The Effect of Passenger Satisfaction on Relationship Between Price, Assurance, Responsiveness and Reliability

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Abstract

The goal of this research study is to better understand how passenger satisfaction in Pakistan's airline business is influenced by aspects including Responsiveness and Airline image values. It investigates the moderating effects of Airline images. The study primarily looks at how price mediates passenger happiness and how gender has a moderating impact on Airline images.
The sample size for this study was 384, with a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence level. The target industry for this campaign was determined to be the aviation sector because of the passenger' prior plane travel. Out of 500 surveys disseminated, 50 plus valid replies were received from the target aviation sector using a Google survey form. the data analysis used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method. We employ the PLS-SEM sampling technique to assess the latent variables' power and how well they can account for the target structures. The main reason (PLS-SEM) is utilized is because it can estimate very complex models with a small amount of data. Seven of the 8 hypotheses evaluated in this study, including two direct and two mediating hypotheses, were not supported by the findings. Except for the following three, all of the direct hypotheses were confirmed by the findings, with the exception of the following
The study mainly concentrated on the effect of price and airline images values on passenger satisfaction, and it is recommended that additional variables be included in future research to provide a thorough understanding of passenger satisfaction across industries or countries. Originality/Value - By exploring the impacts of Assurance and service reliability values on customer satisfaction in the context of the airline business in Pakistan, this research improves the body of current work. In order to shed light on the nuanced interactions between these factors, the study examines the mediate function of Airline images.
Keywords *The perception of value, passenger satisfaction, service quality, price, airline*

Introduction

Passenger satisfaction in air travel refers to the amount of enjoyment and happiness that passengers feel while flying. It is an important part of the aviation sector since it has a considerable impact on the reputation and performance of airlines. Passenger happiness is more likely to lead to returning customers and favorable feedback, which can lead to improved profitability and market share. Passenger satisfaction is determined by a variety of elements, including the airline's service quality, comfort level, safety, convenience, and efficiency. Travelers frequently rate their experiences based on these aspects, which can have an influence on their overall image of the airline (Jalees et al., 2024). This study's goal is to learn about passenger satisfaction and the factors that influence it i.e., Price, Assurance, Reliability, and Responsiveness.

Airlines work hard to improve the passenger experience and maintain consumer satisfaction. Passengers promote businesses that can meet their passenger's needs and desires (Sanyal & Hisam, 2016). To match customer expectations and create a favorable air travel experience, they invest in new technology, offer new services and facilities, and implement new regulations and procedures. With the growth of social media and online reviews, airlines' ability to manage consumer happiness has become even more crucial. Bad criticism may spread fast through various channels, and a single negative encounter can damage an airline's brand and bottom line. As a result, airlines are always looking for methods to improve the passenger experience and keep their customers happy and pleased throughout their voyages. Passenger happiness is critical for the aviation sector since it has a substantial influence on airlines' reputation and performance (Jamil et al., 2024). Customers who are satisfied are more likely to return and suggest the airline to others, which may lead to improved profitability and market share. Passenger satisfaction is defined as a passenger's feeling of discomfort and enjoyment because of a comparison between the performance of the product and the passenger's assumption (Kalaiarasan et al., 2022).

Dissatisfied customers, on the other hand, may post bad reviews or share their experiences on social media, which can tarnish an airline's brand and affect its bottom line. The purpose of this study was to examine many attributes of service quality from the associated literature and conduct some in-depth interviews to find the most important qualities based on the airline market. Even though a lot of studies have been conducted to assess the quality of airline service,

this study explicitly assessed consumer satisfaction with the airline quality of service in each cluster of customers (Khuong, 2014).

The research design is shown here. The next part provides a brief overview of the relevant literature, as well as modification of service quality characteristics, Importance-Satisfaction analysis, and data gathering. Airlines must have to find creative methods to emphasize important service items while decreasing energy and time spent on unimportant service items. The method by which airlines provide services to their consumers to maximize customer satisfaction has always been a very important concern for the previously mentioned firms. Passenger satisfaction is based on the belief that customers must be satisfied for a business to be both sustainable and profitable (Radovich-Markovic et al., 2017).

