

## UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF AIRLINE SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND IMAGE: A PATHWAY TO LOYALTY AND REPURCHASE INTENTIONS



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### Abstract

This study investigates how customer perceptions of service quality and airline brand image affect customer loyalty and intentions to repurchase. By employing a systematic literature review (SLR) method in line with the PRISMA protocol, the research examines 50 articles indexed in Scopus that pertain to customer perceptions in the airline sector. The results indicate that favorable perceptions of service quality significantly impact brand image, thereby promoting customer loyalty and repurchase intentions. Mediating factors such as "brand love," "passenger loyalty," and "positive word of mouth" are essential in reinforcing these connections. Additionally, the study presents a conceptual framework for airlines to develop more effective strategies aimed at improving customer loyalty. This research not only addresses theoretical gaps but also provides practical insights for enhancing airline service strategies that yield long-term benefits for customer loyalty.

**Keywords:** Service Quality, Brand Image, Customer Loyalty, Repurchase Intent, Systematic Literature Review

## INTRODUCTION

Customer perceptions of service quality and brand image are vital elements in the airline industry, which prioritizes customer satisfaction and loyalty (Hussain, 2016; Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). Service quality includes various aspects, from physical comfort to speed and reliability, and is often a key indicator influencing how customers view an airline (Oliveira, Oliveira, and Vassallo, 2023). This is particularly important in a highly competitive and globalized environment, where customers expect service experiences that not only meet their needs but also offer additional value. Research has consistently shown that favorable perceptions of service quality can enhance brand image, boosting customer loyalty and the likelihood of repeat purchases. Nonetheless, fulfilling these expectations presents significant challenges for airlines, especially given the complexities of operations and shifting customer preferences (Han et al., 2019).

Despite this, the existing literature reveals a lack of cohesive research on the interplay between service quality, brand image, and repurchase intention (Hussain, 2016; Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016). Most studies tend to focus on only one or two of these elements in isolation, failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of how they interact within the context of the airline industry (Hussain, 2016). This gap in research highlights the need for a more in-depth exploration of how service quality and brand image contribute to customer repurchase intentions—a topic that has not been thoroughly examined in the literature. Gaining insight into these relationships is crucial for airlines to formulate more effective marketing strategies tailored to customer preferences (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Malhotra, 2005; Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016; Budd, Ison, and Adrienne, 2020; Oliveira, Oliveira, and Vassallo, 2023).

In light of this research gap, this study formulates several important research questions: How do service quality and brand image affect customer perceptions of airlines? Does this relationship have a direct influence on customer loyalty and repurchase intentions? Additionally, how might factors such as brand love, passenger loyalty, and positive word of mouth mediate and reinforce the connection between customer perceptions of service quality and their intentions to repurchase?

To tackle these inquiries, the research aims to: (1) identify and analyze the relationship between perceptions of service quality, brand image, and repurchase intentions in the airline

industry; (2) investigate the mediating effects of variables like brand love, passenger loyalty, and positive word of mouth in influencing customers' intentions to repurchase; and (3) propose a conceptual framework that airlines can utilize to develop strategies aimed at boosting customer loyalty. By employing a structured systematic literature review (SLR) approach in accordance with the PRISMA methodology, this study reviews relevant literature indexed in Scopus from the past ten years, aiming to provide a concentrated synthesis and classification of the elements influencing customer loyalty in the aviation sector (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

The anticipated results of this study are expected to significantly enhance both academic understanding and airline marketing practices by offering evidence-based insights that can be used to improve service strategies and create a more meaningful customer experience. Thus, this research not only addresses theoretical gaps in the existing literature but also offers a clear framework for developing practical strategies to sustain and enhance customer loyalty within the airline industry.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Service Quality**

Service quality has emerged as a crucial element in the airline industry, particularly in a highly competitive environment with increasing globalization demands (Jiang and Zhang, 2016; Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016; Farooq et al., 2018). In aviation, service quality involves more than just fulfilling customer expectations; it reflects the airline's overall effort to provide an experience that exceeds those expectations. The perception of service quality is defined by the gap between what customers ideally expect and the actual service they receive. This highlights the essential aspect of service quality—airlines not only meet fundamental needs but also offer additional value to their customers (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022).

In the realm of service marketing, the SERVQUAL model introduced by Parasuraman et al. (2005) is a key framework for assessing service quality based on five core dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Within the aviation sector, each of these dimensions contributes to shaping customer perceptions of

service quality. For example, timely departures and prompt responses in critical situations are vital for ensuring passenger satisfaction. However, the intricate nature of airline services, which encompasses safety considerations, physical comfort, and personalized attention for each traveler, necessitates a more comprehensive approach to evaluating service quality.

In the airline industry, customer perceptions of service quality extend beyond just seating comfort and punctuality; they encompass the entire travel experience—from reservation and check-in procedures to boarding and arrival (Hussain, 2016; Jiang and Zhang, 2016). Each phase of the journey plays a role in constructing the airline's image in the eyes of the customer. When an airline consistently upholds high service quality standards throughout all interactions, it enhances customers' positive perceptions and ultimately encourages loyalty. This perception is also shaped by brand awareness; customers who have had favorable past experiences with an airline typically have heightened expectations and are more likely to evaluate that airline against stricter service standards (Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016).

Research indicates that customers who receive high-quality service tend to develop a more favorable perception of the airline, resulting in increased loyalty and intentions to repurchase (Farooq et al., 2018; Han et al., 2019; Kim and Hwang, 2023). Conversely, a negative experience can quickly create a poor perception, affecting the likelihood of customers choosing that airline in the future. Thus, service quality is a vital foundation for airlines aiming to establish long-term relationships with their customers (Banjarnahor, Setyawati, and Anggraeni, 2024). This emphasizes the necessity for consistent service standards, where each interaction between the customer and the airline reinforces the brand image and cultivates loyalty (Han et al., 2019).

Additionally, the AIRQUAL model proposed by Alotaibi (2015) expands this viewpoint by taking into account both ground and in-flight service quality, as well as the airline's corporate image. Factors such as efficient check-in processes and the cleanliness of waiting areas at the terminal greatly impact customers' overall perceptions of an airline. The AIRQUAL model emphasizes the significance of a holistic service experience that combines physical services on the ground with in-flight experiences to fulfill customer expectations.

Research indicates that brand awareness is vital for cultivating a favorable perception of service quality. This awareness stems from the customer's overall interaction with the airline brand, which includes perceptions of staff professionalism, the friendliness of service, and physical comforts like seat quality and in-flight entertainment (Seo and Park, 2018). A positive brand experience can subtly but powerfully enhance perceptions of service quality. Passengers who enjoy their flights are likely to have higher expectations for future journeys. For example, prompt management of delays or approachable staff during boarding can leave a lasting impression and boost customer loyalty. In this regard, brand experience not only adds value but also functions as a strategic approach for developing long-term customer relationships.

### **Brand Image**

Brand image is a vital factor in consumer behavior and the service sector, particularly within the airline industry. In this context, the brand image reflects the overall perceptions consumers have of an airline, shaped both by their direct experiences and indirectly through associations or memories related to the airline (Seo and Park, 2018; Han et al., 2019). This comprehensive image includes aspects such as value, benefits, and characteristics, creating a strong impression in the minds of consumers. A more favorable brand image enhances an airline's ability to build customer loyalty, influence purchasing choices, and stand out from its competitors.

Brand image is influenced by various interconnected factors, encompassing both direct experiences and the social and psychological meanings associated with a brand (Sarker, Mohd-Any, and Kamarulzaman, 2021). For instance, an airline renowned for its punctuality and courteous cabin crew leaves a significantly different impression compared to one that often experiences delays or customer grievances. Seo and Park (2018) highlight that a positive customer experience with an airline increases the likelihood of repeat business and recommendations to others, a phenomenon referred to as positive word-of-mouth (WOM). In the airline sector, WOM is crucial for shaping public perception, as information shared between customers is often seen as more credible.

