

## CRM ASSESSMENT FOR PREPARING THE AIR TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS FOR A POST-PANDEMIC FUTURE

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**Abstract.** This paper examined the impact of customer relationship management (CRM) elements on customer satisfaction and loyalty. CRM is an airline strategy for individualizing its service, creating better communication channels with customers, and ensuring customer satisfaction on loyalty. Four essential elements of CRM measured in this study: service quality, price fairness, perceived safety, and social media marketing. The study employed a quantitative approach and base on 178 respondents. Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) is used to examine the variables' relationship. The finding shows that the respondent's response is significantly related and contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty expect for price fairness. By giving more discounts or promotions creates attention to the customer.

**Keywords:** CRM; customer satisfaction; customer loyalty; service quality; price fairness; perceived safety; social media

### I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the service industries, air transportation has become an essential economic source, especially in Indonesia. As a developing country, Indonesia has a service industry component of 45% from their Gross National Product (GNP). Air transportation is one of the critical elements of Indonesia's tourism. In particular, Indonesia's tourism is considered the cheapest and easiest contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), foreign income, and job opportunities [1]. That is why the transportation business is a very prospective field for the present and the future, especially air transportation in an airline [2]. In the year 2019, one of the most significant phenomena in human history happened. The first case occurred on November 17th, 2019, when a 55-year-old from Hubei province could have been the first person to contract Covid-19 [3] in Wuhan Province, China. The Covid-19 virus becomes a pandemic that could impact the whole world. The nightmares became a reality; all businesses suffered from the pandemic, and airline business experienced a "free falling" because of this Covid-19. Since the virus has identified entering Indonesia, The Ministry of Transportation has officially imposed a ban on domestic and international flights from April 24th, 2020, to June 1st, 2020, for prevention of the Covid-19 virus pandemic. The airlines only operate around 20-30 percent of its regular route plus physical distancing rules. Under these conditions, the number of passengers also dropped with only 20 percent of capacity [4].

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) will become a crucial element for businesses, especially for the airline business, to recover from the Covid-19 virus pandemic [5]. Many airlines thought about CRM from their perspective, but customer demands and expectations are changing in today's world [6]. CRM is an essential component of the airline's business strategy to differentiate

itself from rivals. CRM is an airline strategy for individualizing its service, creating better communication channels with customers, and ensuring customer satisfaction based on loyalty [7]. The researcher will focus on Indonesia's most prominent commercial airline company as the only state-owned enterprise in the airline industry. This paper will focus on the critical factors that influence CRM in terms of Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty by looking at their service quality, price fairness, perceived safety, and social media marketing in preparing the business back for post-pandemic.

#### A. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer relationship management (CRM) is an essential strategy and method of attracting, maintaining, and working with selected customers to generate superior value for the organization and the consumer, based on research from Parvatiyar & Sheth [8]. It involves integrating the company's marketing, distribution, customer service, and supply chain functions to achieve greater efficiencies and effectiveness in delivering value to the user.

In many industries, CRM in the airline industry has been using it for years by many scholars [9, 10, 11, 6, 12]. During the Covid-19 pandemic situation in which airlines are attempting to overcome the costs, benefit, differentiate their offer, individualize their service, and apply effective communication channels to loyal crate customers, CRM is strategic and ongoing support the specified goals of the airlines [9]. To Fit with the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, this research adjusted and modified the variables based on the needs of the airline are Service Quality, Price Fairness, Perceived Safety, and Social Media Marketing towards Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty.

#### B. Customer Loyalty

The main aim of customer relationship marketing is to acquire and maintain customers. Customer loyalty is an

act of sustaining a trusted relationship. Managers and marketers should pay careful attention to customer loyalty as a significant factor in improving profitability [13, 6, 14]. Loyalty cannot be reached without a good relationship with customers. That is why managing a relationship is a crucial step to reach and create loyalty. To achieve their goals and be a leader in providing the best service to all competitors, companies should recognize their customers. Develop long-term relationships with customers and closer ties to create a state of pleasure (satisfaction), trust, and security with this customer [15, 16]. The indicators on Customer Loyalty are modified in this research based on Fadhilla, Zimbali, Setyawati, & Anthony [17] and Begzjav [18]. The indicators are Re-flying intention, Intention to Recommend, and Retention.