Most writers proposed a meaningful relationship between factors of service quality and client happiness. Many studies have been conducted to establish various service quality aspects in the airline business (Rashid et al., 2024). Nevertheless, not all service characteristics are equally significant to all customers because no two passengers are the same, particularly when demographics, travel reasons, and cultural background are taken into account. Because of its possibility to affect airline competitiveness and profitability, studies on airline's quality of service and its effect on customer satisfaction and loyalty have piqued the interest of scholars and practitioners (K Kalaiarasan, S Appannan, B Doraisamy, 2020).

Despite the lack of comprehensive quality standards, service quality is nevertheless assessed from the perspective of consumers since the value of services is intrinsically subjective. SERVQUAL calculates the quality of service as the difference (gap) between a customer's expectations for a service provided and their views of the service obtained. SERVQUAL is built on five dimensions, which are commonly referred to as RATER (reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness). Consumers assess service quality by comparing expectations to perceptions based on the five previously described factors. The capacity of a corporate organization to execute the promised service accurately and consistently is referred to as reliability. The willingness or preparedness to provide timely service is referred to as responsiveness (Namukasa, 2021).

Problem Statement

First, it is important to look at these variables' passenger satisfaction and Airline images that will affect the Pakistani airline business in order to fill in the gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

Second, it is important to investigate how these components interact with one another. Third, further research is needed to understand how gender influences passenger satisfaction in Pakistani airlines. Finally, it is crucial to do research on enhancing to passenger happiness at airports by identifying service quality problems and studying consumer behavior.

Objectives

- To examine the factors that affect customer satisfaction and service quality in the airline sector in Pakistan.
- To investigate how higher-level constructs, interact in the Pakistani aviation sector.
- To look into how gender affects consumer satisfaction in the Pakistani airline sector.
- By evaluating the client experience and identifying excellent services, pinpoint areas for future research to improve customer happiness at airports.

Preliminary Literature review and theory development

The Constraint Theory

If we look at the Contrast Theory, so the Theory of Constraints (TOC) tells us to focus on the "weakest link" in the process as that is where improvement can be made. So according to the Contrast Theory, if a passenger is expecting higher value of a product from an airline but they received the low or bad quality then it will emphasize the gap between the expected product and the obtained product (Cardozo, 1965). Basically, this concept saying that if the performance of the product isn't fulfilling the expectations of the passenger, then the negative perception of that brand will be created in the minds of people, no matter how good the product of that brand is (Oliver & De Sarbo, 1988).

Passenger Satisfaction

Passenger satisfaction has always been one of the most frequently researched subjects in the research. Passenger satisfaction is determined over a specified period. If the company fails to match the desired standard, the passenger will be lost, and it will directly impact on the passenger's switching behavior towards the airlines. Because there will be no second chances, (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003). There are many so factors through which the passenger gets satisfied for instance prices, reliability, assurance and responsiveness. Unsatisfied or disengaged passengers naturally mean that airline will have fewer passengers and less revenue. So it is very

important for the airline that their passengers have the excellent experience whenever they travel (Aziz et al., 2024). If the airline is working on the satisfaction of the passengers then that airline will surely have more passengers and more revenue.

Price

The most important factor by which passengers choose an airline is their prices, and this is how airline generate revenue. Passengers also prefer low-cost carriers LCC because they provide full services to the customers who fly in airlines (Liu and lee, 2016) and the effect between passenger satisfaction and loyalty is directly affected through mediation (Hapsari et al., 2017). If an airline set high price and give low quality services so the airline will loose its customers. Its very clear that prices has a significant effect on passenger satisfaction. There is a very strong relationship between the prices and the passenger's satisfaction, so the airline should take this responsibility seriously because having the wrong price can hurt both the passenger satisfaction and the profit of the airlines (Rashid et al., 2023).