Beyond direct experiences, factors such as advertising, loyalty programs, and service quality also contribute to how consumers perceive an airline's image. Han et al. (2019) points

out that a brand's reputation has a significant effect on customer satisfaction; a higher reputation translates to stronger customer loyalty toward that airline. Moreover, loyalty programs, such as frequent flyer initiatives, are essential for nurturing long-term relationships with customers. Research by Seo and Park (2018) illustrates the connection between brand image and service quality through elements like perceived value, promotional incentives, and goodwill. These connections suggest that brand image encompasses not only visible attributes but also the emotional and functional value that a brand delivers to its customers.

As a subjective mental construct, brand image serves as a bridge between brand identity and customer perception. When an airline effectively cultivates a consistent brand image, customers are more likely to have positive expectations. In this regard, Han et al. (2019) emphasize that customers' perceived quality of a brand can be either enhanced or diminished by the brand image stored in their memories. This is particularly significant due to the intricate nature of airline service quality, which includes aspects like safety, physical comfort, and personalized service.

Hwang and Lyu (2020) suggest that an airline's image encompasses "everything the company does." In the context of airlines, this includes the quality of in-flight food and beverages (F&B), which, although not the main product, can still affect customers' perceptions of the brand. Law, Zhang, and Gow (2022) found that food quality has a notable impact on a restaurant's image, and similarly, in aviation, the quality of F&B plays a crucial role in shaping the overall flight experience, thereby enhancing customer perceptions. The significance of the brand image is further supported by studies indicating a link between brand images and customer behavioral intentions, such as the likelihood of reusing services or the readiness to pay a premium for airlines with strong reputations (Hwang and Lyu, 2020; Prasetio et al., 2022; Id, 2023).

The brand image also affects customer loyalty. When customers have a favorable impression of an airline, they are more inclined to stay loyal and choose that airline for future trips. For instance, research by Yang, Tjiptono, and Poon (2018) shows that a positive brand image is a key factor influencing customer loyalty behaviors. This is supported by findings that indicate customers with positive perceptions of a brand are not only more likely to

repurchase but also tend to offer positive recommendations to others, ultimately broadening the airline's customer base.

Additionally, an airline's ability to uphold its brand image plays a crucial role in shaping perceived value and customer trust. Hussain (2016) discovered that brand image has a significant influence on perceived customer value, which subsequently boosts trust in the airline's services. This trust is vital in an industry that prioritizes safety and reliability. When an airline adeptly handles customer complaints or shows a sincere commitment to resolving issues, it reinforces the perception that the airline is trustworthy.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In the research titled "Customer Perception of Airline Quality and Image," the PRISMA diagram is employed as a visual aid to depict the methodology for screening and selecting literature in this systematic review. PRISMA, which stands for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, is one of the most recognized guidelines in research for systematically, transparently, and reliably filtering and selecting pertinent literature. This diagram not only guides researchers but also enhances transparency for readers, ensuring that the final results are of high quality and relevance (Page and Moher, 2017).

The review process begins with the identification of literature concerning customer perceptions of airline quality and brand image. A total of 256 articles were identified using the Scopus database, a well-respected bibliographic resource known for its rigorous selection of peer-reviewed journals. The keywords used, such as "Airline image," "Airline Brand," and "Aviation Brand," reflect the study's focus and are pertinent for investigating factors that affect customer perceptions of airlines. The choice of Scopus as the main scientific search platform is supported by its strict indexing process and extensive coverage of scientific literature, which ensures the validity and credibility of the findings in this review.

Of the 256 articles identified, 23 were eliminated as duplicates. This step is vital in the screening process to prevent bias or repetitive data from affecting the analysis and distorting the outcomes. Furthermore, 39 articles were excluded by automated tools for not meeting the time frame criteria (publication years 2014–2024), which aligns with the study's

emphasis on recent literature pertinent to the latest developments in the airline industry and consumer perceptions. This limitation on publication years is crucial for ensuring that the studies reviewed contain current and relevant information for understanding airline brand image in a fast-changing and dynamic environment (Rethlefsen et al., 2021).

Prisma Reporting: Customer Perception Of Airline Quality And Image

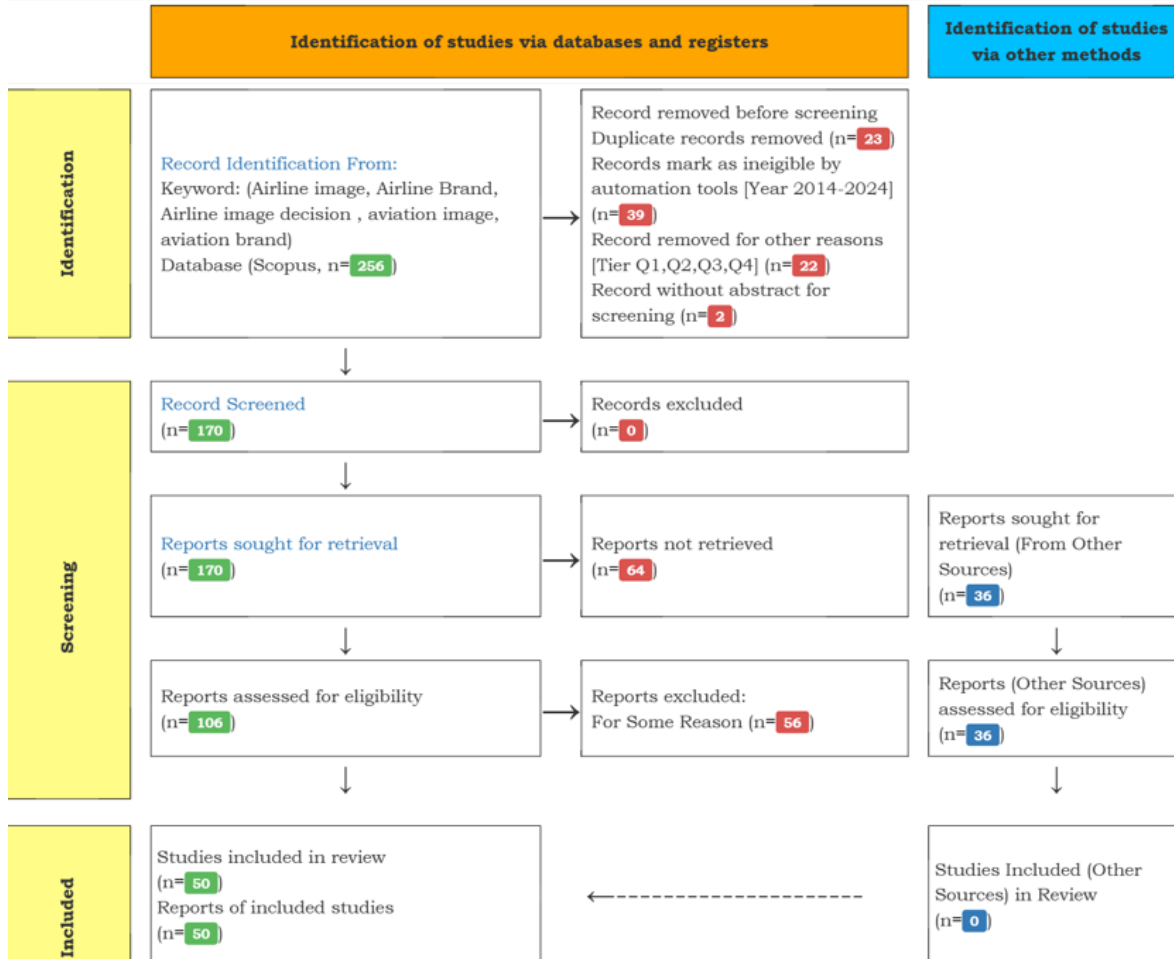


Figure. 1

**Identification, Screening, and Inclusion Steps**

In addition, 22 articles were excluded because they were published in journals that did not meet the established quartile standards (Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4), underscoring the selectivity of this process, which focuses solely on high-quality journal articles (Veretennik and Yudkevich, 2023). Furthermore, two articles were removed because they lacked an abstract, making preliminary screening unfeasible.

