

HRM-Based Service Quality and Marketing Strategy on Passenger Travel Experience during Eid Peak Season

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Abstract

Purpose: This study analyzes the influence of Human Resource Management (HRM)-based service quality and marketing strategies on passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season, both partially and simultaneously.

Research Methodology: This study employs a quantitative survey of airline passengers traveling during the Eid peak season. Convenience sampling was applied through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, involving 150 respondents based on the predetermined minimum sample criteria. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0.

Results: Human Resource Based Service Quality (HRSQ) positively affected passenger travel experience ($\beta = 0.233$, $p = 0.017$), while marketing strategy showed a stronger positive effect ($\beta = 0.523$, $p < 0.001$). Both variables explained 46.9% of the variance in passenger travel experience ($R^2 = 0.469$). These findings indicate that enhancing service quality through human resource capabilities and effective marketing strategies is essential for improving passengers' overall travel experiences.

Conclusions: Airlines should enhance service quality through continuous staff training and innovative marketing strategies to improve passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season.

Limitations: The convenience sample, dominated by students, limits generalizability, and discriminant validity and common method bias were not fully tested.

Contributions: This study provides empirical evidence from Indonesia aviation industry during the underexplored Eid peak season and offers practical guidance for improving passenger experience under peak operational conditions.

Keywords: *Eid Peak Season, Human Resource Management, Marketing Strategy, Passenger Travel Experience, Service Quality*

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1. Introduction

Indonesia transportation industry follows a pronounced annual rhythm in which demand is neither stable nor evenly distributed across the calendar. Instead, demand concentrates into a small number of sharply defined peak seasons, namely Eid al-Fitr, Christmas and New Year, and school holidays, during which passenger volume rises steeply within a compressed window ([Sari & Dharasta, 2025](#)). Among these periods, the Eid homecoming tradition, known locally as mudik, is by a wide margin the largest. The Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia/ [Kemenhub \(2026\)](#) projects approximately 143.9 million travellers during the 1447 Hijri (2026) Eid period, a figure that exceeds half the national population and constitutes one of the largest recurring human mobility events in the world.

The scale of this movement makes the Eid peak season a decisive commercial and operational episode for the aviation sector. Within a matter of weeks, airlines capture a disproportionate share of annual revenue while simultaneously operating at the boundaries of their fleet, crew, and airport-slot capacity. Industry performance during comparable periods illustrates both the opportunity and the operational strain. For example, the Garuda Indonesia Group transported 1.5 million passengers across 10,400 flights during the 2025/2026 Christmas and New Year peak while maintaining an average on-time performance of 89% ([Aboeng, 2026](#)). Sustaining such performance requires the coordinated mobilisation of human, technical, and commercial resources that extend well beyond routine operating levels.

Regulatory intervention adds a further layer of complexity. To preserve affordability during periods of inelastic demand, the Ministry of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia/ [Kemenhub \(2026\)](#) enforces fare-ceiling compliance while implementing stimulus measures, including value-added tax reductions, fuel-surcharge adjustments, and airport service-charge relief. As a result, these measures compress the pricing latitude that airlines would ordinarily use to manage demand peaks. Consequently, competitive differentiation shifts away from price alone and instead depends more heavily on service delivery and the perceived value of the overall travel proposition.

Peak-season conditions alter the mechanics of service delivery in ways that the mainstream service-quality literature, developed largely under normal-demand assumptions, does not fully anticipate. Congested terminals, extended queues, compressed turnaround times, and elevated schedule-disruption risk change both what frontline staff can deliver and what passengers can reasonably expect. [Sari and Dharasta \(2025\)](#), examining aviobridge personnel at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport during the Eid peak, found generally satisfactory staff performance across quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence. However, they also identified rising flight volumes, technical disruptions, and constrained operational resources as persistent pressures on that performance.

Three gaps emerge from the existing evidence base. First, the airline service-quality literature is overwhelmingly grounded in routine operating conditions, and the transferability of its findings to demand-saturated environments remains largely untested ([Bakır, & Atalık, 2021](#); [Law, Zhang, & Gow, 2022](#)). Second, human resource-based service quality and marketing strategy are typically examined in separate research streams, even though both operate simultaneously throughout the same passenger journey and compete for the same finite managerial resources during peak periods ([El, Maarouf, & Younis, 2025](#); [Shah, Syed, Imam, & Raza, 2020](#)). Third, and most consequentially for practice, studies rarely compare the relative practical magnitude of experiential drivers. Establishing that two variables are statistically significant offers limited guidance to managers who must allocate constrained budgets between them. In contrast, identifying which variable exerts the greater practical influence provides substantially more meaningful guidance for managerial decision-making.

