

The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty Through Customer Satisfaction in Bus Suites Class Services of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) Pontianak - Nanga Pinoh Route

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of Service Quality on Customer Loyalty via Customer Satisfaction in the bus service of Suites Class PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) on the Pontianak-Nanga Pinoh route. The sample size is 150 participants, and the research method employed is associative quantitative. The Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach is employed in data analysis, with the support of SmartPLS. The study's findings suggest that Customer Satisfaction is significantly and positively influenced by Service Quality. Customer Satisfaction has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty, while Service Quality also has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Furthermore, service quality has a substantial impact on customer loyalty by influencing customer satisfaction, as evidenced by a T-Statistic value of 6.879 and a P-Value of 0.001. The R-Square value indicates that Service Quality is capable of accounting for 39.5% of Customer Satisfaction and 57.6% of Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality.

INTRODUCTION

Land transportation is one of the sectors that supports the mobility of society and economic activities in various regions of Indonesia. The transportation industry's accelerated growth has resulted in heightened competition among transportation service providers in the realms of land, sea, and air transportation. This condition has led transportation companies to strive to provide services capable of attracting and retaining customers by improving service quality. The Ministry of Transportation's data indicates that the number of bus companies in Indonesia substantially increased from 2018 to 2022. The maximum increase was in 2022, with 19,041 companies, which represents a 256% increase from the previous year. In addition, a survey by the Indonesian Public Transportation Association recorded that around 60% of public transportation users prefer services with a good service quality reputation.

Competition in land transportation services also occurs in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, which has various bus and travel companies based on OSS (Online Single Submission) data in 2025. These companies consist of intercity bus services within provinces (AKDP), tourism bus services, and other non-route buses. In the AKDP category, several companies serve the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route, such as PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM), Maju Terus Jaya Sentosa, Trans Maju, Borneo Trans Mandiri, and Damri. PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) is an AKDP transportation company that provides Royal Class and Suites Class services on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route with different facilities for each service class. The Suites Class provides facilities such as tiered sleeper seats with a 1-1 configuration, Wi-Fi, a smoking room, television, air conditioning, toilet, and blankets, while the Royal Class uses a 2-1 seat configuration with more limited facilities.

The ticket reservation system of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) is still carried out manually through counters, telephone, and WhatsApp because an application-based or online booking service is not yet available. Some customers also report seat booking mismatches, departure and arrival delays due to traffic factors or fleet technical issues, and unstable Wi-Fi facilities during the trip. On the other hand, the company provides service facilities such as well-maintained fleets, official waiting rooms, travel schedule information, and customer assistance services during the trip. This condition indicates a correlation between the service received by customers and the user experience of transportation services on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route.

The service sector has conducted a significant amount of research on customer satisfaction, loyalty, and service quality. However, there are still differences in research regarding the objects studied, indicators, and service characteristics that are employed. In this study, the object is focused on the Bus Suites Class services of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route with service quality indicators including responsiveness, assurance, tangible, empathy, and reliability. The customer satisfaction variable is restricted to product quality, price, service quality, affective factors, and cost and convenience of acquiring services, while customer loyalty is assessed through referrals, retention, and recurrent business. This focus shows a difference in the scope of research compared to other public transportation services that have different facility characteristics, capacity, and customer segmentation.

This study suggests that customer satisfaction acts as a mediator between service quality and customer loyalty in PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM)'s Bus Suites Class services. The research position is directed at measuring relationships between variables based on premium AKDP transportation service conditions on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route, taking into account aspects of facilities, operational services, ticket booking systems, and customer experiences during the trip. With this method, the real-world connection between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty is shown for the thing being studied.

