

SUSTAINABLE MARKETING STRATEGIES IN AVIATION: INSIGHTS FROM A PRISMA-BASED SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract

The aviation industry has experienced profound transformation over the past decade, driven by technological advancements, heightened customer expectations, and global competition. This systematic review, employing the PRISMA protocol, critically examines the interplay between service quality and brand image in the airline sector. Service quality—encompassing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible evidence—emerges as a pivotal determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Superior service delivery not only fosters positive passenger experiences but also strengthens brand image, which in turn enhances repurchase intentions, word-of-mouth advocacy, and competitive positioning. The literature consistently demonstrates that service quality acts as an antecedent to brand image, shaping consumer perceptions and behavioural intentions. Brand image, defined as the collective set of beliefs and associations held by consumers, significantly influences loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices. Through a systematic analysis of 131 Scopus-indexed articles, this study identifies prevailing trends, methodological approaches, and research gaps, offering valuable insights for both academics and practitioners. The findings underscore the necessity for airlines to integrate service quality improvements with strategic brand management to achieve sustainable growth. Further research is recommended to explore contextual variations and optimize the synergy between service quality and brand image in diverse market environments.

Keywords: service quality, brand image, airline industry, customer loyalty, Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Technological developments, greater customer expectations, and expanding worldwide rivalry have all contributed to the aviation industry's tremendous transition during the last decade. Airlines worldwide confront the problem of recruiting new passengers while retaining old ones. To do this, they must deliver services that not only meet but surpass, client expectations, particularly as customers grow. (Farooq *et al.* , 2018; Chen, Y.-Q. Li dan Liu, 2019; Prentice, Wang dan Loureiro, 2019; Sarker, Mohd-Any dan Kamarulzaman, 2021a) . In this context, service quality and brand image emerge as two crucial elements that influence consumer decisions and determine the long-term success of airlines. Service quality is a critical concept in assessing service delivery effectiveness from the customer satisfaction perspective. Grönroos (2013) defines service quality as the level at which services meet or exceed customer expectations.

In the context of the aviation industry, service quality includes various dimensions such as reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and physical evidence (Farooq *et al.* , 2018; Chen, Y.-Q. Li dan Liu, 2019; Sarker, Mohd-Any dan Kamarulzaman, 2021a) . Each of these dimensions contributes to the customer's overall perception of the services they receive, which in turn affects their satisfaction and

loyalty to the airline. Reliability is defined as the ability of an airline to deliver the promised services accurately and consistently, such as the punctuality of aircraft departure and arrival times. On the other hand, responsiveness refers to the readiness of employees to assist passengers and provide fast and timely service. Meanwhile, empathy involves the attention given to passengers, which includes the facilities and equipment used by the airline, such as cabin cleanliness and seat comfort. All of the above aspects are inseparable from the knowledge and courtesy of airline employees and their ability to instill trust and confidence in passengers the civility of airline employees and their ability to instill trust and confidence in passengers. (Min dan Min, 2015; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017; Haghighat, 2017) . In this systematic review, we adopt the PRISMA protocol to screen and analyze relevant studies from various sources to provide in-depth insights into trends, challenges, and opportunities in the aviation industry. The PRISMA protocol was chosen because it is a widely accepted method that improves reporting quality and methodology in research. Adopting the PRISMA guidelines in business and marketing for airlines provides greater assurance for the acceptance and consideration of research publications that adhere to these guidelines (Moher *et al.* , 2010) .

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Improved service quality can result in increased profits and a growing customer base, driven by new and repeat purchases from loyal customers (Zeithaml, 2000; Jiang dan Zhang, 2016; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017; Haghighat, 2017; Sultan dan Wong, 2019) . In contrast to physical goods, the characteristics of the service cannot be produced beforehand; therefore, the service must consistently exceed customer expectations. Customer satisfaction fosters loyalty, which in turn stimulates growth and maximizes profitability (Suki, 2014) . In the context of aviation service quality, the most common dimensions include physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Physical evidence includes physical facilities or equipment used to provide services, such as equipment on board the aircraft (Zeithaml, 2000; Jiang dan Zhang, 2016; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017; Sultan dan Wong, 2019) . Reliability is related to the accuracy and timeliness of service delivery, which greatly affects passenger satisfaction (Suki, 2014) . Responsiveness is essential, reflecting how quickly and efficiently employees handle customer needs (Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017) . Assurance involves the employee's language skills, attention, and ability to instill trust and confidence in passengers (Sarker, Mohd-Any dan Kamarulzaman, 2021b) . Empathy entails giving personalized attention to passengers, in line with customization trends to gain passenger loyalty (Han *et al.* , 2019) . Furthermore, the quality of the service contributes to the perceived value, which is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty. When passengers feel that they receive high value for the services provided—through an efficient check-in process, excellent in-flight service, and a seamless post-flight experience—they are more likely to choose the same airline for future travel. This perceived value increases their overall satisfaction and fosters a strong sense of loyalty to the airline (Zeithaml, 2000; Jiang dan Zhang, 2016; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017; Haghighat, 2017; Brochado *et al.* , 2019)