This study addresses these gaps by examining three research questions. First, whether Human Resource Management (HRM)-based service quality positively and significantly influences passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season. Second, whether marketing strategy exerts a comparable influence. Third, how the two constructs perform jointly and which carries the greater practical

weight. The novelty of the study rests on three foundations. Contextually, it locates the analysis within the Eid peak season, a demand environment of extreme intensity that remains substantially under-examined in the international literature. Theoretically, it integrates the internal service-quality perspective with the service marketing mix within a single structural model, permitting direct comparison of two mechanisms that are usually theorised in isolation. Methodologically, it moves beyond significance testing to effect-size comparison, producing evidence about relative magnitude that translates directly into resource-allocation guidance for airline management.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

2.1.1 *The Service-Profit Chain and Internal Service Quality*

The theoretical anchor of this study is the service-profit chain, which posits a causal sequence running from internal service quality through employee satisfaction and capability to external service value, and ultimately to customer satisfaction and loyalty. The logic implies that customer-facing outcomes cannot be engineered directly; instead, they are the downstream product of how effectively the organisation equips and supports the employees who deliver the service. Applied to aviation, the framework predicts that the quality of internal HR provision, including scheduling, training, resourcing, and support during disruption, propagates through frontline behaviour into passenger perception.

This mechanism is particularly consequential under peak-demand conditions. When operating margins are compressed, the buffer that ordinarily absorbs internal service shortfalls disappears. Consequently, deficiencies in HR provision surface rapidly at the customer interface. [Ruël & Bondarouk \(2014\)](#) demonstrate that the effectiveness of HRM systems depends on the alignment of technology, organisational design, and people rather than on any single element. This alignment is subjected to considerable pressure during peak-season operations.

2.1.2 *The Expectation Disconfirmation Paradigm*

The second theoretical pillar is the expectation disconfirmation paradigm, which holds that satisfaction arises from the comparison between prior expectations and perceived performance rather than from performance in absolute terms. This framework carries specific implications for peak-season travel. Passengers travelling during Eid typically hold calibrated expectations because they anticipate congestion, queues, and schedule volatility. As a result, the performance threshold at which disconfirmation becomes positive is relatively lower. At the same time, the heightened emotional significance of homecoming travel amplifies the consequences of negative disconfirmation when it occurs.

The paradigm also clarifies the role of marketing strategy in experience formation. Because marketing communication shapes the expectations against which performance is subsequently judged, the marketing function does not merely attract passengers. Instead, it actively influences how the delivered service is ultimately evaluated. Consequently, promotional promises, fare transparency, and booking-channel design contribute directly to the formation of the passenger experience rather than merely preceding it ([Lemon & Verhoef, 2016](#)).

2.2 Human Resource Management in Service Organisations

Human resource management constitutes the strategic function through which organisations acquire, develop, deploy and retain the human capability required to achieve organisational objectives. [Armstrong \(2020\)](#) frames HRM as an integrated system spanning workforce planning, recruitment and selection, competency development, performance management, compensation and industrial relations. In service contexts this system carries elevated weight, because the encounter between employee and customer constitutes the moment at which the service is simultaneously produced, delivered and evaluated.

Peak-season conditions intensify every dimension of this challenge. Organisations must satisfy sharply elevated demand using a workforce that cannot be expanded proportionally within the

available time. [Alotaibi and Alharbi \(2022\)](#) identify the principal adaptive responses, namely flexible scheduling, cross-functional deployment, temporary staffing, and technology-enabled productivity gains. Each of these approaches entails trade-offs. For example, temporary staff often lack accumulated service experience, cross-deployed personnel may operate outside their primary area of competence, and compressed scheduling increases the risk of employee fatigue. Empirical studies conducted in comparable settings further confirm that high-performance HR practices translate into measurable improvements in service quality when supported by adequate investment in employee training ([Aburayya et al., 2020](#)).

2.3 Human Resource–Based Service Quality

2.3.1 Conceptual Definition

Human Resource–Based Service Quality (HRSQ) extends the SERVQUAL logic of [Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry \(1988\)](#) to the internal service relationship by defining quality as the perceived standard of provision delivered by the HR function to employees, who are regarded as internal customers. [Saeed, Maarouf, and Younis \(2025\)](#) operationalise the construct through four dimensions adapted from [Bandarouk, Harms, and Looise \(2017\)](#), namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Their study further demonstrates the mediating role of HRSQ in the relationship between electronic human resource management and perceived organisational performance.

The relevance of this construct to the aviation industry stems from the defining characteristics of services, namely intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. [Brochado, Rita, Oliveira, and Oliveira \(2019\)](#) observe that these characteristics require service providers to manage every customer touchpoint carefully because no inventory buffer exists to absorb variability in service delivery. In the context of air travel, these touchpoints include booking, check-in, security screening, boarding, the in-flight experience, and baggage reclaim. Each of these interactions is mediated by employees whose capability reflects the quality of the internal HR system that supports them.

2.3.2 Empirical Evidence in the Airline Sector

Empirical research consistently identifies service quality as a determinant of passenger outcomes, although the estimated magnitudes vary substantially across different contexts. [Law, Zhang, and Gow \(2022\)](#) find significant effects of airline service quality on satisfaction and repurchase intention among Laotian passengers. [Bakır and Atalık \(2021\)](#), applying fuzzy multi-criteria methods to evaluate airline e-service quality, identify reliability and responsiveness as the dominant evaluative dimensions.