After the identification stage, 170 articles were left for screening. No articles were excluded at this point, indicating that the remaining articles were considered highly relevant to the research topic. However, 64 articles could not be accessed during the retrieval phase, likely due to access restrictions or issues with full-text availability. This limitation highlights that, even though the articles were initially regarded as relevant, technical barriers can impede the retrieval of necessary data for further analysis.

Of the articles that were accessible, 106 were evaluated for eligibility based on their relevance and quality of content. At this stage, 56 articles were excluded. The specific reasons for exclusion are not detailed in the diagram, but they typically include factors such as topic misalignment, inadequate methodological quality, or the lack of empirical data related to the research objectives. Ultimately, only 50 articles were included in the final review, demonstrating a commitment to selecting literature that is genuinely relevant and contributes significantly to understanding customer perceptions of airlines (Page and Moher, 2017).

Throughout this process, additional studies from other sources were also taken into account, with 36 articles identified through alternative methods. However, upon evaluating their eligibility, none of these articles from different sources were included in the review. This indicates that, despite efforts to expand the scope of literature through other sources, the results obtained from Scopus remained the primary focus due to the database's consistent quality and relevance.

This literature screening and selection process illustrates the rigorous application of the PRISMA methodology, a well-regarded approach that ensures the literature included in a systematic review adheres to high methodological standards and significant relevance (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). Employing PRISMA in this study is essential, as this process not only assists researchers in filtering literature but also establishes a solid foundation for subsequent analysis and findings. By selecting only articles from reputable journals and adhering to clear temporal criteria, this study guarantees that its review results are based on the most up-to-date and high-quality scientific evidence.

Here's a paraphrased version of the text:

### **Analysis and Results**

The purpose of a systematic literature review is to synthesize and categorize knowledge while profiling research trends (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). This section focuses on the development of the 50 identified research articles related to customer perceptions of airline quality and image. These articles are categorized by publication year, country of study, prominent journals that published them, topics related to customer satisfaction and perception, types of passenger perception, theoretical foundations, and author citation analysis. Subsequently, a comprehensive explanation of the insights gathered from the research profiles will be provided. Lastly, this article outlines the initial factors, mediating variables, and their impacts on attitudes toward airline quality and image. It also highlights theoretical gaps and analyzes them using the TMC framework to suggest new directions for future research.

### **Year of Publication**

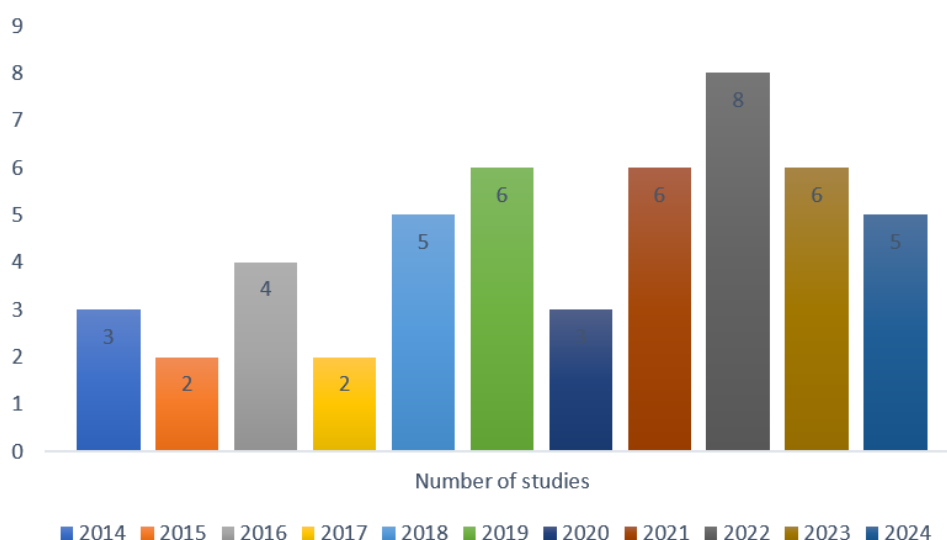
Figure 2 depicts the variations in the number of research publications from 2014 to 2024, illustrating the dynamic evolution of interest in this research topic over the years. The initial period from 2014 to 2017 saw a limited number of publications. In 2014, only three studies were published, possibly due to tentative interest in the subject. The following years, 2015 and 2017, experienced a significant decline, with only two publications each. However, in 2016, there was a slight increase in four studies, suggesting a modest rise in interest.

From 2018 to 2019, a more pronounced revival in publication numbers occurred. In 2018, five studies were published, and this number continued to grow, reaching six studies in 2019. This increase may reflect a growing awareness of the topic's relevance, potentially due to industry shifts necessitating a better understanding of consumer behavior and the adaptation of marketing strategies (Morgan et al., 2019). The upward trend in publications during this period indicates that academics began to recognize the topic's substantial importance in light of changing business and marketing dynamics.

The peak of this publication trend occurred between 2020 and 2022, marking a significant rise in published research. Despite a decrease to three studies in 2020, the following years showed notable growth: six studies in 2021 and eight studies in 2022, making 2022 the year with the highest publication count of the decade. This substantial increase was likely fueled by major shifts in marketing and consumer behavior driven by the COVID-19

pandemic, which resulted in a significant digital transformation. Online marketing and virtual interactions became essential, prompting researchers to conduct more studies to grasp these new dynamics (Morgan et al., 2019).

After reaching this peak in 2022, a decline in publications was noted in 2023, with only six studies reported. Nonetheless, this figure remains higher than in the earlier years, indicating a sustained interest in the topic, even if it hasn't returned to previous peak levels. The projection for 2024 suggests a further slight decrease, with an estimated five studies expected. This decline may signify a stabilization phase, where the research topic has transitioned from a surge and is now settling into a more balanced position within the academic literature.



**Figure 2.**  
**Year of Publication**

**Country of Study**

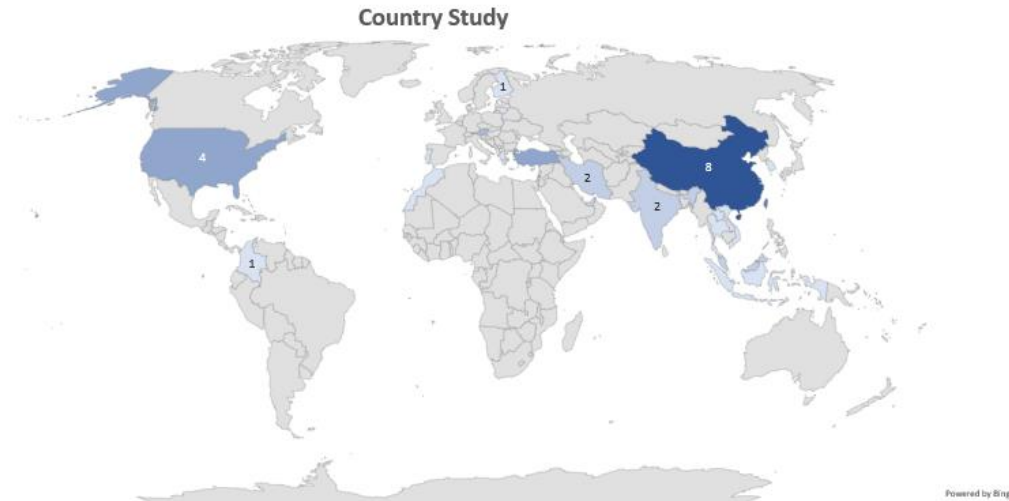
In Figure 3, China leads with 8 studies focusing on customer perceptions of airline quality and image. This prevalence reflects the substantial research efforts within the country, corresponding to the rapid expansion of China's aviation industry. As one of the largest aviation markets in the world, China is crucial to this study due to its extensive domestic market and increasing global influence in the aviation sector (Morgan et al., 2019).