Brand Image

Brand image is defined as the collection of beliefs and perceptions that consumers hold about a brand, encompassing both positive and negative feelings, trust in the brand, and psychological structures that influence consumer behavior (He dan Lai, 2014; Raji, Rashid dan Ishak, 2019; Khatoon dan Rehman, 2021) . Lin dan Sung (2014) emphasize that brand image is a fusion of symbolic, social, and psychological elements. He dan Lai (2014) state that brand image reflects the logical and emotional perceptions associated with brand associations. This brand image is shaped by various factors, including marketing programs, consumers' direct experiences, opinions, and word-of-mouth (WOM) communication

(Jalilvand, 2017; Ansary dan Nik Hashim, 2018; Bakri, Krisjanous dan Richard, 2020; You dan Hon, 2021) . The overall image is often regarded as an important concept in consumer behavior and tourism, frequently used to explain customers' post-purchase behavior (Cohen, Prayag dan Moital, 2014; De Nisco, Papadopoulos dan Elliot, 2017; Han dan Hyun, 2017; Adam, Adongo dan Amuquandoh, 2019) . This image represents customers' total combined perception of a product or service, influenced by the associations stored in their memory (Foroudi *et al.* , 2018; Bakri, Krisjanous dan Richard, 2020) . Customers form favorable or unfavorable images through direct and indirect experiences with the attributes of a product or service (Raji, Rashid dan Ishak, 2019) . Lin dan Sung (2014) asserts that a positive product or service image results in a more favorable attitude towards that product or service, aiding in recognizing customer needs and distinguishing it from competitors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research consists of two main components: a comprehensive literature review followed by supplementary data analysis and discussion (Torraco, 2016; Liao *et al.* , 2017; Snyder, 2019) . This process adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, as proposed by (Moher *et al.* , 2010) . PRISMA was selected because it is a widely accepted protocol for systematic reviews, proven to enhance the quality of reporting and methodology in numerous studies. The widespread adoption of PRISMA guidelines in business and marketing, particularly in the airline industry, provides greater assurance of the acceptance and consideration of research for publication that complies with these standards.

The PRISMA protocol employed in this study remains valid and reliable, even with the emergence of newer methods like SPAR-4-SLR. PRISMA continues to be relevant and effective for conducting comprehensive searches and selecting relevant papers for review, thereby meeting the objectives of this research. The attached PRISMA diagram details the process of identification, screening, and inclusion of articles in this review.

Figure-1 Present The process commenced with the identification of records from the Scopus database using keywords such as "Airline image," "Airline Brand," and "Airline image decision." A total of 131 records were initially identified. However, before these records were further screened, an automated process was employed to remove duplicate records (10 records) and those deemed ineligible based on certain criteria (23 records). Other records were removed due to factors such as journal tier categories (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) and the absence of an abstract (7 records).

Following this initial screening process, 90 records remained for further screening. At this stage, no records were excluded, indicating that all remaining records met the initial criteria for the report search. Subsequently, from these 90 records, the full reports were sought for further assessment. However, 35 reports could not be retrieved due to various reasons, such as restricted access or reports no longer being available.

Of the retrieved reports, 55 were assessed for eligibility. At this stage, 10 reports were excluded because they did not meet the established criteria, leaving 45 reports to be included in the final review. The last stage of this process involved the inclusion of these 45 studies in the systematic review. These studies were then analyzed to identify key trends, research methods used, and gaps in the existing literature. No additional studies were identified through other means, so this review's focus is entirely on studies found through the Scopus database (Kamble, Gunasekaran dan Gawankar, 2018; Linnenluecke, Marrone dan Singh, 2020) .

