

The Effect of Service Quality, Price Fairness and Corporate Image to Customer Retention Mediated by Customer Satisfaction on Low-Cost Carrier Airlines



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ABSTRACT: This research aims to analyze the effect of service quality, price fairness, and corporate image on customer retention of low-cost carrier airlines mediated by customer satisfaction.

The research was conducted by quantitative research and testing hypothesis with a purposive sample of low-cost airline passengers. A Google form was used to collect 203 responses, which were then analyzed using the Partial Least Square method of the Structural Equation Model from the Statistical Package for Social Science.

The results of the study found that the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable was as follows: Service quality to customers retention has no effect; Price fairness on customer retention has no effect; Corporate image on customer retention has no effect; customer satisfaction on customer retention has an effect. In addition, service quality, price fairness, and corporate image have effect on customer satisfaction. For the indirect hypothesis, service quality, price fairness, and corporate image influence on customer retention mediated by customer satisfaction were accepted. The research concluded that there are 3 hypothesis that have no effect and 7 hypothesis that have an effect consisting of 4 direct effects and 3 indirect effects.

The implication of this research, there is the important rule of customer satisfaction as a mediating variable from service quality, price fairness, and corporate image to customer retention of low-cost carrier airlines. The placement of customer satisfaction as a full mediation variable on the research model became a Novelty in this study.

KEYWORDS: Service Quality, Price Fairness, Corporate Image, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention

INTRODUCTION

Airlines in Indonesia apply 2 (two) price concepts, that is full services airlines and low-cost carrier airlines adopted from American and European airlines. The application of low-cost carriers to airlines is by cutting prices and reducing some facilities that are generally owned by full-service airlines. The low-cost carrier was first applied by Pacific Southwest Airlines from the United States, then in 1967 it was adopted by Southwest Airlines which was founded by Rollin King, Lamar Muse and Herber Kelleher. Since then, the trend or business model for low-cost carrier airline has spread widely and been adopted by several airlines from Europe. The first airline to offer cheaper transatlantic flight routes was an airline originating from Iceland named Loftleidir in 1964.

In research conducted by Baker (2013) it was shown that the service quality of low-cost carrier airlines still provides customer satisfaction, even when compared between low-cost carriers and full service airlines from these two concepts each provide customer satisfaction, and passenger perceptions based on costs incurred exceed expectations, both for low-cost carriers and full service airlines.

Based on the Indonesia Central Bureau of Statistics, domestic passengers who have flown through Soekarno-Hatta International Airport at the departure terminal for the last 5 (five) years are as follows:

Table 1. Number of Domestic Passenger at the Departure Terminal at Soekarno – Hatta Airport, 2017 - 2021

No	Year	Passenger	Increase/Decrease
1	2017	21,931,280	6.59%
2	2018	22,609,828	3.09%
3	2019	19,265,062	-14.79%
4	2020	8,621,796	-55.25%

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5	2021	7,945,377	- 7.85%
	Total	80,373,343	

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2017 - 2021)

According to the INACA Annual Report 2021 the development of the number of passengers in 2020 was the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, there was a very drastic decrease in the number of passengers compared to 2019 reaching 55.25 %, and the number of passengers in 2021 decreased by 7.85% compared to 2020. The decrease in the number of passengers in 2020 and 2021 is due to various policies implemented by the Government in preventing the spread of Covid 19 starting from implementing the 3M health protocol (Wearing masks, Washing hands, and Keeping your distance), implementing PPKM (Implementation of Restrictions on Community Activities) and PPKM Emergency to limit the mobilization of community activities by closing access roads to inter-regions, closing entertainment and tourist places, implementing WFH (Work From Home). In addition to prevent the spread of Covid 19, Government requires mandatory immunization with *Peduli Lindungi* program, and limiting the number of passengers which has significantly decreased the number of airline passengers and other modes of transportation.

According to Yang et al. (2017) customers are not satisfied with the service of Vietnam's low-cost carrier airlines, but passengers choose this flight because of its cheap fares. Customer loyalty on low-cost carrier airline is also at an average level. From the results of the analysis, customers expect diversification from Vietnam's low-cost operator services, and passengers still intend to continue using this service.