Following China, Taiwan comes in second with 6 studies. While smaller than China, Taiwan's aviation industry is growing quickly and holds strategic importance in East Asia (Wan et al., 2016). Research from Taiwan emphasizes the necessity of understanding customer perceptions in a nation recognized for its technological innovations and its role as

a regional air transport hub. The United States and Turkey both recorded 4 studies, underscoring their significant positions in the global aviation industry. The United States, home to major airlines like Delta, American Airlines, and United, continues to lead the international aviation market (O'Connell, 2018). In contrast, Turkey, featuring Turkish Airlines and its modern airports, has emerged as a crucial transit hub connecting Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The increasing research on airline perceptions in both countries highlights their influential roles in the global aviation sector.

Austria follows with 3 studies. Although smaller than other countries, Austria's strategic location in Europe and its high volume of air traffic make it an important focus of this study. Research conducted in Austria indicates a strong interest in understanding customer perceptions of airline service quality within the region. India, Iran, Malaysia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) each contributed 2 studies. As one of the world's largest aviation markets, India is becoming a focal point for research aimed at understanding both domestic and regional consumer behavior. Iran and Malaysia are significant players in their respective regional aviation industries, while the UAE, with major airlines like Emirates and Etihad, serves as a primary aviation hub in the Middle East, making research in this area particularly pertinent.

Other countries such as Portugal, Thailand, Lithuania, Greece, Indonesia, Laos, Morocco, Finland, and Colombia each contributed 1 study. While the research volume from these countries is smaller, their contributions are valuable, providing local perspectives on customer perceptions of airlines, which may be influenced by unique factors specific to each nation. Overall, the research distribution depicted in this graph indicates that studies on customer perceptions of airlines are predominantly concentrated in countries with established and rapidly growing aviation industries, such as China, Taiwan, and the United States. However, there is also an increasing interest in exploring emerging markets like India and Malaysia, indicating the presence of significant potential markets that deserve further investigation.



**Figure. 3**  
**Country of Study**

### **Major Publishing Journal**

According to the Major Publishing Journal table, the Journal of Air Transport Management is the leading publication in transportation and hospitality management, featuring a total of 16 articles and 874 citations. This journal is a dominant force in air transport management research, highlighting its significant influence on academic literature. With a citation count far exceeding that of any other journal listed, the Journal of Air Transport Management offers profound and impactful insights into essential topics in air transportation management. In second place, the International Journal of Hospitality Management published 2 articles, which have garnered a total of 148 citations. While its article count is relatively low, its academic impact is considerable, as demonstrated by the high citation numbers. This reflects the journal's critical role in addressing management issues within the hospitality sector, a field that is increasingly interconnected with transportation in the global tourism industry.

The journal Sustainability also makes a notable contribution, with 4 articles and 125 citations, focusing on sustainability issues in transportation and related sectors. This topic is particularly relevant as global awareness of climate change rises, emphasizing the need for more responsible resource management. Additionally, the International Journal of Sustainable Transportation and Research in Transportation Business & Management each published 2 articles, amassing 73 and 64 citations, respectively. These journals provide

valuable insights into business management and sustainability concerning transportation policy, which are crucial areas of focus in contemporary transportation management.

**Table 1**  
**Major Publishing Journal**

No	Journal	Tier	Citation	Total Articles
1	Journal of Air Transport Management	1	874	16
2	International Journal of Hospitality Management	1	148	2
3	Sustainability	1	125	4
4	International Journal of Sustainable Transportation	1	73	2
5	Research in Transportation Business & Management	1	64	2
6	Online Information Review	1	55	1
7	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1	47	2
8	Case Studies on Transport Policy	1	43	2
9	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	1	31	2
10	Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management	1	30	1

Other journals, such as Online Information Review, which has 55 citations and 1 article, and the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, with 47 citations and 2 articles, are becoming increasingly significant in transportation literature. They particularly focus on information management and the environmental health implications linked to transportation and infrastructure. Case Studies on Transport Policy and Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice each published 2 articles, receiving 43 and 31 citations, respectively. These journals are essential for analyzing transportation policy, emphasizing best practices and case studies that provide valuable insights into the implementation of transportation policies in different countries. Lastly, the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, with 1 article and 30 citations, highlights the close relationship between the transportation and hospitality sectors, especially in the context of global tourism. Although its article count is relatively low, its impact in this interdisciplinary field remains significant.

Here’s a paraphrased version of the text:

**Author Citation Analysis**

The Author Citation table highlights the five most impactful articles in airline research, ranked by their citation counts. The article with the highest citations, authored by Seo and Park (2018) and published in the Journal of Air Transport Management, has received 255 citations. This study examines the effects of social media marketing on brand equity and customer responses within the airline industry. Its significant impact underscores the importance of digital marketing in shaping airline brand equity during the growth of social media. This research serves as an essential reference for both practitioners and scholars aiming to understand how social media strategies influence customer perceptions and loyalty in the airline sector.

The second most influential article, written by Wang, Stephen W.; Kao, Grace Hsiu-Ying; and Ngamsiriudom, Wipas (2017), is also featured in the Journal of Air Transport Management and has garnered 114 citations. This study investigates consumer attitudes toward the credibility of endorsers, brand perception, and intentions regarding the use of celebrity endorsers in the airline industry. It offers valuable insights into how celebrities can enhance airline brand image and affect consumer purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of endorser credibility as a crucial factor in celebrity-driven marketing.

**Tabel. 2**  
**Author Citation**

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Tier	Citation
1	Seo and Park (2018)	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
2	Wang, Kao, and Ngamsiriudom (2017)	2017	Consumers’ attitude of endorser credibility, brand, and intention concerning celebrity endorsement of the airline sector,	Journal of Air Transport Management		114
3	Hagmann, Semeijn, and Vellenga. (2015)	2015	Exploring the green image of airlines: Passenger perceptions and airline choice,	Journal of Air Transport Management		106

4	Hwang, and Choi (2018)	2018	An investigation of passengers` psychological benefits from green brands in an environmentally friendly airline context: The moderating role of gender,	Sustainability		97
5	Jeng (2016)	2016	The influences of airline brand credibility on consumer purchase intentions,	Journal of Air Transport Management		82

The third article, authored by Hagmann, Carmen; Semeijn, Janjaap; and Vellenga, David B. (2015), has received 106 citations and explores passenger perceptions of airlines' environmental image and their choices of carriers. Featured in the Journal of Air Transport Management, this article significantly contributes to the discourse on sustainability within the airline sector. As environmental issues gain more attention, this research is increasingly relevant for guiding airlines in developing green strategies that can enhance their reputation among eco-conscious consumers.