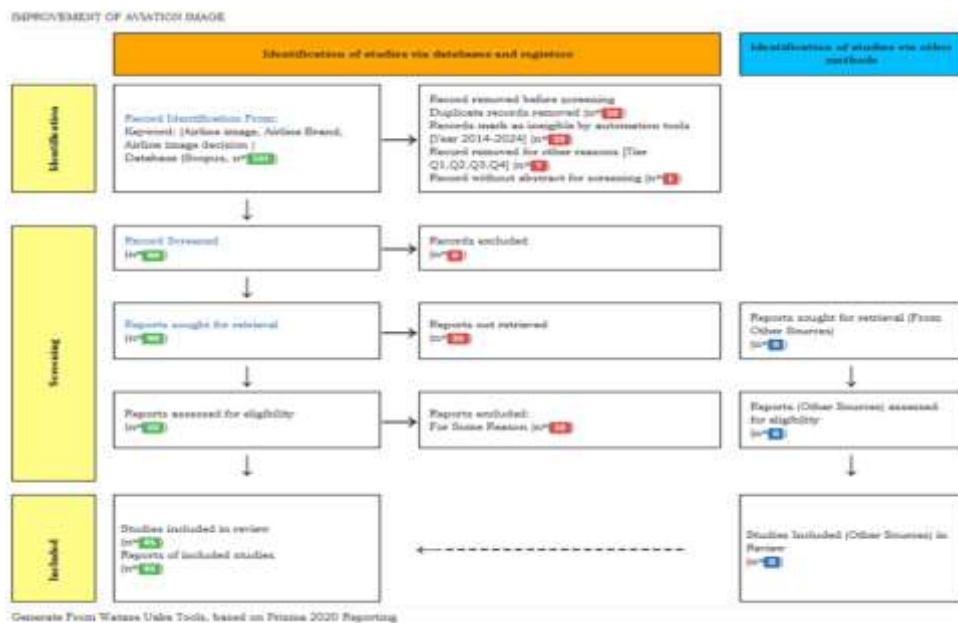


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram Improvement Of Aviation Image

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This systematic literature review aims to summarise and categorize existing knowledge (Block dan Fisch, 2020) as well as research profiles (Jhawar, Varshney dan Kumar, 2023). This section highlights the developments from 45 research articles concerning the impact of service quality on enhancing brand image within the aviation industry. It classifies these articles based on the year of publication, the country in which the study was conducted, the type of methods employed, and the leading journals in which they were published.

Year of Publication

Figure-2 presents a visualization of publications on the improvement of airline image from 2014 to 2024, illustrating research trends regarding service quality in enhancing brand image within the aviation sector over this period (Ferreira *et al.*, 2016). The data reveal notable fluctuations, with periods of increased research output and times of decreased activity.

Figure-3 illustrates the annual citation count for articles categorized by year, revealing significant trends in the academic impact of research on brand image improvement in the aviation sector.