#### C. Customer Satisfaction

Understanding and meeting the needs or expectations of consumers, and then being different from rivals, is crucial to thriving in today's globalization environment [19] since customer satisfaction is the consumer loyalty focused tool. It is also known as the focus of all marketing activities [20]. Satisfying the existing consumers also could lead them to buy more goods and are less likely to defect to rivals. [21] stated that companies with a high degree of customer satisfaction often tend to have the potential to shield off exceptionally competitive costs. Indicators of Customer Satisfaction variables are the Conformity of Hope, Performance Perception, and Customer Assessment [17].

#### D. Service Quality

In the airline business, the encounters between airline staff and customers involved customer service. The frontline staff at the reservation call center, airports, and onboard within the airline industry play a significant role in creating customer satisfaction, creating customer loyalty towards the airline company [11]. Customer service demands are rising, owing to more air transport company choices. It is not difficult for an airline company to imitate its rivals, such as providing the same seats with the same width and legroom, the same standard of meals and in-flight entertainment. However, it is challenging to duplicate the personal interactions between the airline staff [22]. According to [18], the indicators on Service Quality variables are Food, Entertainment, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles.

#### E. Price Fairness

In the airline industry, Price Fairness relies on passengers' assessment to achieve reasonable and acceptable outcomes [17]. Its valuation is based on a comparison of several parties involved in the transactions. This calculation also relies on how comparable the parties involved are in the transactions. Based on Chrisnawan, Onibala, Octora, Setiawan, & Anthony [23], price fairness was one factor that had the most significant impact on passengers' decision to use airline services to purchase them. It was believed that setting up the price to become reasonable to customers would have a beneficial impact on the decision to purchase. [17]. provided the indicators on Price Fairness variables:

Reasonable, Reference of price fairness, Price Policy, and Ethic.

#### F. Perceived Safety

Perceived safety is referred to as something that can concern people in many aspects of their lives [24]. Air travel is generally perceived as riskier than any other service [25]. Perceived risk is called a subjective expectation of failure in marketing literature and is likely to produce feelings of confusion and discomfort [26]. Passengers are well aware that airlines are making every effort to reduce air travel risks. While they do not know the exact calculation of the right safety standards, they are likely to make flight safety assumptions on an aircraft [27].

Since the Covid-19 outbreak happened in most parts of the world, safety became a crucial element for airlines to maintain passengers' numbers. In Indonesia, "New Normal" has become a turning point for airlines to recover their businesses. According to Awaluddin, President Director of Angkasa Pura II [28], airlines and other operational actors are demanded to make people use flight services again, namely by prioritizing health protocols to ensure security and safety passengers and flight operators are guaranteed. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy has also developed a Cleanliness, Health, and Safety (CHS) program as a new normal order that must be conducted in the tourism sector. CHS program aims to increase customer trust and accelerate the recovery of the tourism sector and the post-pandemic economy [29]. A study from Ringle, Sarstedt, & Zimmerman [25] used the indicator of perception of security checks, perceived safety during flights, appearance of the airplane, the cabin crew's competence.