Comparative research further refines this understanding. [Farooq et al. \(2018\)](#) demonstrate that the relative importance of service-quality dimensions varies according to the airline operating model. Specifically, tangible aspects carry greater weight for full-service carriers, whereas reliability is the dominant consideration in low-cost airline segments. [Koklic, Kukar-Kinney, and Vegelj \(2017\)](#) reach a similar conclusion through a direct comparison of low-cost and full-service carriers. Their findings indicate that the attributes driving passenger satisfaction differ systematically between the two business models rather than merely differing in degree. [Nasser, and Hussain \(2015\)](#) establish that perceived value mediates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, implying that passengers evaluate service quality through a value assessment rather than responding to quality perceptions directly.

The geographical breadth of this evidence base is notable, yet it also highlights the boundary condition that motivates the present study. [Jiang and Zhang \(2016\)](#) in China identify service quality as a significant antecedent of passenger satisfaction and loyalty. However, each of these studies focuses on travellers during routine operating periods. In addition, [Pandey \(2016\)](#) and [Sezgen, Mason, and Mayer \(2019\)](#) demonstrate, through segmentation and text-mining analyses, that passenger priorities differ systematically across traveller groups. These findings anticipate the sample-composition effects observed in the present study. Nevertheless, the existing literature has not established whether the estimated effects of service quality remain consistent when airline operations approach capacity saturation. This unresolved issue provides the central motivation for examining passenger experiences during the Eid peak season.

2.4 Marketing Strategy in the Airline Industry

2.4.1 The Service Marketing Mix

Marketing strategy denotes the systematic configuration of organisational resources through which customer value is created, communicated, and sustained. [Kotler and Armstrong \(2022\)](#) articulate this configuration through the expanded service marketing mix, which comprises product, price, promotion, place, process, people, and physical evidence. The three service-specific elements, namely process, people, and physical evidence, acknowledge that in service settings the delivery mechanism, personnel, and tangible environment constitute integral components of the service offering rather than merely supporting it.

Digital transformation has reconfigured the marketing mix rather than replacing it ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2022](#)). Consequently, organisations are required to integrate traditional and digital channels into a coherent customer journey. In the aviation industry, this integration is particularly important because the booking channel often represents the passenger's first interaction with the airline. As a result, friction encountered during this stage can influence subsequent evaluations of the overall travel experience. [Keyser, Verleye, Lemon, Keiningham, and Klaus \(2020\)](#) further demonstrate that consistency across customer touchpoints functions as an experiential attribute in its own right. Accordingly, inconsistencies between service channels are often perceived as service failures regardless of whether the final service outcome is satisfactory.

2.4.2 Marketing Under Peak-Demand Conditions

Peak demand conditions restructure the strategic function of marketing. When demand reliably exceeds capacity, promotional activity ceases to serve demand generation and instead performs expectation management, demand-shaping across time slots and value justification under regulatory fare constraints. [Ramadhani, Dirwan and Hidayat \(2023\)](#) document this reorientation among Indonesian ticketing intermediaries, where marketing effort concentrates on access facilitation and service assurance rather than volume stimulation.

The digital dimension is central to this reorientation. [Jeon & Jeong \(2017\)](#) establish that perceived website service quality shapes e-loyalty directly, while [Riswanda & Millanyani \(2025\)](#) demonstrate that electronic service quality and perceived value drive loyalty through the mediating mechanisms of trust and satisfaction in travel-platform contexts. [Lee & Kim \(2023\)](#) find that mobile application quality significantly influences continuance intention among airline users, and [Tsafarakis, Kokotas and Pantouvakis \(2018\)](#) show through multi-criteria satisfaction analysis that booking convenience ranks among the highest-leverage improvement priorities for carriers. Under peak-season congestion, where each additional physical touchpoint represents an additional queue, the ability to complete transactions digitally acquires disproportionate experiential weight.

2.5 Passenger Travel Experience

2.5.1 Conceptualising Customer Experience

Customer experience encompasses the totality of a customer's cognitive, affective, sensory and behavioural responses across the full journey with an organisation. [Lemon and Verhoef \(2016\)](#) formalise this into the customer-journey framework, partitioning experience into pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages and demonstrating that touchpoints contribute unequally to overall evaluation.

In air travel, the passenger journey is unusually extended and involves multiple service providers. It begins with route and fare searches, proceeds through booking, pre-flight communication, airport arrival, check-in, security screening, boarding, the flight itself, and disembarkation, and concludes with baggage reclaim and post-trip service recovery when necessary. Importantly, passengers tend to attribute the entire journey to the airline, even though substantial parts of the process, such as security screening, terminal facilities, and ground-handling services, fall outside the airline's direct operational control. This asymmetry in passenger attribution becomes even more pronounced during peak seasons because the non-airline components of the journey are typically the most susceptible to congestion.

2.5.2 Experiential Dimensions and Measurement

[Schmitt \(2019\)](#) provides the measurement architecture adopted in this study, decomposing experience into sense (sensory stimulation), feel (affective response), think (cognitive evaluation) and act (behavioural and lifestyle engagement) dimensions. The framework is well suited to air travel, where sensory conditions such as cabin comfort and terminal ambience, affective states ranging from anticipation to anxiety, cognitive assessments of value and reliability, and behavioural fluency in navigating procedures all contribute jointly to overall evaluation.