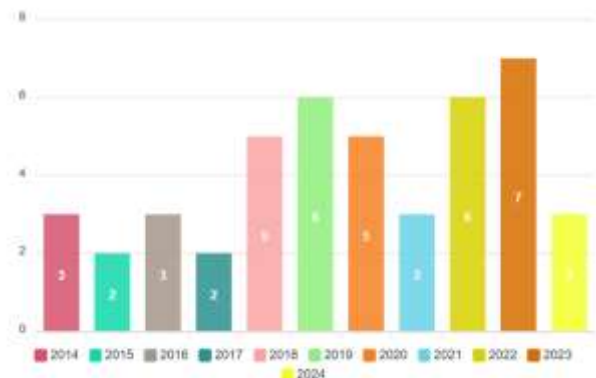


Figure 2. Year of Publication

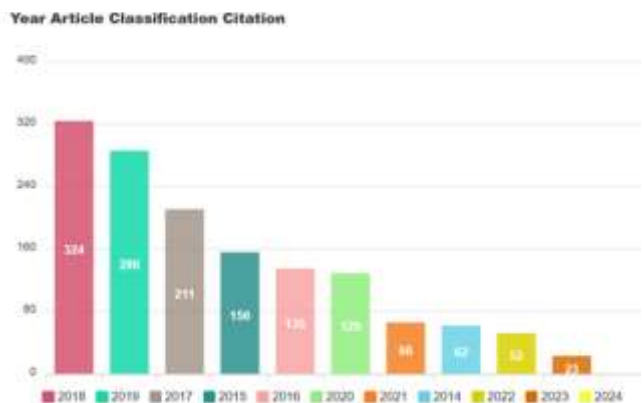


Figure 3. Year Article Classification Citation

Country of Study

Based on the data presented in Figure-4, present Country of Study, it can be concluded that South Korea is the leading country in terms of articles discussing strategies for improving brand image in the aviation sector, with a total of eight articles.

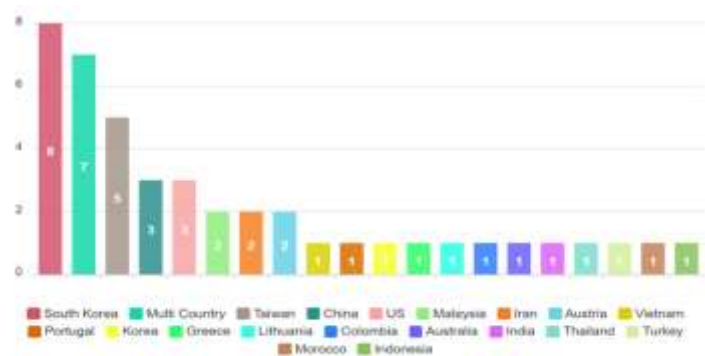


Figure 4. Country of Study

Types and Methods Used

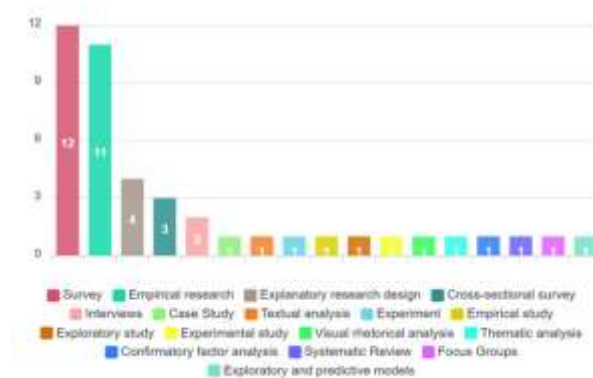


Figure 5. Types of Methods Used

Based on Figure 5, we have classified the methods in these articles into seventeen categories: Surveys, Empirical Research, Explanatory Research, Cross-Sectional Surveys, Interviews, Case Studies, Text Analysis, Experiments, Empirical Studies, Exploratory Studies, Experimental Studies, Visual Rhetoric Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Systematic Reviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Exploratory and Predictive Modelling. According to the figure, the most frequently used method is the survey, which is employed in 12 research articles. Empirical research methods hold the second position, being utilized in 11 articles. The third most common method is explanatory research, found in 4 articles. In fourth place, cross-sectional surveys are used in 3 articles, while interviews are employed in 2 articles.

Other methods, including case studies, text analysis, experiments, empirical studies, exploratory studies, experimental studies, visual rhetoric analysis, thematic analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, systematic reviews, focus group discussions, and exploratory and predictive modelling, are each used in one article.

Major Publishing Journal

Table 6 lists ten influential journals in the fields of transportation, hospitality, and related areas, highlighting the number of citations and total articles published.

Table 1. Major Publishing Journal

No	Journal	Tier	Citation	Total Articles
1	Journal of Air Transport Management	1	844	14
2	Sustainability	1	205	5
3	International Journal of Hospitality Management	1	148	2
4	International Journal of Sustainable Transportation	1	73	2
5	Research in Transportation Business & Management	1	65	3
6	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	1	30	1
7	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	1	29	1

8	Big Data and Cognitive Computing	1	28	1
9	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	1	28	2
10	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	1	28	2

Brand Image Improvement Studied

A brand image enhancement strategy is a comprehensive approach aimed at improving the public's perception of a brand to align it with the desired values and attributes (Alwi dan Kitchen, 2014; Tran *et al.* , 2015; Iglesias *et al.* , 2019; Liu, Dzyabura, dan Mizik, 2020) . This strategy involves analyzing the current brand perception, identifying gaps, and implementing targeted marketing initiatives. It is designed to strengthen customer loyalty, increase brand equity, and differentiate the brand from competitors by emphasizing unique qualities and fostering a positive and consistent brand experience across all customer touchpoints (Lin dan Sung, 2014; Foroudi *et al.* , 2018) . Figure- 6 illustrates the distribution of brand image enhancement strategies across various themes analyzed by the number of articles in the aviation industry.