#### G. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing could also maximize the marketing for e-commerce actors. In essence, e-commerce can be described as purchasing, selling, transferring, or exchanging products, services, information through computer networks, including the Internet [30]. Many people are attracted to shopping on-line because of the flexibility and efficacy that this channel provides. Shopping on-line is best for people who want to keep their shopping comfortable and short [31]. Airlines business is one of the first businesses selling tickets on-line [31]. E-ticketing is a "paperless" revolution and ticket selling creativity. E-ticketing replaced paper tickets, which will save passenger travel information in the database of airlines [32]. According to Alam & Yasin [33] online sales' advantage is that consumers can easily buy tickets and save on costs. E-ticketing also eliminates barriers to the availability of competitive ticket price information, strengthens market efficiency, and gives the e-customer more control. According to Seo & Park [34], the indicators on Social Media Marketing variable are: Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, Customization, and Perceived Risk.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative methods of data intending to evaluating the CRM in Airline in terms of

Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty preparing for post-Covid 19 Pandemic by looking at service quality, price fairness, perceived safety, and social media marketing.

This study's target population had flown by using Garuda Indonesia at least once on a domestic flight and living in the Jabodetabek (Jakarta Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi) as Soekarno Hatta airport have the highest number of passengers and located in the Jabodetabek area. This study received 178 returned questionnaires and 168 questionnaires used for analysis after filtering questions—the data obtained by distributing an on-line questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The demographic profile will be measured in this study consist of age, gender, and monthly income.

Data will analyze by utilizing the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling). The standard principle is that the base number of observations is fivefold the number of observations Hair et al. [35]. The relationship among constructs is portrayed in a hypothetical structure. According to Garson [36], PLS is the most effective methodology in which predictive or exploratory modeling is the research goal. PLS-SEM analysis usually consists of two sub-models. Those are measurement models, often called outer models and structural models often called inner models. The outer measurement model is used to evaluate the goodness of fit using convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability (see Table I)

In contrast, the inner model is built to demonstrate and describe the relationship between latent variables in the research model. The next concept is to evaluate the structural model of the SEM-PLS measured by R2 and Q2. The hypothesis can be accepted if the statistical t value is greater than 1.96, and the P-value is less than 0.05 or 5% for each pathway.

Table 1. Parameter Measurement Model Validity and Reliability

Test	Parameters	Rule of Thumb
Convergent Validity	Loading Factor	Loading factor > 0.60
	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Extracted > 0.50
Discriminant validity	Cross Loading	Each indicator must be positively correlated to its construct
	Fornell-Larcker	A correlation value of the CL latent variable with other latent variables
Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	> 0.70
	Composite Reliability	> 0.70

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Demographic Information

168 respondents out of 178 were used in this study (see Fig. 1). Based on age, the majority were 17-25 years old (46%), followed by above 55 years old (21%) and 26-36 years old (20%). Based on age, this study shows that respondents came from a variety of generations. This study's

gender result shows that female respondents were higher than male respondents of 64% compared to 36%. In terms of monthly income were varies from less than 1 million rupiahs to above 30 million rupiahs. The highest percentage of 22% ranged from 1-3 million rupiah, followed by 21% from 10 - 30 million rupiah.

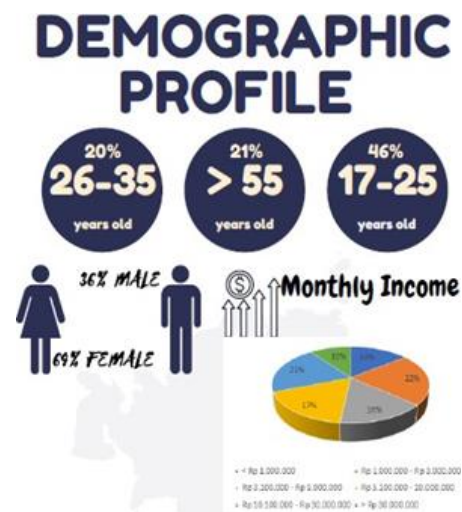


Figure 1 Demographic Profile

#### B. Analysis of Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The analytical analysis in this study uses Structural Equation Model with the Partial Least Square approach and software SmartPLS 3.2.8. PLS-SEM analysis usually consists of two sub-models. Those are measurement models, often called outer models and structural models often called inner models.

