items within the structural model. Indicators with loadings below this threshold were considered for removal, as they may weaken the construct's explanatory power and compromise measurement reliability.

Based on the analysis results, several items were excluded due to insufficient loading values. Specifically, items CR2 (0.552), CX2 (0.679), CX3 (0.482), and CX8 (0.675) did not meet the recommended threshold and were therefore removed from the model. Although some loadings were close to the acceptable cutoff (e.g., 0.67), they were excluded to ensure a more robust and reliable measurement structure.

As a result, 12 items out of the original 16 were retained in the final structural model. These retained items demonstrated satisfactory loading values and were deemed appropriate for measuring the study constructs and testing the proposed hypotheses. The finalized measurement model is presented in Figure 1 and Table 2.



**Figure 2: Research Structural Model**

### **B. Reliability and Validity Assessment:**

To evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model, Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha were assessed. According to Hair et al. (2021), acceptable reliability is achieved when values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. As presented in Table 2, all constructs demonstrate values above this threshold, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the measurement scales used in this study. In addition, convergent validity was examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). AVE reflects the extent to which a construct explains the variance of its indicators. Following the guidelines of Ringle et al. (2024), a minimum threshold of 0.50 is required to establish adequate convergent validity. The results indicate that all constructs exhibit AVE values exceeding 0.50, confirming that the measurement model possesses an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Furthermore, rho\_A was assessed as an additional measure of construct reliability. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), values greater than 0.70 indicate satisfactory reliability. The results presented in Table 2 show that all constructs exceed this threshold, further supporting the robustness and reliability of the measurement model. To assess discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was employed. HTMT evaluates the extent to which constructs are empirically distinct from one another within structural equation models. As recommended in the literature, HTMT values should remain below the conservative threshold of 0.90. The results indicate an HTMT value of approximately 0.860, which falls within the permitted range, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity between the constructs of customer experience and customer satisfaction.

**Table 2: Cross Loading, CR, AVE, CR & VIF**

Factor	Items	Cross Loading	CR	AVE	Rho_A	HTMT
Customer Experience	CX1	0.720	0.910	0.672	0.874	0.860
	CX2	0.679				
	CX3	0.482				
	CX4	0.796				
	CX5	0.726				
	CX6	0.829				
	CX7	0.853				
	CX8	0.675				
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.714	0.931	0.661	0.912	0.860
	CS2	0.552				
	CS3	0.733				
	CS4	0.899				
	CS5	0.824				
	CS6	0.846				
	CS7	0.803				
	CS8	0.825				

**C. Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion:**

In addition to the HTMT assessment, discriminant validity was further evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. This approach involves comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the inter-construct correlations.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for a given construct exceeds its correlations with all other constructs in the model. The results presented in Table 3 indicate that, for each construct, the square root of the AVE is greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations.

This confirms that each latent variable shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, thereby demonstrating adequate discriminant validity. These findings suggest that the constructs included in the model—namely customer experience and customer satisfaction—are empirically distinct and capture unique dimensions of the phenomenon under investigation.

Consequently, the measurement model satisfies the discriminant validity requirement, ensuring the robustness and interpretability of the structural relationships examined in this study.

**Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

CONSTRUCT	CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	0.820	0.820
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	0.813	0.767

## 5. HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND STRUCTURAL MODEL RESULTS:

### A. *Direct Effect of Customer Experience on Customer Satisfaction*

- $H_{01}$ : *There is a significant Effect of Customer Experience on Airline Customer Satisfaction in Saudi Arabia.*

At the structural model level, the results of the path analysis reveal a strong and statistically significant positive effect of customer experience on customer satisfaction. The standardized path coefficient was  $\beta = 0.846$ , indicating a substantial and robust relationship between the two constructs. This finding suggests that improvements in customer experience dimensions lead to a meaningful and direct enhancement in customer satisfaction levels. The statistical significance of this relationship is further supported by the t-value ( $t = 11.152$ ), which substantially exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96, and the p-value ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that the relationship is highly significant. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. These results demonstrate that the relationship between customer experience and *customer satisfaction is both systematic and empirically robust, rather than random.*

- ***Explanatory Power of the Model***

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.588$ ) indicates that customer experience explains approximately 58.8% of the variance in customer satisfaction. This represents a relatively high explanatory power within the context of behavioral and management research, highlighting the central role of customer experience as a key determinant of satisfaction in the aviation sector. The remaining variance may be attributed to other factors such as pricing, brand reputation, or individual passenger preferences.

- ***Effect Size ( $f^2$ )***

The effect size analysis further reinforces the importance of customer experience, with a reported value of  $f^2 = 1.430$ , which significantly exceeds the benchmark threshold of 0.35 for a large effect. This indicates that customer experience is not merely a contributing factor, but rather a dominant and critical predictor within the model.

- ***Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )***

Finally, the predictive relevance of the model was assessed using the Stone–Geisser  $Q^2$  value, which was found to be  $Q^2 = 0.565$ . This value exceeds zero by a substantial margin, indicating that the model possesses strong predictive capability. Thus, the model is not only effective in explaining current relationships but also demonstrates the ability to reliably predict future levels of customer satisfaction. From a managerial perspective, these findings highlight the critical need for airlines to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to customer experience management. This involves not only optimizing individual service touchpoints but also ensuring consistency and seamlessness across the entire customer journey. Airlines should prioritize the design of frictionless digital interfaces, enabling customers to complete booking, check-in, and service requests efficiently and with minimal effort. The integration of user-friendly technologies, such as