H1: Price has a positive impact on passenger satisfaction

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is willingness to help the customer if any inconvenience occurs. It is very important for the airlines to concentrate on prompt & the right kind of responsiveness to the needs of the passengers. In case, if any passenger doesn't like a certain meal served on the flight, so the cabin crew should be in a position to offer that passenger an alternative meal in little time, as his perception or opinion of the airline company would mainly depend upon whether he goes satisfied on this complaint or not (Si et al., 2023). Responsiveness lets your passengers know that you're listening their request and working actively to solve their issue.

H2: Responsiveness has a positive impact on passenger satisfaction.

Reliability

Reliability means the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. Reliability is the factor that passenger are looking for and if any airline doesn't provide it, then that airline will experience unhappy customers and bad brand image. Passenger satisfaction is strongly impacted by reliability factors like providing the right service to the passengers, being on time, offering a suitable schedule, and staff confidence. In the airline sector, the reliability attribute has the highest mean value for consumer expectations (*Customer Satisfaction on Airline Services*, 2022).

Let's take the example of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), PIA have a higher rate of known aviation accidents and the service quality onboard is not considered as good as its competitors, due to the higher accident rates and poor service quality PIA is considered as a non-reliable airline (Zaman et al., 2023). Hence, people are not satisfied with PIA.

H3: Reliability has a positive impact on passenger satisfaction.

Assurance

Meaning of assurance is declaration of confidence or certainty in one's own ability. When an airline give assurance to its customers that they will provide them with best value than the customers will be attracted to them, because of that assurance people will tend to prefer that airline over others. When the assurance is promised than the airline staff have to remain friendly to passengers and should gain their trust and provide value to them. In order to promote the airline the airline staff have to remain confident and remove any doubts of risks from the mind of a passenger and create an assurance (Khan, Imran Zaman, et al., 2023). When the assurance is created in the mind of the passenger than they will be satisfied by the airline.

H4: assurance has a positive effect on passenger satisfaction.

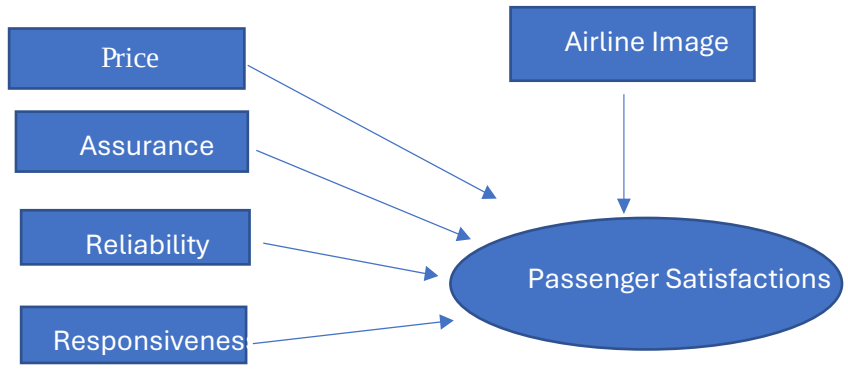
Airline Image

Airline image is a very important aspect to satisfy its passengers, an airline with a very good image has a very high rate of passenger satisfaction because image of an airline is based on how they can satisfy their passengers with their services. The image of an airline is made by the word of mouth of passengers. When the services of an airline are at par with the customers' demands and desires than the word of mouth about that airline will always be positive and the airline's image will grow stronger. The comparison of PIA and Fly Emirates is a perfect example of airline image and customer satisfaction (Khan, Zaman, et al., 2023). Fly Emirates always fulfil the demands and desires of its passengers and is much more reliable than PIA. The image of Fly Emirates is much better than PIA, as compared to PIA the passengers of Fly Emirates are more satisfied with their services and will always prefer Fly Emirates over PIA and suggest the same to others.

H5: Airline image has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

Data gathering and process

384 people made up the study's sample, which had a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. Due to previous passenger experience in the airline travel industry, the study primarily addressed the aviation sector. The authors designed a Google survey form specifically for the targeted Aviation Sectors to gather the data. An adequate response rate was achieved after 350 questionnaires were given and 280 were returned by the enumerators.