##### a) Outer Model Measurements

An outer model measurement connects all manifest variables (indicators) with their latent variables using convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The result of the Loading factor shows that items SQ1a, SQ5 had loading factor below 0.6, which according to Hair et al. [35], the recommended loading factor is >0.60, thus should be removed. Next, each latent variable's AVE value is greater than 0.5, which means each variable can explain 50% or more on its item. It is also declared as valid and meets the criteria of convergent validity. The value of cross-loading all indicators on its construct has a greater value than the indicator's loading factor in other constructs. Also, the result of Fornell-Larcker met the criteria. It is concluded that all unrelated constructs are not related and meet discriminant validity criteria. The last test for outer model measurement is reliability. The value of reliability, including Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) of each variable, is greater than 0.7. Thus, it can be concluded that all variables are considered reliable able to proceed for hypothesis testing. The result of the outer model measurement shows in Table II until IV

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Result

Items	Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR	Final items (Initial items)
SQ1	0.691	0.575	0.815	0.878	4 (4)
SQ2	0.798				
SQ2a	0.816				
SQ3	0.801				
SQ3a	0.759				
SQ4	0.859				
SQ6	0.612				
SQ7	0.702				
PF1	0.876	0.713	0.722	0.843	3 (3)
PF2	0.866				
PF3	0.909				
PF4	0.714				
PS1	0.739	0.684	0.890	0.932	3 (3)
PS2	0.837				
PS2a	0.817				
PS3	0.859				
PS4	0.876				
SMM1	0.884				
SMM1a	0.835	0.728	0.892	0.925	4 (5)
SMM2	0.865				
SMM3	0.856				
SMM3a	0.862				
SMM4	0.816				
SMM5	0.820				
SMM5a	0.885				
CS1	0.892				
CS2	0.908				
CS3	0.880				
CL1	0.892	0.779			
CL2	0.924				
CL3	0.829				

SQ3	0.471	0.624	0.482	0.632	0.423	0.801
SQ3a	0.479	0.695	0.529	0.661	0.417	0.759
SQ4	0.624	0.675	0.616	0.635	0.559	0.859
SQ6	0.405	0.513	0.525	0.463	0.484	0.612
SQ7	0.45	0.573	0.561	0.52	0.478	0.702

Figure 2 mentioned the value of each indicator's loading factor and the value of R<sup>2</sup> on each endogenous latent variable.

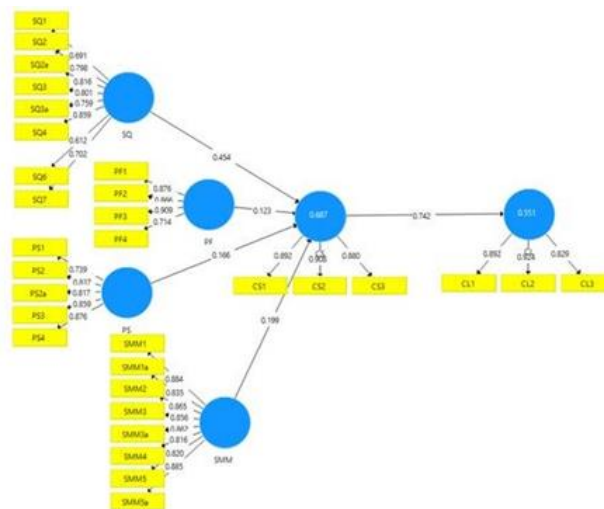


Figure 2. Outer Model

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker

	CL	CS	PS	PF	SQ	SMM
CL	0.883					
CS	0.742	0.894				
PS	0.473	0.71	0.827			
PF	0.604	0.651	0.556	0.844		
SQ	0.624	0.792	0.789	0.687	0.758	
SMM	0.55	0.649	0.584	0.619	0.609	0.853