mobile applications and self-service kiosks, can significantly enhance perceived convenience and overall satisfaction. Furthermore, airlines must invest in service quality enhancement at the operational level, particularly in areas directly experienced by passengers, such as cabin comfort, onboard services, and employee–customer interactions. Training frontline employees to deliver empathetic, responsive, and professional service is essential, as human interaction remains a key driver of emotional experience and customer perception. Equally important is the implementation of effective complaint management systems, where customer feedback is addressed promptly and transparently. A proactive approach to handling service failures not only mitigates dissatisfaction but can also transform negative experiences into opportunities for building trust and strengthening customer relationships. In addition, airlines should leverage data analytics and customer insights to better understand passenger preferences and personalize service offerings. By utilizing data from digital platforms and customer feedback, airlines can continuously refine their service processes and align them with evolving customer expectations. Overall, these results emphasize that customer experience should not be treated as a peripheral function but rather as a core strategic capability. Airlines that successfully embed customer-centricity into their operations and decision-making processes are more likely to achieve sustained customer satisfaction, enhance loyalty, and secure a stronger competitive position in an increasingly dynamic and experience-driven aviation market.

**Table 4: Direct Path Analysis**

H	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Dev.	T-Value	P-Value	f	Supported/ Not Supported	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
H <sub>011</sub>	CX → CS	0.846	0.076	11.152	0.00	1.430	√	0.506	0.565

Significant at P<sub>0</sub>\* < 0.01. Significant at P<sub>0</sub>\*\* < 0.05.

**B. Moderation Analysis Results:**

- H<sub>02</sub>: The Airline Business Model (Full-Service vs. Low-Cost) Moderates the Relationship between Customer Experience and Customer Satisfaction in Saudi Arabia.

**Table 5: Moderators Analysis**

**1) Moderation by Company Name**

PATH	B	STD. ERROR	T	P-VALUE
CX → CS	0.834	0.079	10.545	<0.001
COMPANY(2)	0.076	0.245	0.310	0.757
COMPANY(3)	-0.086	0.241	-0.354	0.724
CX x COMPANY(2)	-0.278	0.556	-0.500	0.618
CX x COMPANY(3)	0.650	0.465	1.397	0.166

**2) Moderation by Period of Dealing**

PATH	B	STD. ERROR	T	P-VALUE
CX → CS	0.839	0.078	10.765	<0.001
DEAL	-0.022	0.056	-0.395	0.694
CX x DEAL	0.059	0.107	0.555	0.581

### 3) Corporative Moderation (Baseness Model)

PATH	B	STD. ERROR	T	P-VALUE
CX → CS	0.825	0.082	10.082	<0.001
COMPANY(2)	0.068	0.250	0.271	0.787
COMPANY(3)	-0.066	0.247	-0.269	0.789
DEAL	-0.009	0.058	-0.152	0.879
CX × COMPANY(2)	-0.245	0.565	-0.434	0.666
CX × COMPANY(3)	0.653	0.476	1.373	0.174
CX × DEAL	0.062	0.110	0.568	0.571

The results of the moderation analysis indicate that the direct relationship between customer experience (CX) and customer satisfaction (CS) remains consistently strong and statistically significant across all estimated models. In the company-based moderation model, the path coefficient reached  $\beta = 0.834$  with a high t-value of 10.545 and a significance level of  $p < 0.001$ , confirming the robustness of the relationship. Similarly, in the transaction duration model, the path coefficient was  $\beta = 0.839$  with  $t = 10.765$ , while in the combined model, it reached  $\beta = 0.825$  with  $t = 10.082$ . Collectively, these results demonstrate the stability and consistency of the positive effect of customer experience on customer satisfaction across different model specifications.

With regard to the moderating role of airline type (Saudi Arabian Airlines, Flynas, and Flyadeal), the findings reveal that the interaction effects between customer experience and airline type are statistically insignificant. Specifically, the interaction coefficient for Flynas was  $\beta = -0.278$  with a p-value of 0.618, while for Flyadeal it was  $\beta = 0.650$  with a p-value of 0.166. Both values exceed the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating a lack of statistical significance. Furthermore, the corresponding t-values were relatively low ( $t = -0.500$  and  $t = 1.397$ , respectively), reinforcing the conclusion that the moderating effects are weak and non-significant.

These findings suggest that the impact of customer experience on customer satisfaction does not significantly differ across the three airlines, despite variations in their operational models (i.e., full-service versus low-cost carriers). This indicates that passengers tend to evaluate their travel experience based on common experiential dimensions, rather than the specific classification or business model of the airline. Overall, the results provide strong empirical evidence that customer experience exerts a universal and stable influence on customer satisfaction, further supporting the argument that experiential value has become a dominant driver of customer evaluation in the aviation industry.

- **Moderating Effect of Relationship Duration**

Regarding the moderating role of duration of dealing with the airline (Deal)—categorized into four groups (less than one year, 1–3 years, 3–5 years, and more than 5 years)—the results indicate no statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between customer experience (CX) and customer satisfaction (CS). The interaction coefficient was found to be  $\beta = 0.059$ , accompanied by a low t-value of 0.555 and a non-significant p-value of 0.581, which exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05. This suggests that the

length of the customer–airline relationship does not significantly influence the strength or direction of the effect of customer experience on satisfaction.

Further analysis of the combined moderation model, which incorporates both airline type and duration of dealing, reinforces this conclusion. All interaction effects remained statistically insignificant, with p-values of 0.666 for the interaction between customer experience and Flynas, 0.174 for Flyadeal, and 0.571 for the interaction with duration of dealing. Additionally, the corresponding t-values were all below 1.96, further confirming the absence of any significant moderating influence.