Common Method Bias

Common method bias describes variances in survey results brought on by the study instrument (Kalaiarasan et al., 2022) The study adhered to the required protocol in order to reduce the likelihood of common method biases. This involved developing the theoretical foundation for the conceptual framework and modifying metrics for passenger satisfaction and high-quality service. Using the current data set, previous the questionnaire's validity and reliability were also confirmed (Radovich-Markovic et al., 2017).

Design of Questionnaire

The study's questionnaire are divided into two sections. The first stage was gathering numerically scaled demographic data. The second section, which concentrated on the main

study, has 26 items and 9 variables that are rated on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Scales and Measurements

All of the study's constructs were taken from earlier research. The sources of the structures and the number of pieces used are disclosed in Table 01. The entire questionnaire is also included as an Appendix.

Table 01
Questionnaires Summary

Variables	References	Items
Airline Image	Zhang, J., & Zhang, Z. (2019).	3
Price	Zhang, J., & Zhang, Z. (2019).	3
Assurance	Chen, Y., & Chen, C. (2019	3
Passenger satisfaction	Zhang, J., & Zhang, Z. (2019	3
Reliability:	Chen, C., & Chen, Y. (2017)	3
Responsiveness	Chen, Y., & Chen, C. (2018	3
Group Moderators		1

Results and analysis

Descriptive analysis

The results of the study in this part, which are summarized in Table 1, looked at convergent validity and internal consistency. The findings show that all composite values are also higher than 0.931 and the AVE values are higher than 0.819, providing additional proof that the constructs correspond to the standards for convergent validity (Zhang, J., & Zhang, Z. (2019)

Discriminant validity

The study applied the standards proposed by Chen, Y., & Chen, C. (2018to evaluate discriminant validity. The results are shown in Table 3, and they show that the square root of AVE values were greater than the Pearson correlation values. This implies that the study's conceptions are separate and special Zhang, J., & Zhang, Z. (2019)

Seven direct hypotheses, five mediating hypotheses, and one moderating hypothesis were all developed for the study. These hypotheses were put to the test via bootstrapping. Figures 2 and 3 show the measurement and structural models, respectively. The findings provide support for all the direct hypotheses, except for the following two: (1) Gender does not significantly affect customer satisfaction (β = -0.045, t = 0.623, p > 0.533), (2) Service tangibility does not significantly affect customer satisfaction (β = -0.190, t = 1.699, p > 0.089), (3) Service responsiveness does not significantly affect customer satisfaction (β = 0.045, t = 0.898, p > 0.369) and (4) Service tangibility does not significantly effect perceived value (β 0.029, t 0.592, p > 0.554). Regarding the five mediating hypotheses, the results are not supported these two: (1) Service tangibility does not mediate perceived value and customer satisfaction (β = 0.009, t = 0.532, p > 0.595), and (2) Service empathy does not mediate perceived value and customer satisfaction (β = -0.055, t = 1.898, p > 0.058). Similarly, for the one moderating relationship, the results do not promote the assertion that gender moderates the connection in between green consumer values and customer satisfaction (β = 0.023, t = 0.313, p > 0.754).

Discussion and conclusion

The fact that H3 has been approved shows that assurance has a beneficial effect on passenger satisfaction. This discovery is consistent with research done by Chen, Y., & Chen, C. (2018and. Therefore, Pakistani airlines must prioritize building customer confidence. Confidence can be achieved through various factors, such as proper aircraft maintenance to ensure safety during travel.

Employees should also be knowledgeable enough to appropriately respond to customer inquiries. To ensure secure and error-free transactions, skilled staff who record consumer transactions are crucial.

Additionally, approved is H4, proving a link between customer pleasure and empathy. This outcome is consistent with research from Chen, Y., & Chen, C. (2018and) that shows empathy has a big effect on customer satisfaction. Pakistani airlines have already taken action to give their clients individualized treatment, displaying their comprehension of their needs.

As the survey was completed by Pakistanis, it is important for the airlines to understand and cater to their specific requirements, such as providing halal food. Additionally, offering convenient flight hours is acknowledged as a factor contributing to customer satisfaction for Pakistani airlines.