Table 4. Cross Loading

	CL	CS	PF	PS	SMM	SQ
CL1	0.892	0.608	0.501	0.305	0.476	0.467
CL2	0.924	0.761	0.586	0.505	0.536	0.65
CL3	0.829	0.573	0.502	0.425	0.434	0.515
CS1	0.566	0.892	0.547	0.646	0.608	0.707
CS2	0.629	0.908	0.616	0.669	0.594	0.698
CS3	0.779	0.88	0.58	0.591	0.543	0.716
PF1	0.513	0.549	0.876	0.446	0.538	0.569
PF2	0.56	0.642	0.866	0.573	0.545	0.675
PF3	0.525	0.592	0.909	0.499	0.542	0.636
PF4	0.428	0.359	0.714	0.311	0.466	0.379
PS1	0.491	0.571	0.537	0.739	0.604	0.627
PS2	0.329	0.522	0.423	0.837	0.499	0.635
PS2a	0.226	0.509	0.374	0.817	0.383	0.586
PS3	0.493	0.695	0.505	0.859	0.473	0.708
PS4	0.374	0.603	0.443	0.876	0.453	0.688
SMM1	0.45	0.539	0.606	0.52	0.884	0.53
SMM1a	0.45	0.51	0.519	0.48	0.835	0.537
SMM2	0.438	0.531	0.565	0.526	0.865	0.578
SMM3	0.391	0.526	0.522	0.519	0.856	0.48
SMM3a	0.475	0.555	0.46	0.468	0.862	0.485
SMM4	0.499	0.533	0.541	0.458	0.816	0.478
SMM5	0.488	0.554	0.467	0.448	0.82	0.493
SMM5a	0.545	0.66	0.548	0.559	0.885	0.568
SQ1	0.452	0.52	0.457	0.594	0.456	0.691
SQ2	0.426	0.567	0.495	0.633	0.438	0.798
SQ2a	0.452	0.595	0.495	0.626	0.445	0.816

b) Inner Model Measurement

In the inner model results, there are nine hypotheses. Only two hypotheses were rejected: Hypothesis 3 (Price Fairness has a significant influence on Customer Satisfaction) and Hypothesis 4 (Price Fairness has a significant influence on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction). Whereas, seven hypotheses are accepted in this study with a t value greater than 1.96 and a P value (sig) less than 0.05 for every path (See Table V). R2 of customer satisfaction was 0.687, meaning that customer satisfaction can be explained by the exogenous latent variables (Service Quality, Price Fairness, Perceived Safety, and Social Media Marketing) as for 68.7%. Meanwhile, the R2 for Customer Loyalty was 0.551, meaning that Customer Loyalty can be explained by the exogenous latent variables (Customer satisfaction) as much as 55.1%. The value of Q2 is 0.859 (> 0.000), meaning that Service Quality, Price Fairness, Perceived Safety, and Social Media Marketing accounted for 85.9%, which explains the effect on the Customer Loyalty through Customer satisfaction. While other variables outside this study explain the remaining 14.1%. Besides, this study's results have a large predictive relevance because the Q2 value is above 0.50.



Table 5. Results of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	t	Sig	Result
H1: Service Quality -> Customer Satisfaction	4.829	0.000	H1 Accepted
H2: Service Quality -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	4.624	0.000	H2 Accepted
H3: Price Fairness -> Customer Satisfaction	1.636	0.102	H3 Rejected
H4: Price Fairness -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	1.605	0.109	H4 Rejected
H5: Perceived Safety -> Customer Satisfaction	2.08	0.038	H5 Accepted
H6: Perceived Safety -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	2.096	0.036	H6 Accepted
H7: Social Media Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	2.95	0.003	H7 Accepted
H8: Social Media Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	2.937	0.003	H8 Accepted
H9: Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	24.523	0.000	H9 Accepted