From an explanatory perspective, the inclusion of moderating variables resulted in only marginal improvements in the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Specifically,  $R^2$  increased from 0.588 in the baseline model to 0.599 when airline type was introduced, 0.591 when duration of dealing was included, and 0.601 in the combined model. These minimal increases indicate that the moderating variables do not contribute meaningfully to enhancing the model's explanatory power.

Collectively, these findings provide strong evidence that the relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction is direct, robust, and stable, and is not significantly influenced by either the type of airline (full-service versus low-cost) or the duration of the customer relationship (new versus long-term customers). This suggests that customer experience functions as a universal and decisive determinant of customer satisfaction across different customer segments within the aviation sector.

## **6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:**

### ***6.1 Discussion of the Effect of Customer Experience on Airline Customer Satisfaction in Saudi Arabia***

The findings of this study reveal a strong and significant effect of customer experience on customer satisfaction within the Saudi aviation sector, underscoring the growing centrality of this construct in explaining customer behavior in contemporary service environments. This result reinforces the paradigm shift in service marketing, where value creation is increasingly driven by experiential factors rather than purely functional attributes. These findings are consistent with recent empirical evidence in the aviation literature. For instance, Mirthipati (2024), in the United States context, demonstrated that improvements in digital experience elements—such as the ease of issuing boarding passes and managing travel processes—have a direct and positive impact on customer satisfaction. This highlights the critical role of digital transformation as a key enabler of enhanced customer experience in the aviation industry.

Similarly, the findings align with Dike et al. (2024), who identified core experiential dimensions such as empathy and reliability as significant predictors of customer satisfaction. In the same vein, Hapsari et al. (2023) emphasized that a seamless and integrated customer experience across all stages of the travel journey—from booking to post-flight services—has a direct impact on both satisfaction and customer loyalty. These conclusions are further supported by Park et al. (2023), who confirmed that the quality of

interactions across multiple touchpoints is the decisive factor in shaping overall passenger satisfaction.

From a regional perspective, the results of this study are consistent with findings in the Gulf and Middle Eastern contexts. Al-Hawari et al. (2020), in the United Arab Emirates, found that customer experience plays a pivotal role in enhancing satisfaction within highly competitive aviation and service markets. Likewise, Alshurideh et al. (2022) demonstrated that customer experience—particularly through digital channels—significantly influences customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior in Jordan and the broader Middle East. In the Saudi context, the findings are supported by Al-Gasawneh et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of customer interaction quality and digital service delivery in shaping satisfaction within the service sector. This is particularly relevant given the rapid pace of digital transformation in Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030. Furthermore, Alzoubi et al. (2023) confirmed that customer experience is a critical determinant of satisfaction in highly competitive Gulf markets, reinforcing the generalizability of the present findings.

Collectively, these results provide robust empirical support for the argument that customer experience has become the dominant driver of customer satisfaction in the aviation sector. They also highlight the increasing convergence between global and regional evidence, emphasizing that airlines must prioritize the design and management of superior, integrated, and technology-enabled customer experiences to remain competitive in an increasingly experience-driven market. From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be interpreted through the lens of the Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), which posits that customer satisfaction is determined by the comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance. When the actual experience exceeds customer expectations, positive disconfirmation occurs, leading to higher levels of satisfaction. The strong effect of customer experience identified in this study suggests that airlines capable of delivering superior and seamless experiences are more likely to generate positive disconfirmation, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the findings align with the principles of Perceived Value Theory, which emphasizes that customers evaluate services based on the overall value derived from the experience rather than isolated service attributes. In the aviation context, this implies that passengers assess their journeys holistically, integrating functional, emotional, and relational aspects into a unified evaluation of value. Consequently, improvements in the overall customer experience significantly elevate perceived value, which in turn strengthens satisfaction outcomes. Importantly, the results also reflect a structural shift in consumer behavior within the Saudi and broader Gulf markets. Customers are increasingly moving away from traditional evaluation criteria—such as brand reputation or airline classification—and instead prioritizing the quality, consistency, and integration of experiences across all touchpoints. This shift is consistent with recent IATA (2024) reports, which indicate that travelers in the Middle East are placing growing emphasis on experiential attributes such as speed, convenience, and comfort. These evolving expectations highlight the increasing sensitivity of customers to the quality of their overall experience. Therefore, the contribution of this study extends beyond merely confirming

the relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction. It provides context-specific empirical evidence that enriches the regional literature by highlighting the strategic role of customer experience within the Saudi aviation sector. The findings underscore that customer experience has become a critical and sustainable source of competitive advantage, enabling airlines to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive and experience-driven market environment.

## **6.2 Discussion of Moderation Findings:**

The second hypothesis aimed to examine whether airline type and duration of customer relationship exert a moderating effect on the relationship between customer experience and customer satisfaction. However, the empirical results did not support the presence of such moderating effects, as no statistically significant differences were observed in the strength of this relationship across different airline types or customer relationship durations. This indicates that the influence of customer experience on satisfaction is highly stable and consistent across diverse contexts and customer segments. This finding is partially aligned with recent literature suggesting a growing standardization of customer experience within the aviation sector. As airlines increasingly adopt similar technologies, service processes, and operational practices, customers are exposed to relatively comparable service environments regardless of whether they engage with full-service or low-cost carriers. In this regard, Park et al. (2023) demonstrated that passengers tend to evaluate their experiences based on the overall quality of interactions throughout the journey, rather than the airline's classification or pricing model. Similarly, Hapsari et al. (2023) found that customer satisfaction is primarily driven by shared experiential factors, such as procedural ease, service efficiency, and the quality of employee interactions, rather than differences in business models. Conversely, the present findings diverge from earlier studies that emphasized variations in customer perceptions across airline types. For instance, Chen and Chen (2010) suggested that differences in service levels between full-service and low-cost carriers could significantly influence customer evaluations. The absence of such effects in the current study may reflect a shift in contemporary consumer behavior, where passengers increasingly prioritize the core experiential value over traditional distinctions such as service classification or brand positioning.