According to Riorini & Widayati (2018) the results of the study show that the stimulus for customer satisfaction airlines low-cost carrier is service quality, corporate image, price fairness, and flight safety. Customer satisfaction will have consequences for airline brand loyalty, where corporate image is the strongest factor that meets customer satisfaction

Customer retention is a sort of airline activity and effort to retain consumers loyal and eager to buy again and suggest to others or new customers. Low-cost airlines in particular focus on this. Maintaining customer retention is highly dependent on increasing customer satisfaction either directly or indirectly (Guo et al., 2009).

Meanwhile customer satisfaction itself is influenced by other factors such as the service quality provided, price fairness and the brand or corporate image of an airline. To form a customer retention in repurchasing airline services on an ongoing basis, it is necessary to increase customer satisfaction, which has customer certainty and is an added value (Ruth N. Bolton et al., 2000).

Customers will continue to pick the airline if they feel comfortable using low-cost airlines, so as to create a customer retention for the company, namely passengers want to reuse airline services in the future by buying back flight tickets, earn acclaim from the community of service users and devoted passengers, offer recommendations to other people who will take the flight, and give awards and praise for the goods or services received. (Wong & Chung, 2008).

As a result, there is a difference in construct with respect to prior research where the placement and function of customer satisfaction, which is typically a dependent variable, becomes a mediation variable. The **novelty** of this study has that the customer satisfaction variable is used as a mediating variable between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Service Quality

Zeithaml, Bitner & Gramler (2010) mentioned that service quality is the customer's perception of the service components of a product received by the customer from the service attributes provided by the company according to the expectations and desires of the customer. According to Lovelock and Wright (2007) service quality is a customer's long-term cognitive assesment of the delivery of a company's services. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988) service quality is the disconfirmation of customer expectations and the evaluation of a service or the comparison between expectations desired by customers with good or bad service perceived by customers. The dimensions or indicators of service quality are 1) Reliability, 2) Assurance, 3) Responsiveness, 4) Physical Evidence, 5) Facility, 6) Employee, 7) Flight Pattern, and 8) Empathy. (Abdel Rady, 2018) (Gilbert & Wong, 2003)

2. Price Fairness

Xia et al. (2004) defined that price fairness is an assesment of the difference in price from the seller compared to other people who feel fair and can accept it. Price fairness as the perception of how fair, acceptable, and reasonable the difference between two prices. According to Campbell (2007) price fairness makes customers feel uncomfortable or guilty when price inequality is profitable, but there is a feeling of anger if the inequalities are detrimental. According to Kim et al. (2006) perception of price fairness is a psychological factor that plays an important role in customer reaction to price. According to Namkung (2010) price fairness is an assesment of price perceived by customers based on a comparison of the difference between the real and reference

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prices, individual preferences, the appropriate level of socially acceptable adaptation, and personal interests, reference and personal interests and acceptable levels of adaptation determined by social standards. Measurements or indicators of fairness are: 1) Reasonable price, 2) Price reference rate, 3) Price discrimination, 4) Price policy, and 5) Ethics (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2007).

3. Corporate Image

According to Oliver (2007) corporate image is a power or asset that is crucial for a company to be able to compete freely. According to Gronroos and Keller (1995) corporate image refers to the perception of an organization that is retained in the minds of customers who labor to filter and shape perceptions of a business. The dimensions or indicators of corporate image are: 1) Credibility, 2) Reliability, 3) Reputation (Pasaribu and Diah, 2015)