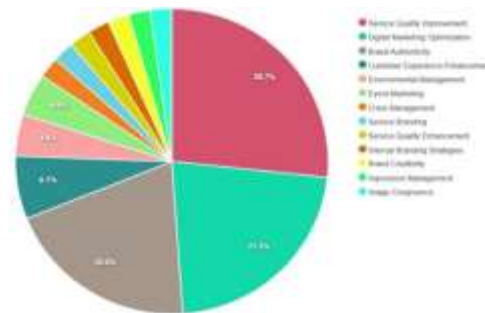


Figure 6. Brand Image Improvement Studied

Table 2. Reporting Category Brand Image Improvement And Theoretical Foundation

No	Category 1	Count	Theory	Country	Author
1	Service Quality Improvement	12	Airline Brand Equity Theory Brand Equity Theory Fuzzy Set Theory (FST) Moral Imagination Theory Schema Theory Social Exchange Theory (SET) Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Theory TRIZ Theory Unidentified	Austria, China, Lithuania, Morocco, Multi Country, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, US	Jeeradist et al., (2016); Kim and Kim (2022); Chen et al., (2019); Han et al., (2019); Huang and Liu (2020); Streimikiene et al., (2021); Lee et al., (2022); Boubker and Naoui (2022b); Koech et al.,(2023); Kim and Hwang,(2023); Neureiter et al., (2024)
2	Digital Marketing Optimization	10	Brand Equity Theory Consumer Engagement Theory	Austria, China, Greece, Indonesia,	Hagmann et al.,(2015); Wang et al.,(2020); Seo and Park, (2020);

No	Category 1	Count	Theory	Country	Author
			Parasocial Interaction Theory Schema Incongruity Processing Theory Semiotic Theory Social Capital Theory Source Credibility Theory Unidentified	Korea , Multi Country, South Korea, US	Menon et al., (2019); Fu (2023); Sakas and Giannakopoulos, (2021); Kim et al.,(2022); Neureiter and Matthes, (2023); Prasetio et al., (2022); Han (2024)
3	Brand Authenticity	9	Brand Equity Theory Commitment-trust Theory Psychological Benefits Theory Self-image Congruency Theory Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) Theory Of Reasoned Action Unidentified	Malaysia, Multi-Country, South Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, US, Vietnam	Cheng et al.,(2019); Erkmen and Hancer, (2015); Chung and Feng, (2022); Hwang and Choi (2020); Lee et al., (2022); Sarker et al., (2021b); Fu (2023); Tran (2024); Sezgen et al.,(2023)
4	Customer Experience Enhancement	3	Social Exchange Theory (SET) Unidentified	Colombia, Iran, South Korea	Chung et al., (2022); Siqueira et al.,(2023); Shabankareh et al., (2024)
5	Environmental Management	2	Market Segmentation Theory Theory Of Planned Behavior (TPB)	Australia, South Korea	Zhang et al., (2018); Hwang and Lyu (2020)

Author Citation Analysis

Table-3 presents the ten most influential articles in the fields of air transport and tourism, based on the number of citations received. These articles provide deep insights into research trends and academic focus within this sector, with eight of the ten cited journals classified as Q1 publications, indicating high-quality and impactful research, while the remaining two are Q2 journals.