Complementary perspectives enrich this theoretical architecture. Pine and Gilmore's experience-economy framework, operationalised by [Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung \(2007\)](#), positions experience as a distinct category of economic value that is realised through entertainment, education, escapism, and aesthetics. [Tuncer, Unusan, and Cobanoglu \(2021\)](#) demonstrate empirically that perceived value mediates the relationship between service quality and behavioural intention, indicating that customer experience is actively constructed rather than passively received. [Lucini et al. \(2020\)](#) further show that text-mining of online reviews reveals differentiated satisfaction dimensions across full-service and low-cost carrier segments, indicating that passengers weigh service attributes differently depending on operating conditions. Consequently, proactive experience management becomes particularly important under conditions in which operational constraints make effective service delivery more challenging. Recent aviation-specific studies by [Bellizzi, Eboli, and Mazzulla \(2020\)](#) as well as [Park, Lee, and Nicolau \(2020\)](#) further confirm that experiential evaluations in air travel are influenced more strongly by process-related attributes than by outcome-related attributes alone.

2.6 Peak Season in the Transportation Industry

Peak season describes a bounded interval of sharply elevated demand, typically coinciding with religious observance, national holidays or school vacation ([Sari & Dharasta, 2025](#)). Its defining property is temporal concentration: passenger volumes that would be manageable if distributed evenly become severely constraining when compressed into days.

Three structural consequences follow from these conditions. First, capacity becomes genuinely binding because aircraft, crew, gates, and airport slots cannot be expanded within the relevant planning horizon. Consequently, surplus demand cannot be accommodated regardless of passengers' willingness to pay. Second, system fragility increases nonlinearly because operating without sufficient slack means that a single disruption is more likely to propagate throughout the network rather than being contained locally. Third, the composition of the passenger population changes, as infrequent travellers who have limited procedural familiarity account for a much larger proportion of total passengers than during routine operating periods. Each of these consequences alters the mechanism through which passenger experience is formed. Therefore, findings established under routine operating conditions cannot be assumed to apply directly to peak-demand environments.

Two further considerations compound these effects in the aviation setting specifically. [Prentice and Kadan \(2019\)](#) demonstrate that airport service quality shapes passenger evaluation independently of carrier performance, meaning that terminal congestion during peak periods degrades experience through a channel the airline cannot directly control yet is nonetheless held accountable for. [Lim & Lee \(2020\)](#) show that the satisfaction gap between legacy and low-cost carriers narrows under constrained operating conditions, as service differentiation becomes harder to sustain when all operators face the same capacity ceiling. Together these findings imply that peak season compresses the competitive space within which service quality can differentiate carriers, plausibly shifting differentiation towards the pre-purchase attributes that remain under managerial control.

2.7 Hypotheses Development

2.7.1 HRM-Based Service Quality and Passenger Travel Experience

The service-profit chain predicts that internal service quality propagates into external experience through frontline capability. [El, Maarouf, and Younis \(2025\)](#) provide direct evidence that HRSQ shapes perceived performance outcomes, while [Aburayya, Alshurideh, Alfarsi, Suson, Bash, and Salloum \(2020\)](#) demonstrate that HR practice quality translates into measurable customer-facing

service gains. Within aviation specifically, frontline responsiveness, informational clarity and empathetic handling of disruption constitute the mechanisms through which internal capability becomes visible to passengers ([Law, Zhang, & Gow, 2022](#)). Under peak-season conditions these mechanisms carry additional weight, since a larger share of passengers requires active assistance and a larger share of journeys involves some deviation from plan. Accordingly:

H₁: Human resource management–based service quality has a positive and significant effect on passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season.

2.7.2 Marketing Strategy and Passenger Travel Experience

Expectation–disconfirmation logic implies that marketing strategy participates in experience formation by establishing the standard against which delivery is evaluated, while the service marketing mix implies that process and physical-evidence elements are themselves components of the experience. Empirical support is substantial: [Jeon and Jeong \(2017\)](#), [Riswanda and Millanyani \(2025\)](#), [Lee & Kim \(2023\)](#) and [Tsafarakis et al. \(2018\)](#) collectively establish that channel quality, perceived value and transactional convenience shape experiential outcomes in travel settings. During peak season, when digital self-service substitutes for congested physical touchpoints and fare transparency mitigates the perceived exploitation risk associated with high-demand pricing, these effects are plausibly amplified.

H₂: Marketing strategy has a positive and significant effect on passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season

2.7.3 Joint Explanatory Contribution

Because the two constructs operate at different stages of the customer journey, their contributions are expected to be complementary rather than redundant. Marketing strategy primarily influences the pre-purchase and purchase stages, whereas Human Resource–based Service Quality (HRSQ) predominantly affects the service-encounter stage. As a result, the two constructs are expected to provide meaningful joint explanatory power in explaining passenger travel experience. Accordingly:

H₃: Human resource management–based service quality and marketing strategy jointly explain a substantial proportion of the variance in passenger travel experience during the Eid peak season

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Type and Approach

This study adopts a quantitative research design combining descriptive and causal-explanatory approaches. The quantitative orientation is appropriate because the research objective is to measure latent constructs and estimate the magnitude and significance of relationships among them through numerical data and statistical inference ([Hair et al., 2019](#)). The descriptive component profiles respondent characteristics and perception levels across constructs; the causal-explanatory component tests directional hypotheses linking the two predictor constructs to passenger travel experience.