4. Customer Retention

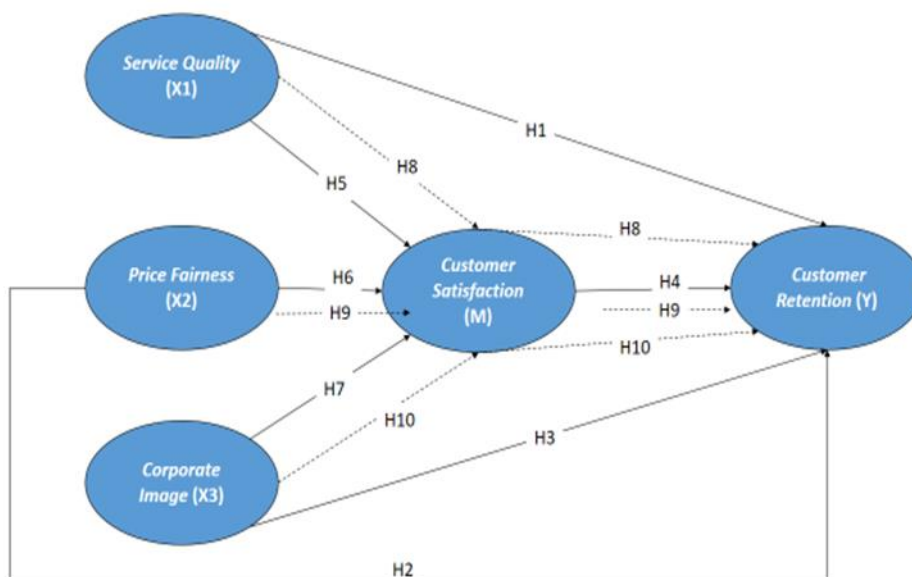
Customer retention Ranaweera & Prabhu (2003) namely the tendency of customers to remain loyal to the company to use products or services in the future. According to Lewis M (2009) customer retention is the attitude of customers to persist in using products or services from manufacturers due to low prices, or brands that are well known to customers. According to Kotler (2002) customer retention is a form of mental attachment between customers and producers, so that customers make repeated purchases that are long term. According to Rangkuti (2002) customer retention is determined by a value that gives the company's product or service uniqueness to customers. According to K. et al, (2013) customer retention needs to be improved because it is an important tool in company performance from aspects outside of finance which is a management tool in maintaining competition. The dimensions or indicators of customer retention are: 1) Recommendations to others, 2) Repeated purchases, and 3) Refusing to change with competing airlines (Magatef and Tomalieh, 2015)

5. Customer Satisfaction

Kotler and Keller (2009) defined customer satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure and disappointment that customers feel and receive based on performance with customer expectations. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2016) customer satisfaction is the achievement of product/service performance received by customers equal to the expectations and desires of customers. Dimensions or indicators of customer satisfaction are: 1) Overall satisfied with facilities, 2) Overall satisfied with management, 3) Overall satisfied with service quality (Thai, 2016).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework in this study describes the influence between independent variables and variables dependent mediated by customer satisfaction on low-cost carrier airlines, the research framework is as follows:



Picture 1. Conceptual Framework

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Development of Hypotheses

Based on a conceptual framework that refers to previous research on low-cost carrier domestic passengers are deduced (correlation and causality) into the development of the hypothesis as following:

H1: There is an influence between service quality and customer retention.

H2: There is an influence between price fairness and customer retention.

H3: There is an influence between corporate image and customer retention.

H4: There is an influence between customer satisfaction and customer retention.

H5: There is an influence between service quality and customer satisfaction

H6: There is an influence between price fairness and customer satisfaction

H7: There is an influence between corporate image and customer satisfaction

H8: There is an influence between service quality and customer retention which is mediated by customer satisfaction.

H9: There is an influence between price fairness and customer retention which is mediated by customer satisfaction.

H10: There is an influence between corporate image and customer retention which is mediated by customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This study was conducted using a survey method on several low-cost carrier airline passengers as a sample to test the hypothesis of each of the variables studied using SmartPLS Structural Equation Model (SEM).

2. Population and Sample

Population Sugiyono (2017) is a term used to describe a group of things or persons that have been chosen by researchers to be examined to draw conclusions. While the sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. The population and sample in this study were low-cost carrier airline passengers. Sampling used a purposive sampling technique in the period from late 2020 – early 2021 for 203 respondents.

3. Measurement Scale

To measure respondents' attitudes toward the statements submitted, 5 scales (Likert scale) were used to measure the ordinal data types Sugiyono (2017). Each answer is given a score, namely: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (S) = 4, Doubtful (D) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

4. Data Analysis Technique

a Validity Testing

Conducted validity testing of research instruments to find out whether all the proposed instruments from each of these variables are valid. From this validity, you can find out the degree of accuracy of the existing data on the research object (Ghozali, 2018). A variable is declared valid if the value of each dimension or indicator of the research variable has a factor loading ≥ 0.40 (N=203), and is invalid if the factor loading < 0.40 . The result of validity test found that all indicators are valid.

b Reliability Testing

An instrument that is reliable or can be trusted, will produce reliable data. Reliability testing was carried out using the Cronbach alpha to obtain the level of accuracy (reliability or constancy) of the data collection tool (instrument) used (Kuncoro and Riduwan, 2014). As a basis for making decisions on reliability testing, namely:

1) If the Cronbach's Alpha value of reliability ≥ 0.60 , the statements in the questionnaire are feasible to use (reliable).

2) If the Cronbach's Alpha value of reliability < 0.60 then the statements in the questionnaire are not suitable for use (not reliable).