From a regional perspective, these findings are consistent with Al-Hawari et al. (2020), who reported in the UAE context that customer satisfaction in service industries is more strongly influenced by the quality of the experience delivered than by the characteristics of the service provider. This reinforces the notion that, within highly competitive and digitally evolving markets—such as those in the Gulf region—customer expectations have converged around experience-centric criteria. Overall, these results suggest that customer experience has evolved into a universal determinant of satisfaction, transcending organizational and relational boundaries. This highlights the diminishing relevance of traditional segmentation variables, such as airline type and relationship duration, in explaining customer satisfaction, and underscores the need for airlines to adopt uniform, experience-focused strategies that cater to all customer segments.

These findings are further supported by Alshurideh et al. (2022), who argue that digital transformation in the Middle East has significantly reduced experiential disparities between companies, thereby limiting the explanatory power of traditional moderating variables. As airlines increasingly adopt similar digital infrastructures and service technologies, the differentiation between service providers becomes less pronounced from the customer's perspective. Regarding the absence of a moderating effect for the duration of the customer–airline relationship, the results are consistent with emerging trends in the literature, which suggest that customers in fast-paced service environments—such as aviation—tend to rely more on current, real-time experiences rather than cumulative past interactions. Rather and Hollebeek (2021) demonstrated that customer satisfaction is primarily shaped by immediate service encounters, rather than the historical depth of the relationship. Similarly, Mirthipati (2024) highlighted that advancements in digital technologies and service speed have increased customers' sensitivity to instantaneous service quality, reinforcing the dominance of present experience over relational history.

From a critical standpoint, the absence of significant moderating effects may also indicate that the variables employed—namely airline type and duration of dealing—do not represent the most influential boundary conditions in the relationship between customer experience and satisfaction. In the context of rapid digital transformation, many aspects of the travel experience have become standardized across airlines, reducing the variability associated with traditional segmentation factors. Recent studies suggest that alternative variables—such as digital service quality, flight punctuality, service recovery effectiveness, and cabin crew performance—may serve as more sensitive and contextually relevant moderators. Empirical evidence in the aviation sector indicates that these operational and experiential factors play a more substantial role in explaining variations in customer satisfaction than demographic or classification-based variables.

Accordingly, the present study makes a meaningful contribution to the literature by demonstrating that the impact of customer experience on customer satisfaction in the Saudi aviation sector is robust, universal, and context-independent, rather than contingent upon airline type or relationship duration. This finding reflects a broader shift in customer behavior, where evaluation is increasingly centered on the quality of the actual, lived experience, rather than on traditional organizational or relational attributes. These insights underscore the necessity for airlines to adopt unified, experience-centric strategies that prioritize the continuous enhancement of customer experience across all interaction points, as a means of achieving sustained customer satisfaction and competitive advantage in an increasingly standardized and digitally driven market.

Building on the second hypothesis, despite the theoretical distinctions between full-service carriers—such as Saudi Arabian Airlines—and low-cost carriers like Flynas and Flyadeal, the findings reveal no significant moderating effect of airline type. This outcome can be interpreted through several analytical perspectives.

First, contemporary literature suggests that customer experience within the aviation sector has become increasingly standardized, largely driven by digital transformation and

the convergence of operational practices across airlines. As highlighted by Park et al. (2023), passengers tend to evaluate their journeys based on the overall quality of the flight experience, rather than the airline's classification. Similarly, Hapsari et al. (2023) demonstrate that core experiential elements—such as procedural ease and the quality of employee interactions—serve as common determinants of satisfaction across different airline models. Second, the findings reflect a broader shift in customer evaluation criteria, where passengers place greater emphasis on the actual, lived experience rather than on brand image or airline type. This aligns with Dike et al. (2024), who argue that the functional and emotional dimensions of customer experience exert a stronger influence on satisfaction than traditional service classifications. Supporting this view, IATA (2024) reports indicate that global travelers increasingly prioritize attributes such as speed, convenience, and reliability—elements that are now delivered at relatively comparable levels across both full-service and low-cost carriers.

From a methodological standpoint, the absence of a moderating effect may also be attributed to the convergence in service quality levels among the airlines under study, which reduces observable variability. Additionally, potential imbalances in sample distribution across airline categories may limit the statistical power to detect subtle differences. These considerations suggest that the variable “airline type” may no longer function as a strong explanatory factor in isolation, particularly when compared to more influential variables such as digital service quality, punctuality, and cabin crew performance, as highlighted in recent aviation research. Accordingly, the lack of significant differences between airline types should not be interpreted as an absence of real-world variation, but rather as evidence that customer experience has emerged as the dominant determinant of passenger satisfaction, effectively surpassing traditional distinctions between business models. This finding reflects a fundamental transformation in the competitive logic of the aviation industry, where differentiation is increasingly driven by the quality and integration of customer experience rather than by structural or operational characteristics.

Based on the findings of this study, several key managerial recommendations can be proposed to enhance customer satisfaction and strengthen competitive positioning in the aviation sector:

- Adopt a holistic customer experience management approach: Airlines should implement an integrated and end-to-end customer experience strategy that encompasses all stages of the passenger journey—pre-flight, in-flight, and post-flight. Ensuring consistency and seamlessness across these stages is essential for delivering a cohesive and high-quality experience. This should be supported by accelerating digital transformation initiatives, including the development of user-friendly applications and digital platforms that simplify booking, check-in, and travel procedures, thereby reducing customer effort and enhancing convenience.
- Enhance service responsiveness and complaint management: Airlines must prioritize the speed and effectiveness of response to customer complaints. Establishing efficient service recovery mechanisms and addressing issues promptly can significantly

enhance customer trust, improve perceived service quality, and increase overall satisfaction.