Table 3. Author Citation Analysis

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Citation	Tier
1	Seo, Park and Choi (2020)	2018	A study on the effects of social media marketing activities on brand equity and customer response in the airline industry	Journal of Air Transport Management	255	Q1
2	Wang, Kao and Ngamsiriudom (2017)	2017	Consumers' attitude of endorser credibility, brand and intention with respect to celebrity endorsement of the airline sector	Journal of Air Transport Management	114	Q1
3	Hagmann, Semeijn and Vellenga (2015)	2015	Exploring the green image of airlines: Passenger perceptions and airline choice,	Journal of Air Transport Management	106	Q1
4	Hwang, Jinsoo Choi, Jung Kyu (2018)	2018	An investigation of passengers' psychological benefits from green brands in an environmentally friendly airline context: The moderating role of gender,	Sustainability	97	Q1
5	Fu (2023)	2016	The influences of airline brand credibility on consumer purchase intentions,	Journal of Air Transport Management	82	Q1
6	Seo, Park and Choi (2020)	2020	The effect of social media usage characteristics on e-WOM, trust, and	Sustainability	80	Q1

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Citation	Tier
			brand equity: Focusing on users of airline social media,			
7	Han <i>et al</i> (2019)	2019	Role of airline food quality, price reasonableness, image, satisfaction, and attachment in building re-flying intention,	International Journal of Hospitality Management	74	Q1
8	Chen, Y. Q. Li and Liu,(2019)	2019	How airline service quality determines the quantity of repurchase intention - Mediate and moderate effects of brand quality and perceived value,	Journal of Air Transport Management	71	Q1
9	Hwang and Lyu (2020)	2020	Relationships among green image, consumer attitudes, desire, and customer citizenship behavior in the airline industry,	International Journal of Sustainable Transportation	64	Q2
10	Laming and Mason (2014)	2014	Customer experience - An analysis of the concept and its performance in airline brands,	Research in Transportation Business and Management	51	Q1

Antecedents, Mediation, and Consequences of Service Quality on Brand Image



Figure 7. Research Model Suggestions

In this analysis, we employ a network analysis approach to identify antecedent, mediating, and consequential variables in the study of airline brand image. The main focus of this research is to examine how service quality contributes to the formation of an airline's brand image. Three groups of variables have been identified and conceptualized in this research as the proposed research model. This model integrates various theories from previous studies to develop the proposed research framework. The proposed model is based on three key factors: relevance, uniqueness, and concepts related to service quality variables. This method identifies the various essential elements that contribute to the airline's brand image.

Antecedent Variable

The independent variables proposed in this model draw from several key theoretical foundations, specifically Experiential Marketing Theory, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Theory, and Brand Equity Theory. Each of these theories offers a distinct yet complementary lens through which to examine the influence of service quality on the brand image of airlines (Chen, Y.-Q. Li dan Liu, 2019) . Brand Equity Theory serves as the basis for understanding service quality as an antecedent variable. This theory underscores the significance of consumer perceptions regarding the value and quality that a brand offers. High service quality plays a crucial role in enhancing the brand image by boosting customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty (Liat, Mansori dan Huei, 2014) . Within this framework, service quality encompasses various dimensions, such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy in service delivery. Empirical evidence suggests that improvements in these aspects of service quality can have a positive effect on both brand image & consumer purchase intentions (Hussain, Al Nasser dan Hussain, 2015) .

Additionally, the variables of brand experience and event marketing are grounded in Experiential Marketing Theory. This theory highlights the importance of creating positive and memorable consumer experiences. Brand experience pertains to the overall impression consumers form through their interactions with the brand, while event marketing involves activities that engage consumers interactively and engagingly (Beig dan Nika, 2019) . Previous studies have shown that positive experiences with a brand can enhance consumer loyalty and strengthen their emotional connection to the brand. Moreover, the variables of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and service experience are informed by the Triple Bottom Line Theory, which advocates for the integration of corporate social responsibility into sustainable business practices. CSR initiatives focus on a company's efforts to positively impact society and the environment, while service experience reflects consumers' perceptions of the quality of their interactions with the company (Beig dan Nika, 2019) . Effective CSR implementation can enhance brand reputation and positively influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Mediation Variable

The mediating variables identified in this model are brand experience and brand love. These variables are pivotal in linking antecedent variables to consequential outcomes by shaping consumer perceptions and influencing their attitudes toward the brand. Brand experience pertains to the overall impression that consumers form through their interactions with the brand (Khan dan Fatma, 2017; Cleff, Walter dan Xie, 2018; Beig dan Nika, 2019; Pina dan Dias, 2021) . Research consistently demonstrates that positive brand experiences can significantly enhance consumer loyalty and deepen their emotional connection to the brand. Within the highly competitive landscape of the aviation industry, a rich and memorable brand experience serves as a critical differentiator. Furthermore, brand love is a concept that encapsulates consumers' affection and emotional attachment to a brand. Acting as a mediator, brand love plays a crucial role in influencing purchase intentions and fostering consumer loyalty. Empirical evidence suggests that brand love not only increases consumers' willingness to make repeat purchases but also encourages them to recommend the brand to others (Bıçakcıoğlu, İpek dan Bayraktaroğlu, 2018; Verma, 2021; Bae dan Kim, 2023) .