The goal of this study is to find out how service quality affects customer loyalty by looking at how satisfied customers are with PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM)'s Bus Suites Class services on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh line, as shown above. The investigation is focused on the operational conditions of the Suites Class services of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) and the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

According to Indrasari (2019), service quality is the general qualities of a good or service that make it easier to meet customer needs, either directly or indirectly (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). According to Chandra et al. (2020), service quality is when you do something for someone else by giving them goods or services that meet their needs and demands. Response, assurance, visible, empathy, and dependability (RATER) are the parts of the idea of service quality that Parasuraman (2001) talks about in Chandra et al. (2020). Service quality indicators in this study refer to Sadiartha & Suartina (2020) in Chandra et al. (2020), which include responsiveness, assurance, tangible, empathy, and reliability. Ayunani et al. (2023) say that service quality has an effect on customer satisfaction. Mahira et al. (2021) also explained that service quality has a big effect on how satisfied customers are. Also, Marsheila & Gumilar (2026) showed that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Nurofik & Wiana (2022) agreed that service quality does have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction (Z)

Lesmana et al. (2022) say that customer satisfaction is the highest level of marketing when it comes to how much value customers get from a product or service over time. Kotler and Keller (2016) explain in Adhari (2020) that a customer's happiness depends on how they rate the product or service they got, which is based on their experience with that product or service. According to Kotler and Keller (2016) and Adhari (2020), the things that make customers happy in this study are product quality, price, service quality, emotional factors, cost, and how easy it is to get the product. Maharani & Bella (2026) that increasing customer satisfaction is necessary to increase customer loyalty. Mustofa, Soeparyanto & Satyadharma (2025) came to the conclusion that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty.

Customer Loyalty (Y)

Said (2022) defines customer loyalty as the level of customer closeness to a brand, reflected in the tendency of customers to continue choosing the brand in a particular product category. The American Marketing Association (2007) in Said (2022) explains loyalty as the level of consumer consistency in making purchases at the same store or service for products they usually use. Sari et al. (2024) define customer loyalty as a consistent attitude or behavior in the use of a product or service that demonstrates customer commitment and allegiance. Customer loyalty indicators in this study refer to Kotler & Keller (2016) in Srisusilawati et al. (2023), which consist of repeat, retention, and referrals. Hartono (2018) states that service quality has an indirect effect on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction as an intervening variable. Khoerunisa & Vikaliana (2022) also explain that service quality not only has a direct effect on customer loyalty but also contributes an indirect effect through customer satisfaction.

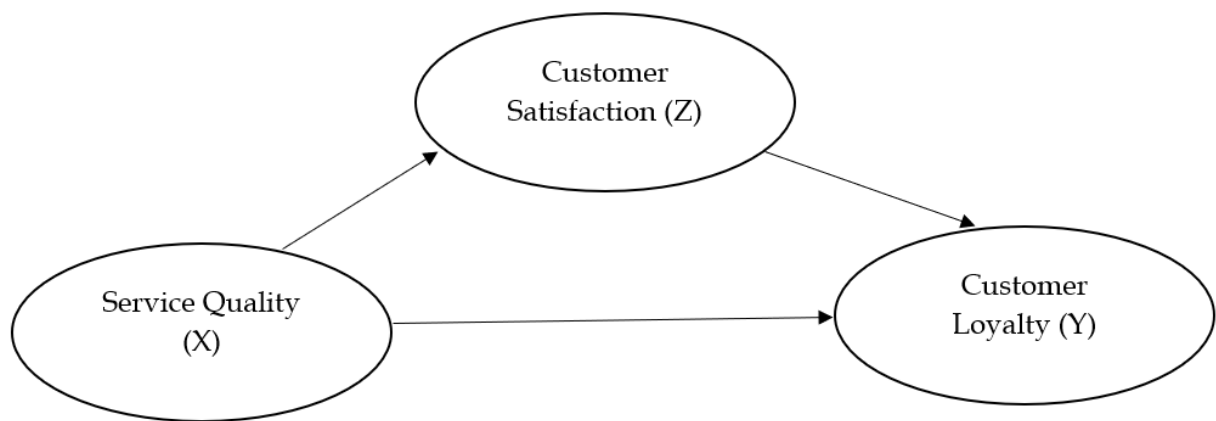


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

An association method is used in this study to look into how service quality affects customer loyalty by measuring customer satisfaction on the Pontianak-Nanga Pinoh route of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM). Siregar (2017) says that associative study is used to find the link between two or more factors. The first set of data came from observations, interviews, and surveys. The second set came from company data, Pontianak OSS data in 2025, and PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) sales and ship data. 150 people who take PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) buses were chosen at random using purposive sampling methods based on certain factors (Sugiyono, 2023) to be part of the study group.