In fourth place, the article by Hwang, Jisoo, and Choi, Jung (2018), which has 97 citations, investigates the psychological benefits passengers derive from airlines that maintain a green brand, particularly regarding eco-friendly carriers. Published in Sustainability, this article identifies gender as a moderating factor in how these psychological benefits are perceived, emphasizing the crucial role of a green brand in shaping customer perceptions, especially within the sustainability-focused airline industry. Lastly, Jeng, and Shih-Ping's (2016) article, with 82 citations, examines the impact of airline brand credibility on consumer purchasing intentions. This study, published in the Journal of Air Transport Management, provides important insights into how brand credibility influences consumer choices in selecting airlines. Its significance in enhancing the understanding of trust and credibility in airline marketing contributes to its status as one of the most cited works in this area.

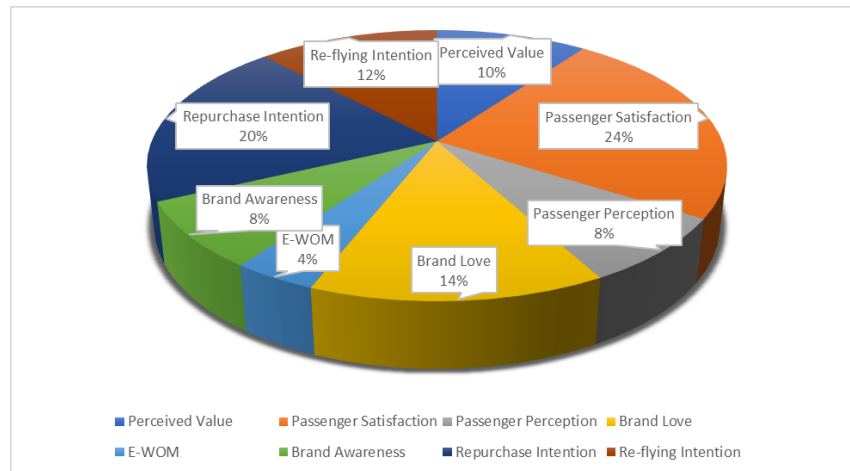
### **Customer Satisfaction and Perception Analyzed**

According to Figure 4, which highlights the areas of study regarding Customer Satisfaction and Perception, Passenger Satisfaction is the most significant focus of researchers, accounting for 24% of all studies. Recognized as a critical factor in an airline's ability to retain customers and encourage long-term loyalty, passenger satisfaction emphasizes the importance of providing positive experiences at various touchpoints with the airline, including during flights and in additional support services. This focus on satisfaction is essential for airlines aiming to cultivate a strong and competitive customer base in an increasingly competitive landscape (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022).

Repurchase Intention ranks second, representing 20% of the studies, illustrating its significance as a vital element of airline strategies (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). This concept not only reflects customer loyalty but also serves as a metric for evaluating successful marketing and service strategies. It suggests that consistent service quality and added value are crucial factors in motivating customers to buy tickets from the same airline again (Simarmata et al., 2024). Brand Love, which constitutes 14% of the studies, is another compelling area of research. The emotional bond between customers and brands is a vital concept in contemporary marketing, particularly in the fiercely competitive airline sector. Studies indicate that a strong sense of brand love correlates with increased customer loyalty and advocacy for the brand (Avogadro et al., 2021). Additionally, brand love is linked to positive perceptions of airlines that meet customers' emotional expectations through their offerings. Re-flying Intention and Perceived Value each account for 12% and 10% of the total studies, respectively. Re-flying intention relates directly to customer satisfaction and brand love, with research suggesting that greater satisfaction leads to a stronger desire to fly again with the same airline. Conversely, perceived value involves customers' evaluations of the trade-off between the costs they incur and the benefits they receive. This aspect of research is crucial in the context of pricing competition within the airline industry, where customers seek more advantages at competitive prices.

Passenger Perception and Brand Awareness each make up 8% of the studies. Passenger perception encapsulates how customers view the airline's service and brand image overall, with stronger perceptions fostering a more robust customer-airline relationship (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). Brand awareness, which reflects how well an airline is recognized

and remembered by customers, is also critical in ensuring that customers continue to choose that airline over others. Finally, E-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) constitutes only 4% of the studies. While this percentage is small, E-WOM significantly influences how potential customers perceive airlines through online reviews, comments, and testimonials across various digital platforms. In today's digital age, the impact of customer reviews is growing stronger, making E-WOM an increasingly relevant area of interest in airline marketing research.



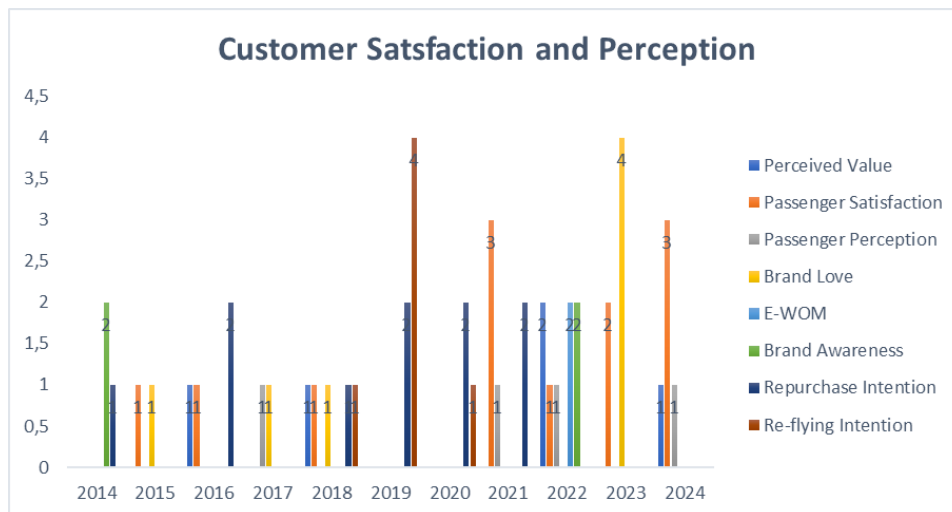
**Figure 4:**  
**Customer Satisfaction and Perception Studied**  
**Customer Satisfaction and Perception Timeline**

Figure 5, depicting the Customer Satisfaction and Perception Timeline, illustrates the evolution of research from 2014 to 2024, highlighting changing trends in studies related to customer satisfaction and perception in the airline industry (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). During the initial phase (2014-2017), research output was fairly balanced, with each variable—such as Passenger Satisfaction, Perceived Value, and Repurchase Intention—garnering 1-2 studies each year. This early focus suggests that airlines were starting to recognize the importance of understanding customer behavior and satisfaction in the face of increasing competition.

A notable spike in research occurred in 2019, characterized by a significant rise in studies on Passenger Satisfaction and Re-flying Intention, with each area accounting for 4 studies. This increase can be linked to the growing complexity of customer expectations for airline services and the imperative for airlines to enhance the passenger experience to

encourage loyalty (Hussain, 2016). During this time, researchers explored the relationship between passenger satisfaction and the likelihood of flying with the same airline again, as well as the connection between satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

In 2020, despite the profound effects of the global pandemic on the airline industry, there was a notable uptick in research on Brand Love, with 3 studies examining customers' emotional bonds with airlines. The pandemic prompted airlines to adopt new strategies for customer retention, including strengthening their brand image to forge deeper emotional connections with customers, a relationship that remained important even as flight frequencies dropped (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). The years 2022 and 2023 also represented significant phases characterized by a broadening of research topics, extending beyond Passenger Satisfaction and Re-flying Intention to encompass Brand Awareness, E-WOM, and Perceived Value (Yang, Tjiptono, and Poon, 2018). This shift indicates a growing recognition among airlines and researchers regarding the diverse aspects of customer satisfaction and perception essential for fostering long-term loyalty.