Data were gathered through a structured self-administered survey. The survey method was selected for its efficiency in reaching geographically dispersed respondents within the narrow window surrounding the Eid travel period, and for its compatibility with the standardised measurement required for structural equation modelling. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

3.1.2 Research Setting and Timeline

The study is set within the Indonesian commercial aviation sector during the 2026 Eid peak season, with respondents drawn from travellers using major national airports that function as primary hubs during the homecoming period. The research was executed between January and March 2026 across the sequential stages of instrument preparation, data collection, analysis and reporting. Field data

collection ran from 15 February to 1 March 2026, positioned immediately before the peak-season window so that respondents' recollections of prior Eid travel remained salient while anticipation of imminent travel was high.

3.2 Population and Sampling

3.2.1 Population and Sampling Technique

The target population of this study comprises air passengers who travelled during the Eid peak season or other comparable high-density travel periods in Indonesia. This population was selected because the Eid holiday represents one of the busiest travel seasons in the country, during which airlines experience substantial increases in passenger demand and operational complexity. As a result, passengers travelling during this period are considered well suited to evaluate the quality of airline services and the effectiveness of marketing strategies under conditions of intensified service delivery.

Since no comprehensive sampling frame identifying all passengers travelling during the Eid peak season was available, a convenience sampling technique was employed. Respondents were recruited through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, allowing data to be collected efficiently from individuals who met the study criteria. This non-probability sampling approach was adopted due to the practical challenges of obtaining access to passengers at airports during the relatively short peak travel period, as well as the logistical and time constraints associated with intercept surveys. Despite its limitations, convenience sampling has been widely applied in tourism, transportation, and consumer behaviour research when the target population is difficult to identify or access directly. The potential implications of this sampling approach for the generalizability and external validity of the findings are acknowledged and discussed explicitly in Section 5.3.

3.2.2 Sample Size Determination

The sample size of 150 respondents was determined using the indicator-based rule of thumb for PLS-SEM articulated by [Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle \(2019\)](#), applying a ten-to-one ratio to the fifteen measurement indicators in the model ($15 \times 10 = 150$). This figure exceeds the minimum required by the inverse square-root method for detecting a minimum path coefficient of 0.20 at 80% statistical power and a 5% significance level, providing adequate power for the hypothesised relationships.

3.2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Respondents were considered eligible for participation if they met several inclusion criteria. Specifically, participants were required to have used commercial air transport services within the relevant observation period, be at least seventeen years of age, possess travel experience during the Eid peak season or another comparable high-density travel period, provide informed consent for voluntary participation, and complete the questionnaire in its entirety. These criteria were established to ensure that respondents had sufficient experience to evaluate the quality of airline services and the effectiveness of marketing strategies examined in this study.

To maintain the quality and reliability of the dataset, several exclusion criteria were also applied. Responses were excluded if the questionnaire was incomplete, if response patterns indicated inconsistency or carelessness, or if data were missing for any of the indicators used to measure the research constructs. Applying these screening procedures helped ensure the completeness, consistency, and validity of the data prior to statistical analysis, thereby improving the robustness and credibility of the research findings.

3.3 Operationalisation of Variables

Three latent constructs were measured using reflective indicators adapted from validated instruments. HRM-based service quality (X_1) was measured through four dimensions, namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, following [Saeed et al. \(2025\)](#) and [Bandarouk et al. \(2017\)](#). Marketing strategy (X_2) was measured through six dimensions of the service marketing mix, namely product, price, promotion, place, process, and physical evidence, following [Kotler and Armstrong \(2022\)](#) and [Ramadhani et al. \(2023\)](#). Passenger travel experience (Y) was measured through four experiential dimensions, namely sense, feel, think, and act, following [Schmitt \(2019\)](#). All indicators were assessed using a five-point Likert scale. Table 1 presents the complete operational specification.

Table 1. Operational definition of variables

Variables	Dimension	Indicator	Scale
Human Resource Management–Based Service Quality (X_1)	Reliability	$X_{1.1}$ Services are delivered as promised	Ordinal
	Responsiveness	$X_{1.2}$ Prompt response to passenger needs	Ordinal
	Assurance	$X_{1.3}$ Staff conduct builds passenger trust	Ordinal
	Empathy	$X_{1.4}$ Attention and care toward each passenger	Ordinal
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	Product	$X_{2.1}$ Ease of flight rescheduling	Ordinal
	Price	$X_{2.2}$ Competitive ticket pricing	Ordinal
	Promotion	$X_{2.3}$ Attractive promotional programmes	Ordinal
	Place / Channel	$X_{2.4}$ Accessible social media promotion channels	Ordinal
	Process	$X_{2.5}$ Consistency of flight punctuality	Ordinal
	Physical Evidence	$X_{2.6}$ Airport facilities supporting comfort	Ordinal
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	Sense Experience	Y_1 Clear and comprehensible flight information	Ordinal
	Feel Experience	Y_2 Comfort throughout the travel process	Ordinal
	Think Experience	Y_3 Interest in learning more about the airline	Ordinal
	Act Experience	Y_4 Ease of check-in, boarding and travel process	Ordinal

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

3.4.1 Analytical Approach

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 3.0. PLS-SEM was selected over covariance-based alternatives on three grounds: the study is predictive and exploratory in orientation rather than confirmatory of an established theory; the sample size, while adequate, is modest relative to covariance-based requirements; and PLS-SEM imposes no multivariate normality assumption, which suits Likert-scale perceptual data ([Hair et al., 2019](#)).