Service Quality is the independent variable, Customer Satisfaction is the mediating variable, and Customer Loyalty is the dependent variable. With the help of SmartPLS software, the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method is used to look at the data. Musyaffi et al. (2021) say that PLS-SEM is a way to look at data that combines structure methods, factor analysis, and path analysis. Hair et al. (2021) say that outer loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, Cronbach's Alpha, and discriminant validity are all ways to test a measurement model. In structural

model testing, methods like R-Square, F-Square, Goodness of Fit (GoF), direct effect, and indirect effect are used with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESEARCH RESULT

Outer Model Evaluation

a. Convergent Validity Test

The loading factor values for each indicator within the construct were analyzed to undertake convergent validity testing. The indicator's ability to accurately represent the latent variable is suggested by the presence of high loading factor values. In general, an indicator is said to have convergent validity if its loading factor number is greater than 0.7. Find out what the convergent validity test showed for all of the factors in this study below.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test Outcomes

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description
Service Quality (X)	X1.1	0.801	Valid
	X1.2	0.770	
	X1.3	0.766	
	X1.4	0.816	
	X1.5	0.819	
	X1.6	0.818	
	X1.7	0.811	
	X1.8	0.842	
	X1.9	0.823	
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	Z.1	0.811	Valid
	Z.2	0.730	
	Z.3	0.773	
	Z.4	0.764	
	Z.5	0.865	
	Z.6	0.746	
	Z.7	0.823	
	Z.8	0.781	
	Z.9	0.845	
	Z.10	0.801	
	Z.11	0.826	
	Z.12	0.824	
	Z.13	0.833	
	Z.14	0.839	
	Z.15	0.741	
Customer Loyalty (Y)	Y.1	0.790	Valid
	Y.2	0.785	
	Y.3	0.834	
	Y.4	0.838	

Y.5	0.830
Y.6	0.809
Y.7	0.835

Source: Processed Data, 2026

All of the markers for Service Quality (X), Customer Satisfaction (Z), and Customer Loyalty (Y) have loading factor values greater than 0.7, as shown by the results of the validation test above. This means that each sign can practically stand for the thing being measured. As a result, all measures are said to meet the standards for convergent validity and can be used in this study.

b. Discriminant Validity

To make sure that each construct can be actually separated from other constructs, discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criterion was carried out. When the Fornell-Larcker value of a construct is higher than its association with other constructs, it is said to have discriminant validity. The results of the discriminant validity tests that were done in this study are shown below.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Outcomes

Variable	Customer Satisfaction	Service Quality	Customer Loyalty
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.811		
Service Quality (X)	0.629	0.873	
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.6702	0.665	0.826

Source: Processed Data, 2026

There is more than 0.7 evidence above that the Fornell-Larcker value for each construct is higher than its association with other constructs. This is shown by the results of the discriminant validity test. This discovery suggests that each construct possesses a high degree of discrimination capacity, which satisfies the criteria for discriminant validity in the research model.

c. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a measure of how well a model can explain the general range of its signs. When the AVE number is greater than or equal to 0.50, it means that the construct has convergent validity. The results of the test are shown below.

Table 3. AVE Test Outcomes

Construct	AVE
Service Quality (X1)	0.763
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.683
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.657

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The AVE values of all variables are greater than 0.5, as indicated by the AVE test outcomes in Table 3. This suggests that the validity criteria for each construct have been met, and the indicators in this study are deemed to be capable of accurately representing the constructs.

d. Reliability Test

The study tool's internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability calculations as part of dependability tests. Someone or something is reliable if the Composite Reliability value is over 0.7 and the Cronbach's Alpha value is over 0.6. Table 4 shows the results of the investigation's dependability tests.