Table No 2
Descriptive analysis

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Airline Image	0.770	0.777	0.867
Assurance	0.765	0.778	0.864
Passenger Satisfaction	0.744	0.768	0.856
Price	0.805	0.806	0.885
Reliability	0.779	0.781	0.872
Responsiveness	0.730	0.732	0.849

Table 3

Discriminant Validity

	Airline Image	Assurance	Passenger Satisfaction	Price	Reliability	Responsiveness
Airline Image						
Assurance	0.944					
Passenger Satisfaction	1.051		0.901			
Price	0.793		0.764	0.891		
Reliability	0.971		0.997	0.961	0.891	
Responsiveness	0.815	0.877	0.849	0.971	0.888	

According to H3, reliability passenger satisfaction, that is in link with studies by, Rahim, A. G. (2016). Therefore, airlines of Pakistan must keep the commitments they made when purchasing tickets. Being on time is essential for ensuring that preparations are completed in accordance with the stated departure time listed on the ticket. To prevent consumers from having to repeat procedures, accurate data is crucial.

Airlines must also make sure that services are delivered accurately the first time to prevent the need for rework brought on by customer discontent (ul Haque et al., 2024). To avoid customer unhappiness, it is critical to respond to customer complaints quickly and to take the proper action at every level, from front-line staff to higher management.

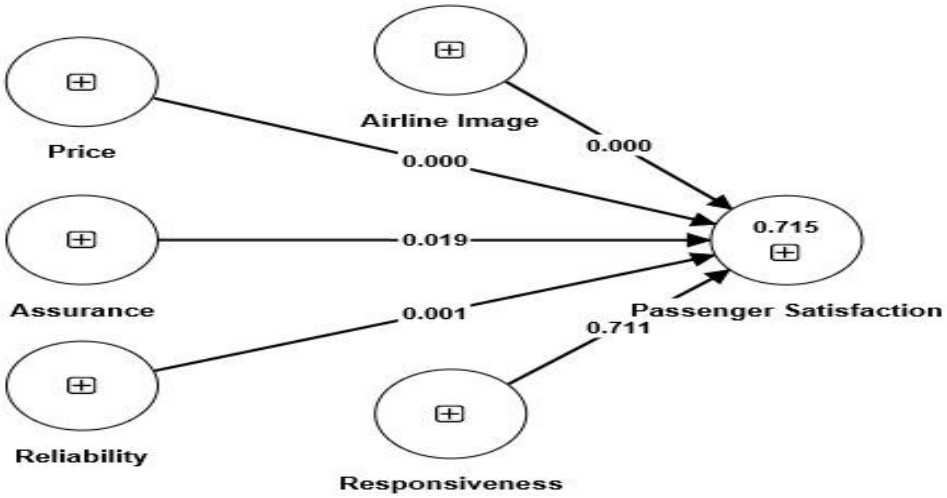
Table 04
Hypothesis Results

Airline Image -> Passenger Satisfaction	0.487	0.048	10.071	0.000	Accepted
Price -> Passenger Satisfaction	0.201	0.036	5.571	0.000	Accepted
Assurance -> Passenger Satisfaction	0.099	0.042	2.348	0.019	Accepted
Reliability -> Passenger Satisfaction	0.147	0.045	3.300	0.001	Accepted
Responsiveness -> Passenger Satisfaction	0.014	0.038	0.370	0.711	Rejected

Results indicate that responsiveness negatively and significantly affects passenger satisfaction, supporting hypothesis H4. This conclusion is in linked with those made by, as a result, immediate action should be taken to meet customers' demands for quick service. Any customer complaints should be promptly addressed with immediate assistance.