- Leverage data analytics and artificial intelligence: The use of advanced data analytics and AI-driven solutions can enable airlines to gain deeper insights into customer preferences and behavior. This facilitates the delivery of personalized and adaptive services that align with customer expectations, while also supporting proactive decision-making and continuous service improvement.
- Simplify operational processes and reduce service complexity: Streamlining procedures and minimizing unnecessary complexity across service touchpoints—such as booking, boarding, and baggage handling—can significantly improve the ease and comfort of the travel experience, thereby positively influencing customer satisfaction.
- Shift from segmentation-based to experience-centered strategies: Given the findings that variables such as airline type and relationship duration do not significantly moderate satisfaction, airlines should move away from traditional segmentation approaches. Instead, they should focus on enhancing core interaction points—including booking systems, service delivery processes, and employee–customer interactions—ensuring high-quality, consistent experiences for all customer segments.

### **Policy and Strategic Implications: Alignment with Saudi Vision 2030**

In light of the study’s findings—which confirm that customer experience is the most influential determinant of passenger satisfaction, with no significant differences across airline business models—important applied implications can be drawn that directly align with the objectives of the Saudi Aviation Strategy and Vision 2030.

The results indicate a fundamental shift in the competitive dynamics of the Saudi aviation sector, where differentiation is no longer driven by the distinction between full-service and low-cost carriers, but rather by the quality and integration of the traveler experience. This aligns closely with the national strategy’s ambition to position the Kingdom as a global logistics hub, connecting more than 250 international destinations and serving up to 330 million passengers annually by 2030.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce the strategic importance of enhancing the traveler experience as a core pillar in achieving the Kingdom’s tourism objectives, particularly the target of attracting 100 million visitors annually. The travel experience represents a critical component in shaping visitors’ overall perceptions of the Kingdom, thereby influencing satisfaction, destination image, and repeat visitation intentions.

Within this context, improving customer experience across all interaction points—from digital booking platforms and smart airport services to in-flight experience and post-travel engagement—becomes a strategic necessity. Such improvements directly contribute to enhancing quality of life, a central pillar of Vision 2030, and support the broader goals of the National Transformation Program.

Moreover, the results highlight the importance of continued investment in digital transformation within the aviation sector, particularly in line with national initiatives to develop smart airports, automate passenger processes, and enhance operational efficiency. The absence of significant differences between airline models further suggests that innovation in customer experience, rather than service classification, is the primary driver of competitive advantage. This underscores the Kingdom's strategic direction toward building an advanced aviation ecosystem characterized by efficiency, innovation, and institutional integration. Accordingly, enhancing customer experience can be considered a foundational enabler for achieving the objectives of the Saudi Aviation Strategy, as it contributes to increasing passenger satisfaction, improving the overall visitor experience, and strengthening the Kingdom's position as a leading global aviation and logistics hub. Ultimately, these outcomes support broader national goals, including economic diversification and increasing the aviation sector's contribution to gross domestic product (GDP), thereby reinforcing the strategic significance of customer experience as a key lever for sustainable development in the Saudi aviation industry.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that customer experience has evolved beyond a mere operational component to become a central strategic pillar that fundamentally reshapes the competitive dynamics of the aviation industry. The results confirm that customer experience exerts a strong, direct, and consistent influence on customer satisfaction, regardless of airline type or the duration of the customer relationship. This indicates a clear transformation in consumer behavior, where passengers increasingly prioritize the overall quality, coherence, and value of their experience over traditional factors such as service classification or relational history. These insights underscore the necessity for airlines to redefine their strategic priorities, shifting from a model-based or segmentation-driven approach toward a holistic, experience-centered paradigm.

Designing seamless, integrated, and customer-centric journeys across all touchpoints is no longer optional but essential for delivering superior value and sustaining competitive advantage. Moreover, the study highlights the growing relevance of customer experience as a strategic enabler of competitiveness within the Saudi aviation sector. In alignment with the broader objectives of Vision 2030, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, quality of life enhancement, and tourism development, customer experience emerges as a key mechanism for strengthening the sector's adaptability and resilience in the face of rapid industry changes.

Accordingly, investing in the development of advanced, flexible, and technology-enabled customer experience systems, centered around the evolving needs and expectations of travelers, represents a critical pathway toward achieving sustainable value creation. Such investments not only enhance passenger satisfaction but also reinforce the Kingdom's position as a competitive regional and global aviation hub, contributing to long-term economic diversification and sectoral growth.