**Figure 5**

### Customer Satisfaction and Perception Timeline

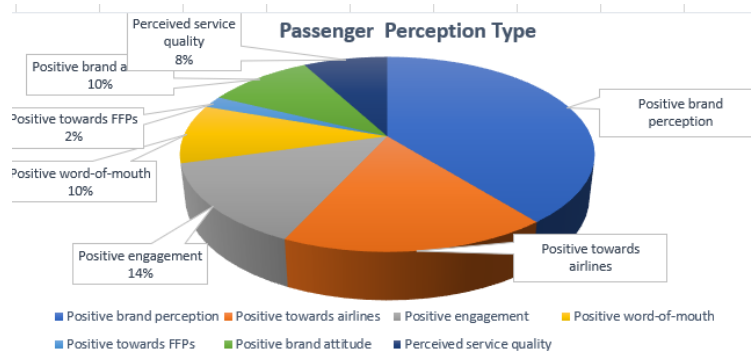
#### Passenger Perception Types

Figure 6, which explores Passenger Perception Types, reveals that Positive Brand Perception is the most researched aspect, accounting for 39% of the studies. This finding underscores that how positively passengers perceive an airline brand is a crucial factor in shaping its image (Herjanto et al., 2022). Positive brand perception is typically influenced by

high-quality service experiences, favorable interactions with airline personnel, and effective brand management. For airlines, sustaining this positive perception is vital for fostering customer loyalty and maintaining a competitive edge in the crowded airline market. Next, Positive Perception of Airlines constitutes 17% of the total research. This variable examines passengers' overall views of the airline as an organization, encompassing aspects such as its operational image, customer service, and the technological advancements it employs (Hwang and Lyu, 2020). Studies in this area indicate that perceptions of the airline are heavily impacted by operational factors directly experienced by passengers, including flight punctuality, the friendliness of staff, and the efficiency of issue resolution. Positive Engagement, which makes up 14% of the studies, highlights the significance of active interaction between passengers and airlines. This engagement can occur through social media interactions, participation in loyalty programs, and ongoing communication post-flight. Such interactions strengthen the bond between customers and the airline, fostering loyalty and increasing the likelihood that passengers will choose the same airline for future travels.

Moreover, Positive Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and Perceived Service Quality contribute 10% and 8% of the total studies, respectively. Positive WOM refers to passengers willingly recommending the airline to others, which is particularly impactful in the digital age through online reviews and social media platforms (Avogadro et al., 2021). In contrast, Perceived Service Quality pertains to how passengers evaluate the service quality of the airline, encompassing various factors like in-flight comfort, check-in efficiency, and the overall travel experience.

Research on Positive Brand Attitude comprises 10%, emphasizing that passengers' attitudes towards an airline brand significantly shape their overall perceptions. A positive brand attitude often reflects satisfying experiences and a strong, consistent brand image maintained by the airline. Finally, Positive Attitude towards Frequent Flyer Programs (FFPs) is the least explored variable, representing only 2% of the total research. While FFPs are crucial for retaining loyal customers, they seem to be a lesser focus in studies concerning passenger perceptions related to airline branding and image.



**Figure 6**

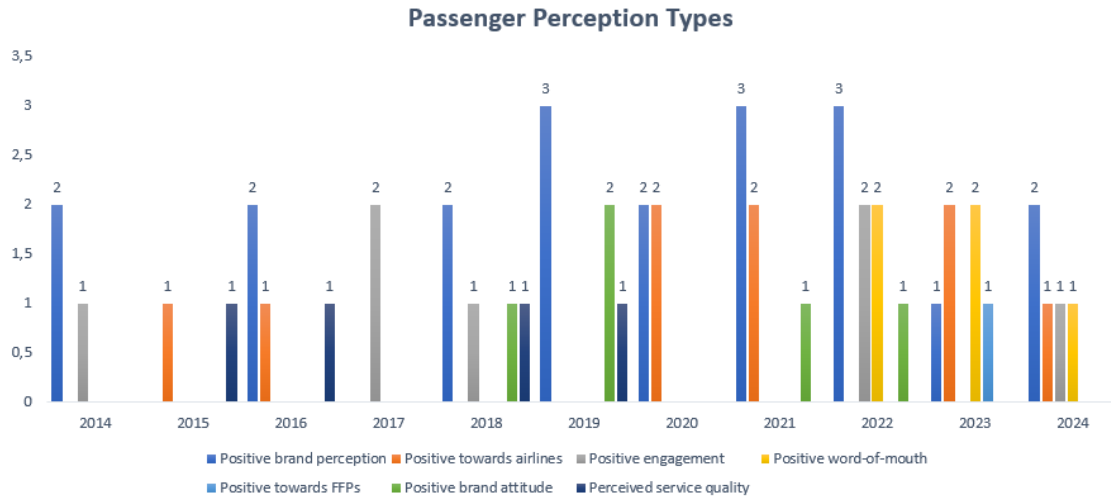
### Passenger Perception Types

#### Passenger Perception Types Timeline

Figure 7 illustrates the timeline of research trends regarding passenger perceptions of airline image and branding from 2014 to 2024. In the initial phase (2014-2016), research attention was fairly balanced among variables such as Positive Brand Perception, Positive Attitudes toward Airlines, and Perceived Service Quality (Laming and Mason, 2014). This period marked the beginning of an academic inquiry into how these factors affect passenger perceptions. A significant increase in research on Positive Brand Perception occurred in 2019, with three studies dedicated to this subject. This growth signifies a shift towards recognizing the importance of establishing a robust brand perception in light of increasing competition in the airline sector (Maertens, 2018). During this time, studies on Positive Engagement also rose, highlighting the significance of direct interactions between airlines and passengers in fostering a more tailored and favorable customer experience.

In 2020 and 2021, the focus on Positive Brand Perception remained prevalent, with three additional studies published. This trend underscores that brand perception continues to be a crucial subject in airline marketing research, especially amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, during which airlines struggled to uphold a positive image in the face of reduced passenger numbers and considerable operational adjustments. By 2022 and 2023, the research landscape began to diversify, with a rise in studies concerning Positive Word-of-Mouth, Positive Attitudes toward Airlines, and Perceived Service Quality (Yang, Tjiptono and Poon, 2018). This evolution suggests that, in addition to enhancing brand perception, there is an increasing emphasis on other dimensions, such as perceived service

quality and the effects of positive WOM on airline reputation in the international marketplace.