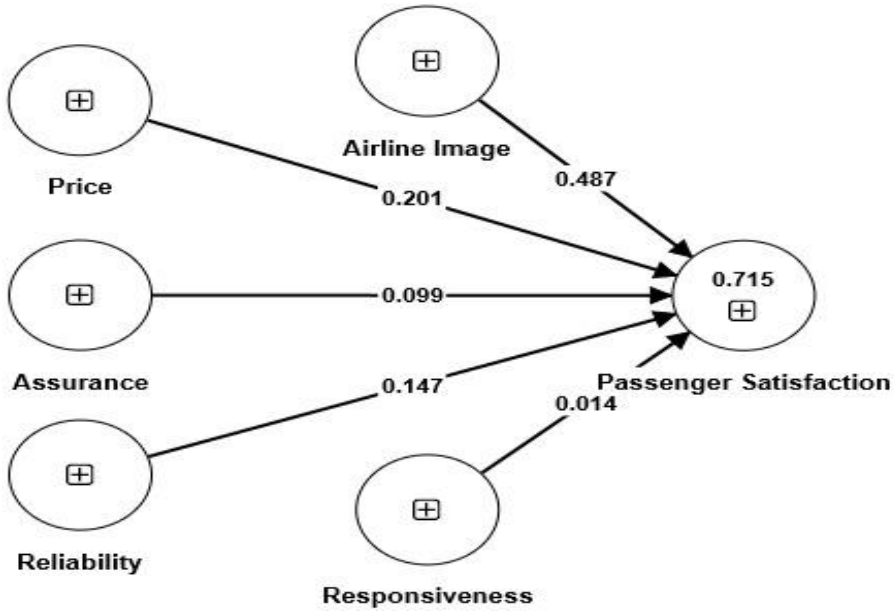
Employees need training to respond promptly, even in stressful work environments. Implementing stress management techniques can help evaluate employees' responsiveness in various situations. Airlines should also provide channels for customer feedback, such as customer service assessment forms, suggestion boxes, email, etc., to measure the responsiveness of their staff.

Figure 2
Meairment



H5 demonstrates how customer pleasure is greatly impacted by Airline Image. It is regarded as the factor that has the greatest bearing on how well an airline provides service. The alignment between a passenger, expectations and what they receive experience, according to the EDT model (Adeola, M. M., & Adebiyi, S. O. (2014). affects how satisfied they are with the service they receive. Therefore, the results imply passenger satisfaction parts of service offered by airlines typically go above and beyond what passengers expect.

Figure 3
Structural Model



A surprise finding from H4 shows that being a responsible airline does not always translate into happy passenger for price. Despite the fact that they favor airlines with green flight characteristics, consumers' price pleasure with an eco-friendly airline is closely related to their price consumer values. To satisfy passengers, specific measures are required, such as the implementation of new flight features. These findings are consistent with the studies by Namukasa, J. (2013). , which discovered beneficial relationships between consumer happiness and airline environmental responsibility initiatives.

Conclusion and Discussion

The research draws the conclusion that Assurance value and service quality have a substantial effect on passenger satisfaction in the aviation business based on the discussion that has come before it. In order to foster passenger satisfaction, aviation companies should place a high priority on service quality in addition to other aspects like pricing. Airlines should work to improve their connectivity with passenger in order to foster a sense of assurance, dependability, and responsiveness. In order to recruit and keep a larger passenger base in today's competitive environment, airlines must strive to satisfy their passengers.

It is concluded that raising service quality is critical for fostering passenger satisfaction in the airline business since Assurance value has a significant role in moderating the impacts of service quality on passenger contentment. While "reliability, assurance, and empathy" are highlighted as crucial predictors of passenger satisfaction in Pakistan's aviation business, the study indicates that responsiveness and tangibles have no appreciable impact on it.

The results of the research have theoretical ramifications for the body of previous literature. The findings advance knowledge of the elements that influence passenger satisfaction by emphasizing the significance of service quality. This information can help airlines create plans that will keep passenger and strengthen their market position. In conclusion, this study adds to the theoretical knowledge of the connections between perceived value, service quality, and passenger happiness in Pakistan's aviation sector.

Theoretical implications

The present study enriches existing theoretical frameworks by incorporating the assimilation of TBL (Triple Bottom Line), SERVQUAL, and EDT (Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory)

within the context of the airline sector, the current study enhances previous theoretical frameworks. It seeks to identify the elements that affect service quality and investigate how each influences client happiness. TBL, a widely recognized model in the literature, provides a comprehensive framework that considers social, environmental, and economic aspects. By integrating TBL with SERVQUAL and EDT, this study aims to yield more robust and insightful findings.