## Reference

- 1) Abidin, R. A., Yudistria, Y., & Ramli, A. H. (2025). The Effect of Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction and Word of Mouth on Customer Loyalty. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan*, 13(2), 685–702.
- 2) ACSI. (2024). Airline customer satisfaction index. American Customer Satisfaction Index.
- 3) Alawneh, O.M.; Allahham, M.; Habeeb, A.F.H.; Almajali, W.; Al-Nsour, I.A.; Jawabreh, O. (2025). Evaluation How Big Data Analysis Mediates the Impact of Digital Marketing Strategies on Tourism Development IN Jordan. *Geoj. Tour. Geosites*, 62, 2053- 2062. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.62405-1571>.
- 4) Albashtawi, Zain., Alnsour., Ibrahim Radwan , Al-Nsour, Iyad A., Allahham, Mahmoud Izzat., and Jawabreh, Omar. (2025). The Role of Big Data Analysis In Developing Logistics Within Renewable Energy Systems: The Moderating Role Of Engineering Solutions (2025). *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*, 23(S2), 273-293. <https://doi.org/10.52152/>.
- 5) Al-Gasawneh, J. A., Anuar, M. M., & Alzoubi, H. M. (2022). The impact of e-service quality on customer satisfaction: Evidence from the service sector. *Uncertain Supply Chain Management*, 10(3), 925–938.
- 6) Al-Hawari, M., Ward, T., & Newby, L. (2020). The impact of customer experience on service quality and customer satisfaction in the UAE service sector. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 55, 102073.
- 7) Ali, N., & Alfayez, M. (2024). The impact of E-CRM on customer loyalty in the airline industry: the mediating role of customer experience. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2364838>
- 8) Al-Nsour, Iyad A. (2013). Examine the Relationship between Internal Marketing & Internal Service Quality in Saudi Public Hospitals. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (19), 27-41.
- 9) **Al-Nsour Iyad A, Hasnin, Eman Abdelhameed.m Almurad, Hussein Mohamad., and Allahham, Mahmoud Izzat. (2024).** *Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management*, 10 (54s), 1012-1029.
- 10) Al-Nsour, A. I., and Aiaf, A.A. (2024). Effect of Innovation in Communication Message on Financial Customer Relationships: New Evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Asian Business Strategy*, 14(1), 61–69. <https://doi.org/10.55493/5006.v14i1.5054>.
- 11) Al-Nsour, I. (2020). Effect of Brand Enhancement on Buying Behavior towards the Sport Sponsorship Companies in Riyadh, KSA. *International Journal of Business, Economics and Management*, 7(2), 110-119.
- 12) Al-Nsour, I. (2023). The Impact of Social-media Celebrity on Buying Behavior of Retailer Customers in Riyadh, KSA. *Jordan Journal of Business Administration*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.35516/jjba.v19i4.1719>
- 13) Alnsour, I. (2022). The impact of the use of electronic social platforms on the pre- behavior of the Saudi buyer during the coronavirus pandemic. *Journal of Administrative and Economic Sciences*, Qassim University, 15(1), 102–132.
- 14) Al-Nsour, I. (2024). Impact of Social-media Engagement and Entertainment on the Buying Intention from Online Fashion Stores in Jordan. *Jordan Journal of Business Administration*, 20(3). <https://doi.org/10.35516/jjba.v20i3.1014>.
- 15) Al-Nsour, I. A. (2017). WOM Effectiveness in Improving the Purchasing Behavior: Comparative Study on the Private Hospitals Inpatients in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. *Arab Economic and Business Journal*, 12(1), 13-28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aebj.2017.04.003>.

- 16) Al-Nsour, I. A. (2024). Building a Model for E-Interaction Via Facebook Platform: "The IN-IMSIU Model for E-Interaction". *Journal of Management World*, 2024(5), 348-362. <https://doi.org/10.53935/jomw.v2024i4.1120>.
- 17) Al-Nsour, I. A. A., & Al-Saleh, N. H. (2025). Impact of Humor Communication Message Elements on Brand Equity Mediator for Customer Relationships A Study on Fast Food Restaurant Customers via the X Platform in Saudi Arabia. *Arab Journal of Administration*, (), 1-24. doi: 10.21608/aja.2025.356476.1791.
- 18) AL-Nsour, I. A., & Al-Sahli, S. A. (2022). Effects of Cash and Non-Cash Communications on Brand Awareness: An Empirical Evidence from Saudi Arabia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 9(5), 507–518. <https://doi.org/10.13106/JAFEB.2022.VOL9.NO5.0507>.
- 19) Al-Nsour, I. A., & Hasnin, E. A. H. (2024). Leveraging Humor Content in Effective Communications for the Saudi Food Industry. *Journal of Management World*, 2024(3), 170-184. <https://doi.org/10.53935/jomw.v2024i4.1103>.
- 20) Al-Nsour, I. A., Al-Nsour, I. R., & Al-Otoun, F. J. (2021). Enhancing Customers' Satisfaction Using Loyalty Rewards Programs: Evidence from Jordanian Banks. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(11), 297–305. <https://doi.org/10.13106/JAFEB.2021.VOL8.NO11.0297>.
- 21) Al-Nsour, I., & Alsahli, S. (2025). The Brand Involvement as a Mediator between Sports Sponsorship and Jordanian Audience Behavior: Psychological-Communication Analysis. *Arab Journal of Administration*, (), 1-32. doi: 10.21608/aja.2025.404536.1897.
- 22) Al-Nsour, I., and Al-Shaibani, M.F. (2024). Effect of Social Media Involvement on Buyer Behavior: Evidence from Jordan Fashion Market via Facebook Platform. *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research*, 7(S12), 341–359.
- 23) Al-Nsour, I., Somili, H., and Allahham, M., (2021). Impact of Social Networks Safety on Marketing Information Quality in the COVID-19 Pandemic in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8 (12), 0223–0231.
- 24) Alnsour, Ibrahim Radwan., Al-Nsour, Iyad A. , Malkawi, Eyad Mohammad., and Allahham, Mahmoud Izzat. (2025). The Role of Internet of Things in Fintech Adoption Within Banking Sector: The Moderating Role of Digital Transformation Capability. *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*, 23(S4), 2486-2510. <https://doi.org/10.52152/k4pew155>.
- 25) Al-Nsour, Iyad A. (2017). Effect of Applying the Marketing Intelligence on Enhancing Innovation: Comparative Study between Productive & Service Sectors in Jordan. *Arab Journal of Administration*, 37(2), 219-246.
- 26) **Al-Nsour, Iyad A., Hasnin, Eman Abdelhameed., Almurad, Hussein Mohamad., and Allahham, Mahmoud Izzat. (2024).**The Relationship between Social Media Trust and Purchase Decision in the Fashion Industry. *Journal of Information Systems Engineering & Management*, 10(54s), 1012-1029.
- 27) Al-Nsour, Iyad Abed Al-Fattah., Hasnin., Eman Abdel Hameed & Al-Johani, Moayad Ali (2024). Using Artificial Intelligence to Enhance Customer Communication at Major Saudi Companies, 4 (1), 619-636.
- 28) Al-Nsour, Iyad., and Al-Sahli, Saud Abdullah (2024). Impact of Value on Customer Retention of Fast Food Restaurants in Saudi Arabia. *Arab Journal of Administration*, 44 (3), 305-328. doi: 10.21608/aja.2023.202772.1420
- 29) Al-Qahtani, Mai Abdel Aziz., and Al-Nsour, Iyad A. (2025). Leverage Digital Advertising to Gain a Competitive Advantage for the Beauty Care Centers in Riyadh. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences*, 23 (1), 1026-1046.