**Figure 7**  
**Passenger Perception Types Timeline**

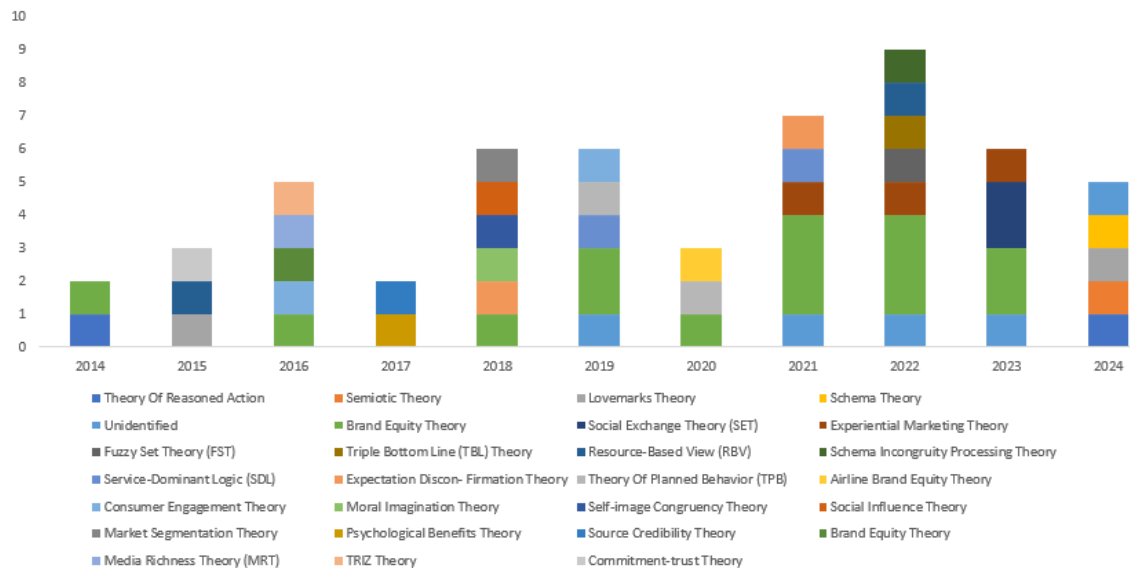
**Theoretical Foundation**

The Theoretical Foundation figure illustrates the progression of various marketing theories from 2014 to 2024, highlighting the evolution and interdisciplinary nature of understanding consumer behavior, marketing strategies, and brand management across different sectors. Prominent theories during this period include the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Brand Equity Theory, and Schema Theory. This array of theoretical perspectives emphasizes the complex nature of marketing research, especially in capturing the dynamics of consumer behavior and strategic brand management.

From 2014 to 2015, the application of theories was somewhat limited, with TRA and SDL emerging as the most utilized frameworks. TRA highlights how individuals' intentions to act are shaped by their attitudes and subjective norms, while SDL centers on the value exchanged between customers and service providers, recognizing customers as co-creators of value rather than passive recipients. These theories emphasize the importance of understanding consumer behavior and the value of services within marketing environments. In 2016, the theoretical landscape diversified with the introduction of Brand Equity Theory and Schema Theory, alongside the ongoing application of SDL. Brand Equity Theory

examines the value of a brand from the consumer's viewpoint, which is crucial for fostering customer loyalty and shaping brand perception. In contrast, Schema Theory pertains to how consumers process new information and integrate it into existing cognitive frameworks, or schemas, which affects their perceptions of a brand or product.

During the 2017-2018 period, Social Exchange Theory, Brand Equity Theory, and TRIZ Theory gained traction. SET emphasizes that relationships—whether between individuals or between customers and service providers—are founded on social exchanges, with both parties aiming to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. TRIZ Theory, or the Theory of Inventive Problem Solving, is frequently applied in the realm of product and service innovation, helping to identify patterns in creative problem-solving relevant to new product development or marketing strategies. Between 2019 and 2020, Schema Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Brand Equity Theory became prominent frameworks, with research increasingly exploring how consumer experiences and interactions shape brand perceptions. Schema Theory, in particular, is vital in explaining how consumers associate brands with specific categories and how deviations from these established schemas can influence positive or negative brand perceptions.



**Figure 8.**  
**Theoretical Foundation**

In 2021 and 2022, there was a notable increase in the use of theories, especially the Self-image Congruency Theory, Social Influence Theory, and Lovemarks Theory. Self-

image Congruency Theory describes how consumers tend to select brands that resonate with their self-image, thereby enhancing their emotional connection and engagement with those brands. Social Influence Theory examines how consumer behavior is influenced by individuals within their social circles, highlighting the impact of peer pressure and societal expectations. In contrast, Lovemarks Theory emphasizes the deep emotional ties and exceptional loyalty that consumers develop towards brands, viewing them not just as products but as essential components of their emotional identity.

In 2023 and 2024, theories such as Schema Theory, Brand Equity Theory, and Experiential Marketing Theory have gained prominence. Experiential Marketing Theory examines how consumers' experiences with a brand can leave lasting impressions that foster long-term loyalty. Schema Theory remains relevant in explaining how consumers process information regarding new brands or modifications to existing ones, influencing their attitudes and purchasing behaviors. This theory aids in understanding how brands can utilize consumer schemas to enhance brand perception and effectively respond to market changes.

### **Antecedents, Mediators, and Consequences of Customer Perception of Airline Quality and Image**

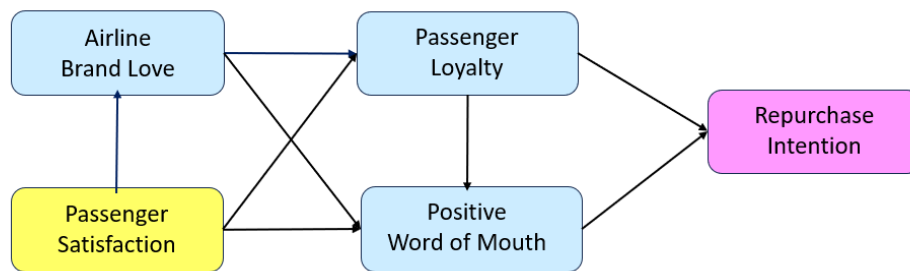
In this research model, the authors delineate the relationships among the main variables that affect Repurchase Intention in the airline industry. The model classifies these variables into three key categories: antecedents, mediators, and consequences, aiming to clarify the mechanisms that encourage passengers to repurchase or continue using airline services (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). Below is a detailed explanation of each category of variables:

**Antecedent Variables:** These are the foundational elements that initiate the process leading to repurchase intention. They usually consist of factors such as Perceived Service Quality, Brand Image, and Customer Satisfaction. In the context of the airline industry, these components set the groundwork for the passenger experience and perception. For example, high service quality and a favorable brand image create a positive first impression, which is crucial in shaping the passenger's overall attitude toward the airline.

**Mediating Variables:** Mediators serve as intermediaries between the antecedents and the ultimate repurchase intention. Common mediators in this scenario include Brand Loyalty,

Emotional Attachment (such as Brand Love), and Perceived Value. These variables help illustrate how initial perceptions (like service quality and brand image) evolve into a more profound, personal connection with the airline, potentially boosting customer loyalty and affecting the likelihood of repurchase.

**Consequence Variables:** The main outcome in this model is Repurchase Intention, which reflects the result of a positive and cohesive relationship among the antecedents and mediators. When antecedent factors and mediators are effectively optimized, they enhance passengers' intentions to repurchase, indicating the effectiveness of customer retention strategies in the competitive airline sector. This structured model provides a comprehensive understanding of the elements that drive repeat purchasing behavior among airline passengers, offering insights into areas where airlines can concentrate their efforts to cultivate customer loyalty and gain a competitive edge.



**Figure. 9**  
**Research Model Suggestions**

### Antecedent Variable

In this model, the antecedent or independent variable is Passenger Satisfaction, which reflects the level of satisfaction passengers have with their experience with an airline. This level of satisfaction can be influenced by various factors, such as service quality, comfort, punctuality, and interactions with airline staff (Herjanto et al., 2022). Previous research has shown that passenger satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping a positive attitude toward the airline, which in turn affects other variables in this model. In this context, Passenger Satisfaction serves as a foundational element that triggers further relationships with mediating variables, which will be discussed subsequently (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). Satisfied passengers are likely to develop an emotional attachment and a higher degree of loyalty toward the airline, ultimately increasing their intention to use the airline's services in

the future. This foundational role of satisfaction underscores its importance in building long-term customer relationships and retention within the airline industry.

### **Mediation Variables**

The mediating variables in this model consist of Airline Brand Love, Passenger Loyalty, and Positive Word of Mouth (WOM). These three variables play essential roles in connecting Passenger Satisfaction with Repurchase Intention.