Consequent Variables

The consequential variables in this model are reuse intention and word of mouth (WOM). These variables reflect the outcome of the interaction between antecedent and mediating variables, demonstrating how service quality can influence consumer behavior and brand image. Reuse intention refers to the tendency of consumers to return to using products or services from the same brand (Jena dan Sarmah, 2015; Daassi dan Debbabi, 2021) . This indicates a brand's success in retaining consumers and enhancing their loyalty. Studies show that positive brand experiences and strong brand love can increase reuse intention. Word of mouth refers to positive recommendations or discussions that consumers have with others about a brand. Positive WOM can enhance a brand's reputation and attract new consumers (Wallace, Buil dan De Chernatony, 2014; Daassi dan Debbabi, 2021) . Research indicates that positive brand experiences and strong brand love can increase positive WOM.

CONCLUSION

This study has delved into the relationship between service quality and brand image within the airline industry through a systematic literature review (Snyder, 2019) . The findings emphasize the crucial role of service quality as a key factor in shaping a strong and positive brand image among airline consumers (Yilmaz dan Ari, 2017; Shen dan Yahya, 2021) . In an industry characterized by intense competition, airlines need to understand how various dimensions of service quality influence consumer perceptions and how these insights can be leveraged to improve their marketing and operational strategies (Hussain, Al Nasser dan Hussain, 2015) .

Service quality, being a multi-dimensional construct, includes elements such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Prakash, 2019) . The study found that each of these dimensions plays a unique role in influencing consumer perceptions of airline services. For example, reliability is closely tied to punctuality and service accuracy, which are essential for building consumer trust (Prakash, 2019) . Responsiveness refers to how promptly and effectively airlines address customer needs and complaints, while assurance pertains to the airline's ability to deliver safe and dependable services (Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017) . Empathy reflects the personal attention and care provided by airline staff to passengers, while tangibles involve physical aspects such as cabin cleanliness and seat comfort (Suki, 2014) .

Moreover, the study reveals that high-quality service can lead to a significant enhancement in brand image. A positive brand image, in turn, can foster customer loyalty and encourage positive word-of-mouth promotion. This aligns with the findings of Kumar and Pansari (2016) who

emphasize that a strong brand image can elevate brand value and offer a sustainable competitive advantage. Consequently, airlines that consistently deliver high-quality services are more likely to build a favorable brand image in the eyes of consumers (Kumar dan Pansari, 2016; Ramesh *et al.* , 2019) .

The findings of this study have several practical implications for the airline industry. First, airlines should adopt a more holistic approach to enhancing their service quality, which includes investing in staff training to improve service skills, adopting advanced technologies to boost operational efficiency, and developing corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs that can enhance brand image (Suki, 2014; Chung, Park, dan Lee, 2022) .

Second, airlines should be more proactive in managing their brand image through effective and consistent communication strategies. This involves using social media and other digital platforms to build closer relationships with consumers and promote brand values. By creating positive and memorable customer experiences, airlines can increase customer loyalty and strengthen their market position (Patel dan D'Cruz, 2018; Boubker dan Naoui, 2022b) .

Third, airlines should be more responsive to customer feedback and use this information to continuously improve their service quality (Haghighat, 2017) . By conducting in-depth analyses of feedback data, airlines can identify areas needing improvement and develop appropriate solutions to address customer issues.

Overall, this study reaffirms the importance of service quality and brand image as key determinants of the long-term success of airlines. In this highly competitive industry, airlines must continually innovate and adapt to changing consumer needs and expectations to remain relevant and competitive (Hussain, Al Nasser, dan Hussain, 2015; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017; Panda *et al.* , 2019) . By understanding and leveraging the relationship between service quality and brand image, airlines can create superior customer experiences and build stronger, more sustainable relationships with their consumers.

DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on service quality and brand image in the airline industry has significantly contributed to our understanding of how these elements affect consumer decisions. However, there remain numerous opportunities for further research that can expand and deepen our comprehension. Below are several directions for future research, encompassing theoretical contributions, methodologies, and contexts.