- 30) Al-Sahli S., and Al-Nsour, I. (2022). Effects of Cash and Non-Cash Communications on Brand Awareness: An Empirical Evidence from Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 9 (5), 507–518.
- 31) Alsahli, Saud Abdulla., Al-Nsour, Iyad , A., and Allahham , Mahmoud Izzat. (2025). Improving Visitor Awareness through Marketing Literacy during Riyadh Season Events. *Lex Localis - Journal of Local Self-Government*, 23(S4), 2511-2540. <https://doi.org/10.52152/srvtb662>
- 32) Alshurideh, M., Al Kurdi, B., & Salloum, S. A. (2022). The effect of digital customer experience on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Middle East. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 6(2), 365–376.
- 33) Alshurideh, M., et al. (2022). Digital customer experience in the Middle East. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*.
- 34) Alshurideh, M., et al. (2022). Digital customer experience in the Middle East. *International Journal of Data and Network Science* 6 (2022). 1557–1566.
- 35) Alzoubi, H. M., Alshurideh, M., & Kurdi, B. A. (2023). Customer experience and its impact on customer satisfaction in service industries. *International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management*, 14(1), 1–15.
- 36) Ammar, Yasser, A., and Al-Nsour, Iyad A. (2026). The Impact of Brand Personality on Customer Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Traveler Experience. *Tianjin Daxue Xuebao (Ziran Kexue yu Gongcheng Jishu Ban)/ Journal of Tianjin University Science and Technology*, 59(3), 212-240.
- 37) Bakır, M., Atalık, Ö., & Itani, N. (2025). Service quality and repurchase intentions in the airline industry: a multiple mediation analysis through customer citizenship behaviour. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 28(24), 4025–4046. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2024.2410935>
- 38) Becker, L., & Jaakkola, E. (2020). Customer experience: Fundamental premises and implications for research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(4), 630–648. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00718-x>.
- 39) Chen, C. F., & Chen, F. S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management*, 31(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.02.008>
- 40) Chen, C. F., & Chen, F. S. (2019). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions for air passengers. *Transportation Research Part A*, 123, 1–12.
- 41) Chen, C. F., & Chen, F. S. (2019). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction Chen, F., & Chang, Y. (2005). Examining airline service quality from a process perspective. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 11(2), 79-87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2004.09.002>
- 42) Cheng BL, Gan CC, Imrie BC, Mansori S (2019). Service recovery, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: evidence from Malaysia’s hotel industry. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, 11 (2), 187–203, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQSS-09-2017-0081>
- 43) Chonsalasin, D., Jomnonkwao, S., Chanpariyavatevong, K., Laphrom, W., & Ratanavaraha, V. (2022). Modeling of airline passenger loyalty: A comparison of leisure and business travelers. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 43, 100735. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rtbm.2021.100735>
- 44) Dike SE, Davis Z, Abrahams A, Anjomshoae A, Ractham P (2024). Evaluation of passengers' expectations and satisfaction in the airline industry: an empirical performance analysis of online reviews. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 31 (2), 611–639, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-09-2021-0563>