C. Discussions of Findings

Based on the result, Hypothesis 1 was accepted. Service Quality influence the Customer Satisfaction has provided the best service for their passengers and support by proof that this airline got many awards such as “The World’s Best Cabin Crew Skytrax” for five years in a row and included in “Top 10 The World’s Best Airline 2018” (Heriandono, 2018). This hypothesis is the following result from Ahadmotlaghi & Pawar [37], Begzjav [18], and Fadhillah, Zimbali, Setyawati, & Anthony [17]. However, passengers do not weigh heavily on service factors. Hypothesis 2 also accepted. Improving the service quality equal to improving customer loyalty for Garuda’s passengers indicates that people were loyal to one airline if they gave excellent service quality. The result is also relevant to Bekzjav [18] and Fadhillah, Zimbali, Setyawati, & Anthony [17].

Hypothesis 3 has a t-statistic value of 1.636, which is less than 1.96; thus, H3 is rejected. Price Fairness has no significant influence on Customer Satisfaction. This finding is likely because customers still not considered the price is fair enough for them to pay. Passengers still give much attention to the airline discount and promotion announcements before the travelers are making their airline’s choice [11]. The same result is also found in Hypothesis 4 as a t-statistic value of 1.605, which is less than 1.96; thus, H4 rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that Price Fairness has no significant influence on Customer Loyalty. It is parallel with the finding that customer satisfaction is not influenced by price fairness and then also impacted customer loyalty. However, this study is contradicted with Fadhillah, Zimbali, Setyawati, & Anthony [17] that Price Fairness has a positive influence on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction as a mediator variable.

Based on the statistical analysis results, Hypothesis 5 is accepted as a t-statistic value of 2.08, greater than the t-table of 1.96. This finding proves that customer satisfaction is influenced by perceived safety. Improving an in-flight safety level equal to improving customer satisfaction indicates that people were satisfied using an airline that offers

a good safety standard. A similar finding found in Hypothesis 6 is a t- statistic value of 2.096, which is greater than the t-table, which is 1.96. Thus H6 is accepted. They are improving an in-flight safety level simultaneously, improving loyalty, which indicates that people were considered loyal to using one airline to guarantee passengers’ safety. This result follows the research from Begzjav [18] and Law [11], which indicates that the airline’s safety standard is also the primary consideration for passengers.

Hypothesis 7 and 8 were accepted. The result of H7 and H8 has a t-value of higher than 1.96 (2.96 and 2.937, respectively). Nowadays, social media’s use undoubtedly could improve the company’s marketing to a whole new level by providing all the information wrapped in an attractive way to get to know the products or services. This result is relevant to the research from Ahmed & Zahid [38] and Seo & Park [34], that concludes social media marketing (SMM) had a positive effect on customer response. People were considered loyal to using one airline if the airlines’ social media

marketing can persuade them. This research has been proved the research from Ahmed & Zaki [38] concludes that SMM has a positive influence on CRM. In this research, CRM is discussed in terms of customer satisfaction and loyalty, which means that Customer Loyalty should be positively affected by Social Media Marketing.

Based on the statistical analysis results, the Customer Satisfaction construct on Customer Loyalty (H9) has a t-statistic value of 24.523, which has the greatest t value and concluded that H9 is accepted. This finding shows that customer loyalty was strongly influenced by customer satisfaction. Improving customer satisfaction could affect customer loyalty, indicating that people were considered loyal to one airline if they were satisfied with the airlines. The result is consistent with the research from Ahadmotlaghi & Pawar [9], Begzjav [18], Fadhillah, Zimbali, Setyawati, & Anthony [17], Law [11], Salah & Abou-Shouk [6], which all concludes that Customer Satisfaction positively effects towards Customer Loyalty.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on findings, this study proved that the airline is ready for post-pandemic business to start in terms of its service quality, perceived safety, and social media marketing. However, even though customers already want to travel, they will still pay attention to the airline’s prices. Therefore, it is necessary to consider competitive prices when doing social media marketing to be right on target.

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