Practical and managerial implications

The results of the research has highlighted how crucial it is to raise service standards in Pakistan's aviation sector in order to increase passenger satisfaction. Airlines should concentrate on important factors including responsiveness, certainty, and reliability. Airlines may boost passenger satisfaction levels by offering dependable and effective services, maintaining passenger safety, and immediately responding to passenger questions and concerns. The report emphasizes how important it is for the airline industry to take passeger values into account. Airlines should implement eco-friendly procedures include using fuel-efficient aircraft, reducing trash, and participating in carbon offset programmers. Airlines can draw in and keep environmentally concerned passenger by operating in line with passenger satisfaction ideals and successfully publicizing their efforts, which will increase passenger satisfaction.

The study emphasizes how Airline images mediating the relationship between passenger satisfaction and service quality. Airlines should concentrate on improving passenger perceptions of value by providing top-notch services at affordable costs. Airlines can improve airline image and, in turn, passenger happiness by emphasizing the special qualities, advantages, and benefits of their services. The study shows that passenger that are more environmentally conscious and passenger satisfaction is not significantly moderated by gender. Therefore, airline managers need to make sure that both male and female clients may find what they're looking for in their services and goods. Client satisfaction will increase as a result of the implementation of inclusive policies and initiatives that take into account the diverse client base.

In the airline sector, managers should place a high priority on enhancing service, responsiveness, and empathy. Airlines may raise passenger satisfaction by making investments in practical elements like seating cost, well-kept aircraft, and visually beautiful cabin décor. Additionally,

offering accommodating and sympathetic passenger service during pre-flight, during-flight, and after-flight encounters can make a big difference in how satisfied customers are with an entire experience.

Managers of airlines should aggressively adopt eco-friendly behaviors and projects. Programs to improve fuel efficiency, initiatives to reduce waste and recycle it, and collaborations with environmental organizations can all be part of this. Airlines can entice environmentally sensitive consumers and raise their satisfaction levels by displaying a commitment to environmental sustainability.

To emphasize the value and advantages of their services, managers should create effective communication and marketing strategies. Airlines can affect their clients' perceptions of value by effectively communicating the distinctive characteristics, competitive pricing, and service quality requirements. Airlines may reach a wider audience and project a positive image by using a variety of marketing platforms, including social media, websites, and commercials. This will ultimately increase passenger satisfaction.

The demands and tastes of both male and female clients should be catered to by managers. This may entail providing amenities that are gender-neutral, giving a variety of entertainment alternatives, and taking gender preferences into account when designing meal options. Airlines can ensure that everyone travelling with them has a pleasant and satisfying experience by cultivating an inclusive passenger experience.

Limitations and future recommendations

It is crucial to remember that the results of this study are unique to the airline sector in Pakistan. Therefore, it is important to use caution when extrapolating these findings to other markets or nations. Future research could look into comparable relationships in various contexts or businesses to establish broader relevance. Second, the main goal of this study was to determine how passenger happiness was affected by service quality and price. Comparative analysis can provide light on the distinctions and resemblances between these associations, but it's important to recognize that there are more variables that might potentially have an impact on passenger satisfaction. These elements, including cost, ease of use, or competitiveness, were not specifically covered in this study. Future research doing comparative studies should include a

wider range of characteristics to provide a thorough knowledge of passenger satisfaction across other businesses or nations. Thirdly, the study did not discover any evidence of a gender moderating impact on the association between life time value ideals and passenger happiness. This shows that in the Pakistani aviation business, gender might not have a particularly substantial impact on this particular relationship. Future research might examine additional moderating factors that might affect this association. Last but not least, it is significant to realize that the study's time frame may have placed restrictions on the breadth of data gathering and analysis. It takes considerable time and money to conduct an in-depth analysis of customer happiness, service quality, and price. Future study might think about extending the time of data collection or using longitudinal designs to capture more dynamic relationships to address potential limitations brought on by time constraints

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