Table 4. Reliability Test Outcomes

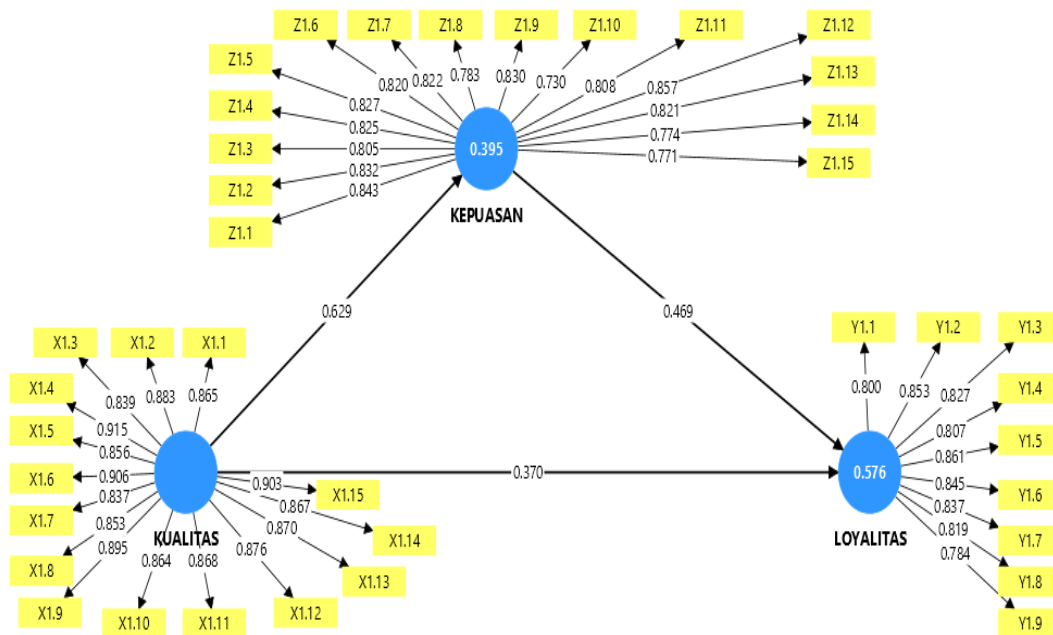
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Service Quality (X1)	0.978	0.980
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.963	0.966
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.942	0.951

Source: Processed Data, 2026

All constructs have Composite Reliability values > 0.7 and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6, as indicated by the reliability test outcomes above. These findings suggest that all variables have exhibited satisfactory internal consistency and have met the reliability criteria.

The outcomes of the Outer Model testing are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Outer Model Test Outcomes



Source: Output SmartPLS, 2026

Inner Model Evaluation

a. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square Test)

In SEM-PLS research, the R-Square (R^2) number is used to find out how well external factors can explain internal variables. A bigger R^2 number makes it easier for the model to predict the dependent construct. Hair et al. (2019) say that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 show that the category is substantial, middling, or weak. The R-Square numbers used in this study are shown below.

Table 5. R-Square Test Outcomes

Endogen Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.395	0.391
Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.576	0.570

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Based on the outcomes of the R-Square test in Table 5, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1) The R-Square value for Customer Satisfaction (Z) is 0.395. This means that Service Quality (X) can explain 39.5% of the Customer Satisfaction variable, while factors outside the model explain the other 60.5%. Based on the Adjusted R-Square number of 0.391, the model is considered weak.
- 2) The R-Square number for Customer Loyalty (Y) is 0.576, which means that Service Quality (X) and Customer Satisfaction (Z) can explain 57.6% of Customer Loyalty. The other 42.4% is due to factors that are not in the model. A number of 0.570 for the Adjusted R-Square shows that the model is modest.

b. F Square Test

In PLS-SEM research, the F-Square (f^2) is a measure of effect size that looks at changes in the R-Square value in the structural model to figure out how much external factors affect internal variables. Based on Hair et al. (2021) and Henseler (2009), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 in Yamin (2023) mean small, medium, and large effects, respectively. The results of the f^2 test used in this study are shown below.