Therefore, all the research variables are reliable.

c The Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination is an assessment of the level of accuracy of the actual value with the predicted value of the dependent latent variable, with a numerical rating range from 1-5, so that it can be seen whether the model or accuracy of the predictive value is strong, strong enough, weak (Hair, et al 2010)

TABLE 2. DETERMINATION COEFFICIENT (R^2)

Model	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer retention	0.676	0.670

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Customer satisfaction	0.825	0.823
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Source: SPSS data processing results (22)

Based on table 2 of the Coefficient of Determination (R²) above, the customer retention model obtained an R Square value of 67.6%. The R Square value is 0.676 close to 0.75 or 75% so the accuracy of the prediction value or model is quite strong.

d Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing aims to test whether the proposed hypothesis is accepted or rejected. Testing this hypothesis uses the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) version 8.80 with the Smart Partial Least Squares (PLS) 3.0 which is presented in 2 parts of the model, namely the model section with direct relationship analysis and the model section with indirect relationship analysis. Carrying out tests together on the structural model which is the relationship between independent and dependent constructs and the measurement, namely the relationship (loading value) between indicators and constructs (Ghozali & Fuad, 2014)

In this study, if the results of hypothesis testing show the magnitude of the P-value < 0.05 (α 5%), then the hypothesis are accepted. However, if the test results show that the P-value is ≥ 0.05 (α 5%) then the hypothesis are rejected.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Data

The description of descriptive statistical results of the research variables are as follows:

TABLE 3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation
Service Quality	4.0099	.71053
Price Fairness	4.0197	.73093
Corporate Image	4.0345	.76676
Customer Satisfaction	4.0887	.71200
Customer Retention	3.8128	.85852

Source: Results of data processing

Based on table 3 above the results of statistical calculations describe the mean and standard deviation of observation of 203 respondents on low cost carrier variable service quality obtained a mean of 4.0099 which means service quality is good, price fairness obtains a mean of 4.0197 which means price fairness is appropriate and reasonable, corporate image obtains a mean of 4, 0345, which means that corporate image has a reputation, customer satisfaction obtained a mean of 4.0887, which means that customer satisfaction has been fulfilled, and Customer retention earned a mean of 3.8128 which means customer retention is maintained.

2. Analysis and Research Results

TABLE 4. OUTPUT HYPOTHESIS TESTING FROM PARTIAL LEAST SQUARE

Hypothesis Testing	Original Sample	Std Dev	P-Values	Results
H ₁ Service quality on customer retention	0.064	0.093	0.487	Rejected
H ₂ Price fairness on customer retention	0.014	0.068	0.838	Rejected
H ₃ Corporate image on customer retention	0.190	0.116	0.101	Rejected
H ₄ Customer satisfaction on customer retention	0.585	0.120	0.000	Accepted
H ₅ Service quality on customer satisfaction	0.322	0.066	0.000	Accepted
H ₆ Price fairness on customer satisfaction	0.254	0.045	0.000	Accepted
H ₇ Corporate image on customer satisfaction	0.418	0.061	0.000	Accepted
H ₈ Service quality on customer retention through customer satisfaction	0.188	0.049	0.000	Accepted
H ₉ Price fairness to customer retention through customer satisfaction	0.149	0.041	0.000	Accepted

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H ₁₀	Corporate image to customer retention through customer satisfaction	0.244	0.068	0.000	Accepted
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Source: Results of data processing with SoftwarePLS 3.0

The results of the research in table 4 are obtained from data processing using Partial Least Square with SmartPLS 3.0 software which is presented in 2 parts of the model, namely the first part of the model with direct relationship analysis and the second part of the full model with indirect relationship analysis. In the analysis of the direct relationship, the results are 3 hypotheses are rejected and 4 hypotheses are accepted, while the indirect relationship results are 3 hypotheses are accepted.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the analysis of the assessment of research results through hypothesis testing described above, this discussion can be explained in detail from the results of hypothesis testing both directly and indirectly mediated customer satisfaction of low-cost carrier airlines as follows:

1. Influence between service quality and customer retention

This hypothesis is rejected, there is no influence between service quality on customer retention. The results of this study are not in line with previous research conducted by Hasan et al. (2013) in that the results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between ATM service quality and customers retention in Banks in Pakistan. In this study, the average service quality value obtained for the respondents' answers stated that the service quality provided by low-cost carrier airlines were good. But service quality has no impact on customer retention on low-cost carrier airlines

2. Influence between price fairness and customer retention

Based on the results of testing the hypothesis that there is no influence between price fairness and customer retention. The results of this study are not in line with previous research on the impact of customer retention on GSM cellular service companies. Case studies in Pokhara City, Nepal show that the variables of service quality, customer care, pricing, other service facilities, loyalty improvement programs and communication have a relationship with the NTC network or Neell that customers use (Bir, 2018). In this study, the average price fairness value obtained for the respondents' answers stated that the price fairness determined by low-cost carrier airlines was reasonable. But price fairness has no impact on customer retention airline low-cost carrier airlines.