**Airline Brand Love:** This refers to the emotional attachment that passengers develop toward an airline. Airline Brand Love emerges when satisfied passengers cultivate a strong affection for the brand. As Passenger Satisfaction increases, so does Airline Brand Love, leading passengers to feel a stronger connection to the brand and a greater inclination toward loyalty (Herjanto et al., 2022). This emotional attachment serves as a foundation, reinforcing the passenger's relationship with the airline and boosting the likelihood of repeat usage.

**Passenger Loyalty:** This is the result of passengers' affection for the airline brand. Those who have a fondness for a specific airline are more likely to demonstrate heightened loyalty. Passenger Loyalty is vital as it indicates passengers' willingness to continue using the airline's services, even in a competitive environment. This loyalty arises not only from positive experiences but also from the emotional bond established between passengers and the airline, making it more durable (Alotaibi, 2015).

**Positive Word of Mouth (WOM):** This variable indicates the degree to which satisfied and loyal passengers recommend the airline to others (Sweeney et al., 2020). Positive recommendations often stem from fulfilling experiences and brand love, which passengers share with friends, family, or on social media platforms. Positive Word of Mouth is significant because it extends the airline's influence beyond direct interactions, potentially attracting new passengers through trusted endorsements from peers.

### **Consequent Variable**

The dependent variable in this model is Repurchase Intention, which reflects the passenger's desire to utilize the airline's services again in the future (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022). Repurchase Intention is the ultimate result of the interaction among Passenger Satisfaction, Brand Love, Loyalty, and Positive Word of Mouth. Satisfied passengers, who possess a strong emotional attachment to the airline brand, exhibit loyalty, and communicate

their positive experiences to others are more inclined to choose the airline's services again. Repurchase Intention is a critical measure of an airline's ability to foster long-term relationships with its customers. When all components in this model work effectively, the airline can build a loyal customer base, ultimately boosting profitability and ensuring sustainable business growth in the future (Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016). Collectively, these mediating variables elucidate how initial passenger satisfaction can develop into deeper loyalty and advocacy, ultimately increasing the likelihood of repurchasing and enhancing the airline's market presence through organic brand influence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study highlights the significant role that customer perceptions of service quality and brand image play in influencing loyalty and repurchase intentions in the airline industry. According to the literature review, service quality—which includes aspects like reliability, comfort, and responsiveness—substantially affects the customer experience and contributes to a favorable brand image. Prior research supports these findings, suggesting that customers who receive high-quality service are more likely to report higher satisfaction, which is essential for airlines seeking to foster long-term loyalty (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022).

Additionally, brand image is a multifaceted concept that reflects customers' overall views of an airline. This image is shaped not only by direct service experiences but also by factors such as corporate reputation, social associations, and visual communication, all of which leave a lasting impact. The literature analyzed indicates that a strong brand image can enhance customer loyalty through significant emotional engagement, especially when customers feel an emotional bond—referred to as brand love—toward the airline. This brand love encourages a greater commitment to using the airline's services and motivates customers to recommend the airline to others (Su, Swanson, and Chen, 2016).

Brand love emerges as a vital link between perceptions of service quality and intentions to repurchase, as this emotional connection compels customers to maintain a long-term relationship with the airline (Hwang and Lyu, 2020). This finding aligns with Service-Dominant Logic, which asserts that value is created through interactions where customers actively participate in crafting meaningful experiences. The results emphasize that a

successful relationship between customers and airlines, founded on consistent service quality and a strong brand image, not only promotes behavioral loyalty but also cultivates deep emotional ties, leading to positive behaviors like positive word of mouth (WOM).

The practical implications of this research are significant. Airlines should prioritize service quality that not only meets but exceeds customer expectations, as this can profoundly affect customer retention. Enhancing aspects such as flight reliability, crew friendliness, punctuality, and in-flight comfort can achieve this goal. Furthermore, cultivating a robust and consistent brand image through targeted branding initiatives—whether in marketing campaigns or customer interactions—can reinforce positive customer perceptions. By presenting itself as a brand that genuinely cares for customer needs and comfort, an airline can strengthen emotional connections, ultimately fostering increased brand loyalty (Yang, Tjiptono, and Poon, 2018).

Moreover, this study emphasizes that positive word of mouth (WOM) is a valuable asset for enhancing an airline's reputation in the digital age, where online reviews and customer testimonials heavily influence potential customers' purchasing decisions. Positive recommendations from satisfied customers not only bolster the brand image but also act as a cost-effective and powerful marketing tool. Therefore, airlines should uphold high service standards and be responsive to customer needs or complaints to fully leverage the potential of WOM (Law, Zhang, and Gow, 2022).

Lastly, the theoretical implications of this research underline the necessity for a comprehensive approach to understanding the interactions between service quality, brand image, and brand love in building customer loyalty within the airline industry (Wan et al., 2016). These findings pave the way for future research to investigate additional factors, such as the impact of technological advancements and digital innovations in the airline sector, which may affect customer perceptions. Future studies could also examine the influence of cultural context, as customer preferences can vary widely across different regions and aviation markets.

### **Directions for Future Research**

This study outlines various potential avenues for future research concerning customer perceptions of service quality and airline brand image, organized into three primary

categories: theory, methodology, and context. Each of these categories is crucial for advancing knowledge and enhancing the literature on service marketing, especially within the context of the aviation industry.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

While this study builds on foundational theories such as Service Quality and Brand Loyalty, there is still potential to expand or modify these theories in light of the evolving contemporary landscape. One promising avenue is to enhance the understanding of brand love and emotional attachment, which significantly influence customer loyalty in the airline industry. Future research could explore how emotional attachment develops through consistent service experiences and how these emotions directly affect repurchase intentions. Furthermore, incorporating theories from consumer psychology, such as the Self-Image Congruity Theory, could provide valuable insights into how the alignment between brand image and customers' self-identity impacts their loyalty to airlines.

### **Methodology**

Future research should consider incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of customer perceptions. For example, conducting experiments or longitudinal studies could help investigate how customer perceptions evolve or assess the effects of repeated service interactions on brand loyalty. Additionally, qualitative methods like focus group discussions and in-depth interviews can yield deeper insights into customer experiences, especially concerning emotional factors that may be difficult to measure quantitatively. This integrated approach is anticipated to provide a more holistic view of how service quality and brand image interact to affect customer loyalty in the airline industry.

### **Context**

In light of global changes and digitalization in the airline industry, future research should take into account contextual factors such as cultural differences and economic conditions. Since this study primarily draws on general literature, investigations that focus on developing countries or specific regional contexts, like Southeast Asia, could uncover distinct variations in customer preferences. Moreover, future research should examine the effects of digitalization, especially through digital customer experiences and online word of

mouth (e-WOM), on perceptions of service quality and customer loyalty. Cross-cultural studies that incorporate these elements could offer more comprehensive insights into how airlines can effectively position their brand image in an ever-evolving global market.

## CONCLUSION

Customer perceptions of service quality and brand image play a central role in shaping loyalty and repurchase intentions within the airline industry. Service quality—including airline reliability, comfort, and responsiveness—stands as a key factor influencing customer experiences and reinforcing brand image. This study highlights that customers who experience high-quality service tend to report greater satisfaction, establishing a strong foundation for long-term loyalty.

Furthermore, brand image is identified as a complex construct shaped through direct experiences and emotional associations like "brand love." This connection deepens customer commitment to repeat usage and promotes positive recommendations. Thus, the relationship between service quality and brand image generates an emotional attachment that enhances customer loyalty.

The practical implications of this study suggest that airlines focused on improving service quality—such as punctuality, crew friendliness, and in-flight comfort—can achieve higher levels of customer retention. In the digital era, positive reviews and customer recommendations become highly effective, low-cost marketing tools that strengthen an airline's reputation. This research encourages a holistic approach to understanding how service quality, brand image, and emotional attachment interact to build customer loyalty in the airline industry.

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