- 45) Dike, K., Eze, U. C., & Okoye, L. U. (2024). Evaluation of passengers' expectations and service quality in aviation. Benchmarking: An International Journal. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-XX-2023-XXXX>
- 46) Eshaghi, M. S., Afshardoost, M., Lohmann, G., & Moyle, B. D. (2024). Drivers and outcomes of airline passenger satisfaction: A Meta-analysis. *Journal of the Air Transport Research Society*, 3, 100034. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jatrs.2024.100034>
- 47) Groth, M. (2005). Customers as Good Soldiers: Examining Citizenship Behaviors in Internet Service Deliveries. *Journal of Management*, 31, 7-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206304271375>
- 48) Hapsari, R., Clemes, M. D., & Dean, D. (2023). The impact of service quality, customer experience, and loyalty in the airline industry. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 109, 102389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2023.102389>
- 49) Hollebeek, L. D., Srivastava, R. K., & Chen, T. (2019). S-D Logic-Informed Customer Engagement: Integrative Framework, Revised Fundamental Propositions, and Application to CRM. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 47, 161-185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-016-0494-5>
- 50) Homburg, C., Jozic, D., & Kuehnl, C. (2015). Customer Experience Management: Toward Implementing an Evolving Marketing Concept. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 45, 377-401. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-015-0460-7>
- 51) Hussain, R., Al Nasser, A., & Hussain, Y. K. (2014). Service quality and customer satisfaction of a UAE-based airline: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 42, 167-175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2014.10.001>
- 52) IATA. (2024). Global passenger survey report. International Air Transport Association (IATA). (2024). Global passenger survey report 2024. <https://www.iata.org>
- 53) Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management (15th ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- 54) Lemon, K.N. and Verhoef, P.C. (2016) Understanding Customer Experience throughout the Customer Journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 80, 69-96. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420>
- 55) Linda D. Hollebeek & Rajendra K. Srivastava & Tom Chen, (2019). "S-D logic–informed customer engagement: integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Springer, vol. 47(1), pages 161-185, January.
- 56) Maklan, S. (2013). Towards a Better Measure of Customer Experience. *International Journal of Market Research*. <https://doi.org/10.2501/IJMR-2013-021>
- 57) Manyanga, W., Makanyeza, C., & Muranda, Z. (2022). The effect of customer experience, customer satisfaction and word of mouth intention on customer loyalty: The moderating role of consumer demographics. *Cogent Business & Management*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2022.2082015>
- 58) Mirthipati, T. (2024). Enhancing Airline Customer Satisfaction: A Machine Learning and Causal Analysis Approach. *ArXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2405.09076>
- 59) MoghadasNian, SeyyedAbdolHojjat and Moslehi, Zahra, Optimizing IT Solutions in the Airline Industry: A KPI-Driven Strategic Approach (August 21, 2024). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=6279258> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.6279258>
- 60) Molinillo, S., Aguilar-Illescas, R., Anaya-Sánchez, R., & Carvajal-Trujillo, E. (2022). The customer retail app experience: Implications for customer loyalty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 65, 102842. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102842>

- 61) Murugesan, R., A P, R., N, N., & Balanathan, R. (2024). Forecasting airline passengers' satisfaction based on sentiments and ratings: An application of VADER and machine learning techniques. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 120, 102668. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2024.102668>.
- 62) Nadiri H, Hussain K, Haktan Ekiz E, Erdoğan Ş (2008), "An investigation on the factors influencing passengers' loyalty in the North Cyprus national airline". *The TQM Journal*, 20(3), 265–280, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/17542730810867272>
- 63) Ng, S. C., Sweeney, J. C., & Plewa, C. (2020). Customer engagement: A systematic review and future research priorities. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 28(4), 235-252. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.05.004>
- 64) Oliver, R. L. (2014). *Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer*. Routledge.
- 65) Pabla, H., & Soch, H. (2023). Up in the air! Airline passenger's brand experience and its impact on brand satisfaction mediated by brand love. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 107, 102345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2022.102345>
- 66) Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L. (1988) SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64, 12-40.
- 67) Park, J. W., Robertson, R., & Wu, C. L. (2004). The effect of airline service quality on passengers' behavioral intentions. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 10(6), 435–439.
- 68) Park, J., et al. (2023). Passenger experience and satisfaction in air travel. *Sustainability*.
- 69) Park, J., Robertson, R., & Wu, C. (2004). The effect of airline service quality on passengers' behavioural intentions: A Korean case study. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 10(6), 435-439. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jairtraman.2004.06.001>
- 70) Park, J., Robertson, R., & Wu, C. L. (2023). Passenger experience and satisfaction in the airline industry. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3456. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043456>
- 71) Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (2019). *The experience economy*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- 72) Ragab, H., Polo-Peña, A. I., & Mahrous, A. A. (2024). The effect of airline service quality, perceived value, emotional attachment, and brand loyalty on passengers' willingness to pay: The moderating role of airline origin. *Case Studies on Transport Policy*, 18, 101313. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cstp.2024.101313>
- 73) Rather, R. A. (2021). Customer experience and engagement in tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(5), 1029–1046.
- 74) Rather, R. A., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2021). Experiential marketing and customer engagement in tourism and aviation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(7), 1528–1544.
- 75) Schmitt, B. (2011). Experience marketing: Concepts, frameworks and consumer insights. *Foundations and Trends in Marketing*, 5(2), 55–112.
- 76) Sun, X., Zheng, C., Wandelt, S., & Zhang, A. (2024). Airline competition: A comprehensive review of recent research. *Journal of the Air Transport Research Society*, 2, 100013. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jatrs.2024.100013>
- 77) Verhoef, P. C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2009). Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1), 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2008.11.001>
- 78) Wang, J., Du, J., Chiu, Y., & Li, J. (2018). Dynamic effects of customer experience levels on durable product satisfaction: Price and popularity moderation. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 28, 16-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2018.01.002>

- 79) Wang, Y., Wang, Y., & Hsu, M. (2020). The influence of service quality on airline passenger satisfaction. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 86.
- 80) Yi, Y., & Gong, T. (2013). Customer value co-creation behavior: Scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(9), 1279-1284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.02.026>
- 81) Zaid , Sudiman ., and Patwayati, Patwayati . (2021). mpact of Customer Experience and Customer Engagement on Satisfaction and Loyalty: A Case Study in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8 (4), 983-992.
- 82) Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2018). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- 83) Zhang, Y., et al. (2024). Drivers of airline passenger satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Transport Policy*.
- 84) Zhang, Y., Lee, S., & Gu, Y. (2023). A review of air transport service quality studies: Current status and future research agenda. *Journal of the Air Transport Research Society*, 1(1), 9-21. <https://doi.org/10.59521/EF52BB6324BD7035>
- 85) Zhang, Y., Lee, S., and Gu, Y. (2023). A review of air transport service quality studies: current status and future research agenda. *Journal of the Air Transport Research Society* 1(1): 9-21  
**DOI:** <https://dx.doi.org/10.59521/EF52BB6324BD7035>