3.4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation

The reflective measurement model was assessed for convergent validity through outer loadings (threshold > 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50); for internal consistency reliability through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (both > 0.70); and for discriminant validity through the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. Common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test following [Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff \(2003\)](#).

3.4.3 Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) interpreted against [Cohen \(1988\)](#) benchmarks of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 for small, medium and large

effects, and predictive relevance (Q^2) obtained via blindfolding. Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, applying significance criteria of $|t| > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

The demographic and behavioural profile of the 150 respondents is presented in Table 2. Female respondents constitute the majority at 58.7% ($n = 88$) against 41.3% male ($n = 62$), a distribution consistent with generally higher female response rates to online survey instruments. The age structure is concentrated in the 17–22 bracket at 64.7% ($n = 97$), followed by 23–26 years at 28.0% ($n = 42$) and those above 26 years at 7.3% ($n = 11$).

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondent characteristics ($n = 150$)

No	Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	62	41.3
		Female	88	58.7
2	Age	17–22 years	97	64.7
		23–26 years	42	28.0
		> 26 years	11	7.3
3	Activity Status	Student	115	76.7
		Working Student	35	23.3
4	Travel Frequency during Eid	Once	85	56.7
		Twice (Round Trip)	65	43.3
5	Travel Purpose	Homecoming (Mudik)	108	72.0
		Leisure / Recreation	34	22.7
		Other Purposes	8	5.3

Activity status reflects the recruitment channel: 76.7% ($n = 115$) are full-time students and 23.3% ($n = 35$) combine study with employment. Regarding travel frequency during the Eid period, 56.7% ($n = 85$) travelled once while 43.3% ($n = 65$) completed a round trip, suggesting that a substantial proportion of respondents used a different transport mode for one leg of the journey. Travel purpose aligns closely with the cultural character of the period, with 72.0% ($n = 108$) travelling for homecoming, 22.7% ($n = 34$) for leisure and 5.3% ($n = 8$) for other purposes. The concentration of students within the sample is a recognised limitation and is examined in Section 5.3.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics of Research Indicators

Indicator-level means and standard deviations derived from raw Likert responses are reported in . All fifteen indicators returned means above 3.5, indicating broadly positive perceptions across all three constructs. Within HRM-based service quality, assurance ($X_{1.3}$, $M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.84$) recorded the highest mean, indicating that staff conduct inspiring passenger confidence is the most positively evaluated dimension. Within marketing strategy, place ($X_{2.4}$, $M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.87$) led, reflecting the accessibility of promotional information through social channels, while price ($X_{2.2}$, $M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.88$) and physical evidence ($X_{2.6}$, $M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.03$) recorded the lowest means consistent with fare sensitivity and terminal congestion being the most salient peak-season irritants. Within passenger travel experience, act experience (Y_4 , $M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.82$) recorded both the highest mean and lowest dispersion of any indicator in the model, indicating unusually consistent agreement that procedural ease is central to the travel experience.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of research indicators (raw likert scores, n = 150)

Construct	Indicator	Statement	Mean	SD
HRM-Based Service Quality (X_1)	$X_{1.1}$ Reliability	Staff provide services as promised	3.82	0.89
	$X_{1.2}$ Responsiveness	Staff respond quickly when passengers need assistance	3.76	0.91
	$X_{1.3}$ Assurance	Staff conduct builds passenger trust	3.91	0.84
	$X_{1.4}$ Empathy	Staff show care and attention to each passenger	3.79	0.94
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	$X_{2.1}$ Product	Airlines provide ease in rescheduling flights	3.61	1.02
	$X_{2.2}$ Price	Ticket prices are competitive relative to other airlines	3.55	0.88
	$X_{2.3}$ Promotion	Airlines offer attractive promotions or discounts	3.68	0.86
	$X_{2.4}$ Place	Promotional information is accessible via social media	3.71	0.87
	$X_{2.5}$ Process	Airlines maintain consistency in flight punctuality	3.63	0.84
	$X_{2.6}$ Physical Evidence	Airport facilities support passenger comfort	3.58	1.03
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	Y_1 Sense	Information provided during the journey is easy to understand	3.88	0.88
	Y_2 Feel	I feel comfortable during the travel process	3.85	0.87
	Y_3 Think	The experience makes me interested in learning more about the airline	3.72	0.85
	Y_4 Act	The check-in, boarding and travel process is easy to follow	3.93	0.82