Table 6. F-Square Test Outcomes

Model	F Square
Service Quality (X) → Customer Satisfaction (Z)	0.654
Service Quality (X) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.195
Customer Satisfaction (Z) → Customer Loyalty (Y)	0.314

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Based on the F-Square test outcomes in Table 6, the interpretation is as follows:

- 1) The F-Square value of the effect of Service Quality (X) on Customer Satisfaction (Z) is 0.654, indicating a large effect.
- 2) The F-Square value of the effect of Service Quality (X) on Customer Loyalty (Y) is 0.195, indicating a medium effect.

- 3) The F-Square value of the effect of Customer Satisfaction (Z) on Customer Loyalty (Y) is 0.314, indicating a medium effect.

c. Goodness of Fit (GoF)

The Goodness of Fit (GoF) test is used in SEM-PLS to figure out how well the model fits the problem as a whole. The measurement model (outer model) and the structure model (inner model) can both be put through this test. Below is a list of the results of the GoF formula used in this study.

Table 7. Goodness of Fit Test Outcomes

GoF	Model Estimation
	0.087

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The research model is classified as low due to the GoF value of 0.087, which is less than 0.10. This is confirmed by the GoF test outcomes above.

d. Direct Effect

The path coefficient from bootstrapping is used to figure out the Direct Effect, which looks at the direct effect of external latent variables on internal latent variables. The Direct Effect test outcomes from this investigation are demonstrated below.

Table 8. Outcome of Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample Estimate	T Statistic	P Value	Description
H1	Service Quality -> Customer Satisfaction	0.629	14.912	0.000	Accepted
H2	Service Quality -> Customer Loyalty	0.370	5.603	0.000	Accepted
H3	Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.469	7.515	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The outcomes of the direct effect test in Table 8 are as follows:

- 1) The T-Statistic value of 14.912 and the P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.05) show that Service Quality (X) does have a significant effect on Customer Satisfaction (Z).
- 2) The T-Statistic of 5.603 and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.05) show that Service Quality (X) does have a big effect on Customer Loyalty (Y).
- 3) The T-Statistic is 7.515 and the P-Value is 0.000 (< 0.05), which means that Customer Loyalty (Y) is significantly affected by Customer Satisfaction (Z).

e. Indirect Effect

The Indirect Effect is used to figure out how external latent variables affect endogenous latent variables through intermediate factors. This is done by using

bootstrapping results. The results of the Indirect Effect test for this study are shown below.

Table 9. Outcome of Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample Estimate	T Statistic	P Value	Description
H4	Service Quality -> Customer Satisfaction -> Customer Loyalty	0.295	6.879	0.001	Accepted

Source: Processed Data, 2026

A T-Statistic of 6.879 and a P-Value of 0.001 (< 0.05) show that Service Quality (X) has a positive and significant indirect effect on Customer Loyalty (Y) through Customer Satisfaction (Z). This is shown in Table 9 by the results of the indirect effect test. As a result, the mediation hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Service Quality (X) on Customer Satisfaction (Z)

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Satisfaction among users of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) Bus Suites Class services on the Pontianak–Nanga Pinoh route. This finding is supported by a path coefficient of 0.629, a T-Statistic value of 14.912, and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, the F-Square value of 0.654 indicates a large effect size, while the R-Square value of 0.395 suggests that Service Quality explains 39.5% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction. These findings imply that improvements in service quality are associated with higher levels of customer satisfaction among PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) Bus Suites Class passengers. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Ayunani et al. (2023), which found that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction. Similarly, Mahira et al. (2021) reported that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction.