3. Influence between corporate image and customer retention

The results of testing the hypothesis between corporate image on customer retention is rejected. The results of this study are not in line with previous research which revealed that the level of customer loyalty tends to be higher when perceived corporate reputation and corporate image are very good. In particular, the increased interaction between the two constructs contributes to better explaining customer loyalty (Nha Nguyen*, 2001). In this study, the average corporate image value obtained for the respondents' answers stated that the corporate image of low-cost carrier airlines are in the good category. But corporate image has no impact on customer retention low-cost carrier airlines.

4. Influence between customer satisfaction and customer retention

There is an influence between customer satisfaction and customer retention. The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Hasan et al. (2013) which stated that customer satisfaction and customer retention have a positive and significant relationship. In this study, the average value of customer satisfaction was obtained from the respondents' answers that the customer satisfaction received from low-cost carrier airlines had been fulfilled which could have a positive impact on customer retention low-cost carrier airlines.

5. Influence between service quality and customer satisfaction

The results of the hypothesis test show that service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. This research is in line with previous research conducted by GAMBO (2016) which stated that inflight service quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction on domestic airlines in Nigeria. In this study, the average value of service quality was obtained from respondents' answers that the service quality provided by low-cost carrier airlines were good and had a positive impact on customer satisfaction to low-cost carrier airlines.

6. Influence between price fairness and customer satisfaction

There is a positive effect of price fairness on customer satisfaction. The results of this study are in line with previous research that price fairness influences customer satisfaction because it is an important element for customers to buy (Hamza et al., 2014). In

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this study, the average value of price fairness was obtained from respondents' answers that the price fairness given by low-cost carrier airlines was reasonable and had a positive impact on customer satisfaction airlines low-cost carriers.

7. Influence between corporate image and customer satisfaction

Based on the results of testing the hypothesis that there is a positive effect of corporate image on customer satisfaction. The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted (Irshad et al., 2017). The results showed that CSR has a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and corporate image positively affects customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In this study, the average value corporate image obtained from respondents' answers shows that the corporate image of low-cost carrier airlines has a good category reputation which has a positive impact on customer satisfaction of low-cost carrier airlines.

8. The influence between service quality and customer retention mediated by customer satisfaction.

There is an effect between service quality on customer retention mediated customer satisfaction airline low-cost carrier. The results of this study are new findings (Novelty) because in previous research no customer satisfaction mediate between service quality and customer retention.

9. The influence between price fairness and customer retention mediated by customer satisfaction.

The results of hypothesis testing that there is an influence between price fairness on customer retention mediated customer satisfaction airline low-cost carrier which is a new finding (Novelty) which differs from other studies in placing the dependent variable and mediating variable. In this study, the variable customer satisfaction fully mediates the influence of price fairness on customer retention airlines low-cost carriers.

10. The influence between corporate image and customer retention mediated by customer satisfaction.

Based on the results of testing the hypothesis that there is an effect between corporate image on customer retention mediated by customer satisfaction airline low-cost carrier. This research is a novelty which has not been found in previous studies, by placing customer satisfaction as a full mediation effect between corporate image and customer retention airline low-cost carrier.

RESEARCH CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical test results of the 10 hypotheses analyzed, it can be concluded that: 1) service quality, price fairness, and corporate image partially have no effect on customer retention, 2) customer satisfaction has an effect on customer retention, 3) service quality, price fairness, and corporate image partially have an influence on customer satisfaction, 4) service quality, price fairness, and corporate image each have an influence on customer retention which is mediated by customer satisfaction. So that from the test results there are 3 hypotheses rejected because the probability value is greater than the alpha value ($P\text{-Values} > \alpha$ value), and 7 hypotheses are accepted because the probability value is smaller than the alpha value ($P\text{-Values} < \alpha$), where the α value that can be tolerated is 5% (0.05).

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