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

4.2.1 Convergent Validity and Reliability

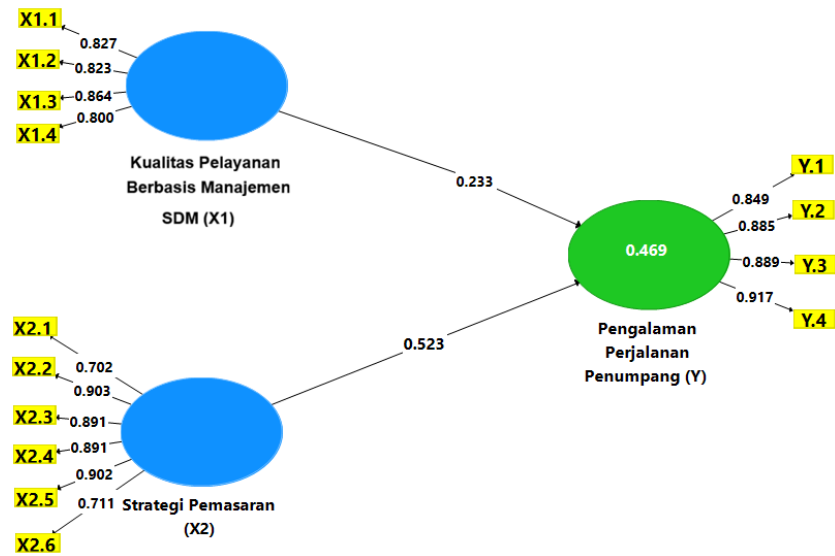


Figure 1. Measurement model with loading factors

Figure 1 presents the estimated measurement model together with the standardized loading factors for all research indicators. The figure shows that each indicator is strongly associated with its respective latent construct, with standardized loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. This indicates that the indicators adequately represent their underlying constructs and provides an initial indication of satisfactory convergent validity.

The detailed measurement model evaluation is presented in Table 4. The results show that all indicator loadings range from 0.800 ($X_{1.4}$, empathy) to 0.917 (Y_4 , act experience), confirming that every indicator contributes substantially to its assigned construct. Furthermore, the constructs demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.849, 0.878, and 0.908, and composite reliability values of 0.898, 0.908, and 0.935 for HRM-based service quality, marketing strategy, and passenger travel experience, respectively. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of 0.687, 0.623, and 0.784 all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that each construct explains the majority of the variance in its indicators and confirming adequate convergent validity.

Table 4. Outer loadings, construct reliability and validity

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
HRM-Based Service Quality (X_1)	$X_{1.1}$ Reliability	0.827	0.849	0.898	0.687
	$X_{1.2}$ Responsiveness	0.823			
	$X_{1.3}$ Assurance	0.864			
	$X_{1.4}$ Empathy	0.800			
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	$X_{2.1}$ Product	0.782	0.878	0.908	0.623
	$X_{2.2}$ Price	0.795			
	$X_{2.3}$ Promotion	0.811			
	$X_{2.4}$ Place	0.788			
	$X_{2.5}$ Process	0.802			
	$X_{2.6}$ Physical Evidence	0.774			
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	Y_1 Sense Experience	0.849	0.908	0.935	0.784

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Y_2 Feel Experience	0.885				
Y_3 Think Experience	0.889				
Y_4 Act Experience	0.917				

4.2.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires the square root of AVE for each construct to exceed that construct's correlation with every other construct in the model. The results in Table 5 satisfy this requirement: diagonal values of 0.829, 0.789 and 0.885 exceed all corresponding off-diagonal correlations. Cross-loading inspection confirmed that every indicator loads more strongly on its assigned construct than on any alternative construct, providing convergent support at the item level.

Table 5. Fornell–Larcker criterion for discriminant validity

Construct	X_1	X_2	Y
HRM-Based Service Quality (X_1)	0.829	-	-
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	0.512	0.789	-
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	0.489	0.631	0.885

4.2.3 Common Method Bias Assessment

Because all data derive from a single self-report source, common method bias was assessed using Harman's single-factor test. Exploratory factor analysis constraining all indicators to a single unrotated factor yielded 38.2% of total variance explained, below the 50% threshold conventionally taken to indicate a substantive problem (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Common method bias is therefore unlikely to account for the observed relationships, although the single-source design remains a limitation acknowledged in Section 5.3.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

4.3.1 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R^2 value of 0.469 reported in Table 6 indicates that HRM-based service quality and marketing strategy jointly explain 46.9% of the variance in passenger travel experience, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.462. Following Hair et al. (2019), this represents moderate explanatory power. The remaining 53.1% of the variance is attributable to determinants outside the specified model. These factors plausibly include airport infrastructure quality, aircraft configuration, schedule reliability, and individual passenger characteristics. This proportion is consistent with the multi-actor nature of the air travel journey because substantial parts of the passenger experience are shaped by service components that lie beyond the airline's direct operational control.