Effect of Service Quality (X) on Customer Loyalty (Y)

The results further indicate that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. This finding is supported by a path coefficient of 0.370, a T-Statistic value of 5.603, and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty. Moreover, the F-Square value of 0.195 indicates a moderate effect size. The R-Square value of 0.576 for Customer Loyalty suggests that 57.6% of the variance in Customer Loyalty can be explained by Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction, while the remaining 42.4% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. These findings imply that improvements in service quality contribute to higher levels of customer loyalty among users of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) Bus Suites Class services. This result is consistent with the findings of Marsheila & Gumilar (2026), who reported that service quality has a positive

and significant effect on customer loyalty. Similarly, Nurofik & Wiana (2022) found that service quality significantly influences customer loyalty. The consistency of these findings across previous studies reinforces the importance of service quality as a key determinant of customer loyalty, indicating that customers who perceive higher service quality are more likely to continue using and recommending the service.

Effect of Customer Satisfaction (Z) on Customer Loyalty (Y)

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that Customer Satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. This finding is supported by a path coefficient of 0.469, a T-Statistic value of 7.515, and a P-Value of 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating a statistically significant relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty. Furthermore, the F-Square value of 0.314 indicates a moderate effect size. These findings suggest that higher levels of customer satisfaction are associated with increased customer loyalty among users of PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) Bus Suites Class services on the Pontianak-Nanga Pinoh route. This result is consistent with the findings of Maharani & Bella (2026), who reported that improving customer satisfaction contributes to stronger customer loyalty. Similarly, Mustofa et al. (2025) found a positive and significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The consistency of these findings indicates that customers who are satisfied with the services they receive are more likely to maintain their relationship with the company through repeat usage and continued loyalty.

Effect of Service Quality (X) on Customer Loyalty (Y) through Customer Satisfaction (Z)

The results of the indirect effect test indicate that Customer Satisfaction serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty. This finding is supported by a path coefficient of 0.295, a T-Statistic value of 6.879, and a P-Value of 0.001 (< 0.05), demonstrating that Service Quality has a positive and significant indirect effect on Customer Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction. These results suggest that improvements in service quality not only directly enhance customer loyalty but also indirectly strengthen customer loyalty by increasing customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Hartono (2018), which reported that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Similarly, Khoerunisa & Vikaliana (2022) found that customer satisfaction plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. The consistency of these findings indicates that customer satisfaction functions as an important mechanism through which service quality contributes to the development of stronger customer loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If you take the Bus Suites Class on the route between Pontianak and Nanga Pinoh, operated by PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM), this study shows that the quality of service has a big effect on both customer satisfaction and trust. The direct effect test results show that Service Quality has a big effect on both Customer

Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty. Additionally, Customer Satisfaction has a big effect on Customer Loyalty. The relationship coefficient study shows that 39.5% of the variance in Customer Satisfaction is explained by Service Quality., and 57.6 percent of customer loyalty is due to both service quality and customer satisfaction. Based on the Adjusted R-Square numbers, Customer Loyalty is middling (0.570), and Customer Satisfaction is weak (0.391). The indirect effect study also shows that Customer Satisfaction is the link between Service Quality and Customer Loyalty, which is a positive and significant one. Based on these results, it seems that the level of service is strongly linked to both customer satisfaction and trust in the PT TSM Bus Suites Class services. The F-Square results back up these results. They show that Service Quality has a big effect on Customer Satisfaction and a medium effect on Customer Loyalty. Based on these findings, PT Tri Star Melawi (TSM) is encouraged to maintain and further enhance its service quality by ensuring fleet comfort, strengthening staff responsiveness, providing clearer travel information, and reducing the possibility of delays or seat reservation errors. The company should also give greater attention to supporting facilities, including more stable Wi-Fi access, cleanliness, waiting room convenience, and customer assistance services.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

As of now, 42.4% of the difference in customer loyalty in this study can't be explained, so the research model needs to be improved by adding more factors that may affect customer loyalty. More research should be done. Potential variables include customer loyalty, facility quality, customer value, customer experience, price perception, and company's image. Additionally, future research could broaden the study's scope in terms of population and geographical coverage, as well as recruit a greater number of participants to enhance generalizability and representativeness.

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