Theoretical Contributions

While extensive research has been conducted on the relationship between service quality and brand image, there remains significant potential for the development of more comprehensive theoretical models (Chen, YQ Li dan Liu, 2019; Tran, 2024) . A particularly promising direction is the further refinement of Brand Equity Theory, particularly by incorporating new variables that are increasingly relevant in the rapidly evolving airline industry. Future studies could, for example, investigate how digital interactions—such as those occurring through social media and mobile applications—shape brand perception and influence consumer decision-making. By integrating digital marketing theory with brand equity theory, researchers could uncover novel insights into how airlines can effectively build and sustain customer loyalty in the digital age (Jena dan Sarmah, 2015; Nam dan Kannan, 2020)

In addition, further exploration of Social Exchange Theory could enhance our understanding of the dynamics between airlines and their customers, especially in the context of service quality (Pina dan Dias, 2021; Bae dan Kim, 2023) . Previous studies have underscored the importance of trust and commitment in fostering strong customer relationships. However, there is a need for more in-depth research to examine how these elements interact with other critical factors—such as pricing strategies, convenience, and service innovation—in shaping customer decisions. Expanding the application of Social Exchange Theory by incorporating digital components into the analysis of airline-customer relationships could also yield valuable insights (Cleff, Walter, dan Xie, 2018) . As technology

becomes increasingly integral to the airline industry, understanding how digital interactions affect customer relationships and how airlines can use technology to enhance trust and loyalty is essential (Buhalis et al., 2019). Moreover, the development of multidimensional models that account for variables such as culture, demographics, and consumer behavior could provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between service quality and brand image across different contexts (Haghighat, 2017; Sürücü et al., 2019). For instance, future research could explore how cultural differences influence consumer perceptions of service quality and how airlines can adapt their strategies to effectively meet the diverse needs of consumers in various markets (Evangelista, 2014).

Methodology

From a methodological perspective, there are opportunities to implement more sophisticated and diverse methodologies in future research. Currently, most studies rely on surveys and quantitative analysis to evaluate service quality and brand image (Bae dan Kim, 2023). However, future research could adopt a more holistic approach by using mixed-methods research, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer experiences (Thelwall dan Nevill, 2021). Qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, can provide deeper insights into consumers' perceptions and expectations regarding service quality and brand image (Snyder, 2019). This approach can help researchers understand the motivations and emotions underlying consumer decisions and how these factors contribute to brand image formation (Thelwall dan Nevill, 2021).

Furthermore, the use of advanced analytical technologies, such as text and sentiment analysis, can aid researchers in evaluating real-time customer feedback from social media platforms and online reviews. These methods allow researchers to capture and analyse larger and more diverse data sets, providing more accurate insights into consumer perceptions of service quality and brand image (Hussain, Al Nasser dan Hussain, 2015; Ansary dan Nik Hashim, 2018). The use of field experiments can also enhance our understanding of the causal relationship between service quality and brand image (Haghighat, 2017). For example, research could design experiments to test how changes in specific service elements, such as improved customer service or the implementation of new technologies, affect consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. Such experiments can provide stronger evidence of the effectiveness of marketing and service strategies in enhancing brand image (Suki, 2014; Deepa dan Jayaraman, 2017).

Context

The context in which research is conducted also plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of service quality and brand image. Future research should consider different geographical and cultural contexts to provide richer and more relevant insights into how these variables interact in various settings. For instance, studies could explore how cultural differences affect consumer perceptions of service quality and brand image. Cross-cultural studies can help identify differing preferences and expectations in various markets, which can be used to tailor marketing and service strategies to meet the specific needs of consumers in each region (Frank, Abulaiti dan Enkawa, 2014; Voyer, Kastanakis dan Rhode, 2017; Nam dan Kannan, 2020).

Additionally, research could also explore how economic and technological contexts influence service quality and brand image. With the increasing adoption of technology in the airline industry, it is essential to understand how technological innovations such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and the Internet of Things impact consumer perceptions and interactions with airlines (Buhalis et al., 2019; Pereira, Lohmann, dan Houghton, 2022). Future research could explore how airlines can leverage these technologies to enhance customer experiences and build a stronger brand image.

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