Table 6. Coefficient of determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	0.469	0.462

4.3.2 Effect Size (f^2)

Effect-size analysis presented in Table 7 reveals a pronounced asymmetry between the two predictors. Marketing strategy yields an f^2 value of 0.342, which approaches Cohen (1988) benchmark for a large effect (0.35). In contrast, HRM-based service quality produces an f^2 value of 0.068, which falls within the small-effect range. These findings indicate that marketing strategy exerts approximately five times

the practical influence of HRM-based service quality on passenger travel experience within the present sample. This substantial difference in effect size would not be apparent from the statistical significance results alone. Therefore, the findings provide important practical implications for managerial resource allocation and strategic decision-making.

Table 7. Effect size (f^2)

Exogenous Construct	f^2 on Passenger Travel Experience	Interpretation
HRM-Based Service Quality (X_1)	0.068	Small
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	0.342	Large

4.3.3 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Blindfolding produced a Q^2 value of 0.353 for passenger travel experience, reported in Table 8. As this exceeds zero by a substantial margin, the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance for the endogenous construct, indicating that the specified predictors reconstruct omitted data points with meaningful accuracy. The model therefore possesses explanatory validity within the sample and predictive capability beyond it.

Table 8. Predictive relevance (Q^2)

Construct	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (= 1 - SSE/SSO)$
HRM-Based Service Quality (X_1)	600.000	600.000	–
Marketing Strategy (X_2)	900.000	900.000	–
Passenger Travel Experience (Y)	600.000	388.297	0.353

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Structural relationships were evaluated through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to obtain t-statistics and p-values, applying significance criteria of $|t| > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$. Figure 2 presents the bootstrapped structural model and Table 9 reports the path coefficients. Both hypothesised direct paths are positive and statistically significant, supporting H_1 and H_2 , while the R^2 result reported in Section 4.3.1 supports H_3 .

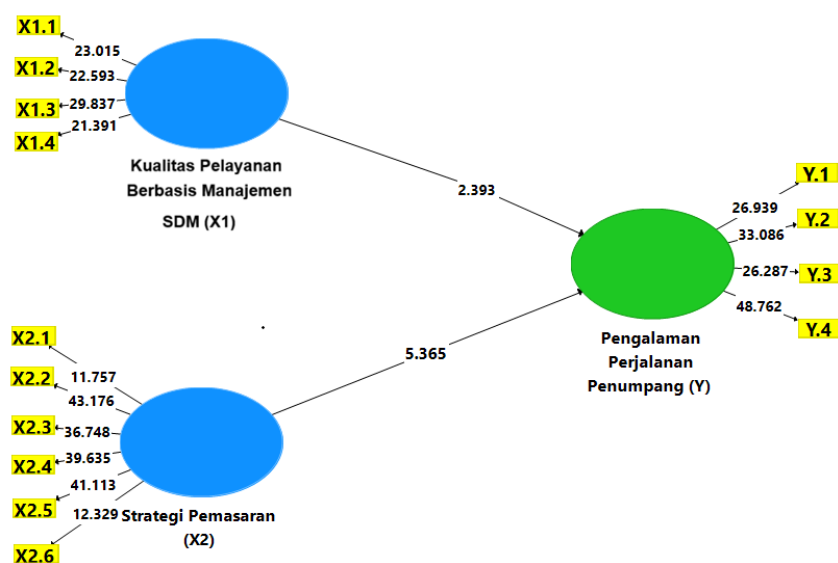


Figure 2. Structural model with bootstrapping results

4.4.1 Test of Hypothesis 1: HRM-Based Service Quality $\rightarrow$ Passenger Travel Experience

The path from HRM-based service quality to passenger travel experience yields a coefficient of 0.233 with $t = 2.393$ and $p = 0.017$. Both criteria are satisfied, and H_1 is supported. The positive sign indicates that improvements in the service quality delivered through frontline human resources translate into more favourably evaluated travel experiences, with a one standard-deviation increase in HRSQ associated with a 0.233 standard-deviation increase in passenger travel experience, holding marketing strategy constant.

4.4.2 Test of Hypothesis 2: Marketing Strategy $\rightarrow$ Passenger Travel Experience

The path from marketing strategy to passenger travel experience yields a coefficient of 0.523 with $t = 5.365$ and $p < 0.001$. H_2 is supported. The coefficient is more than double that of HRSQ, and both the larger t -statistic and the smaller p -value indicate that this relationship is estimated with greater precision as well as greater magnitude.

4.4.3 Test of Hypothesis 3: Joint Explanatory Contribution

PLS-SEM contains no direct analogue of the simultaneous F -test used in ordinary least squares regression; joint explanatory capacity is instead captured by R^2 . The value of 0.469 confirms that the two predictors together account for a moderate and substantively meaningful proportion of variance in passenger travel experience, supporting H_3 . The complementarity implied by this result is consistent with the theoretical expectation that the two constructs operate on distinct segments of the customer journey rather than duplicating one another.

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 The Effect of HRM-Based Service Quality on Passenger Travel Experience

The support for H_1 confirms the core proposition of the service-profit chain within a peak-season aviation context, namely that internal service quality propagates into external experience through frontline capability. The finding is consistent with El [Saeed et al. \(2025\)](#), who established HRSQ as a determinant of perceived performance outcomes, and with [Ruël & Bondarouk \(2014\)](#), who argued that HRM effectiveness depends on the alignment of technology, organisation, and people. It also converges with the airline-specific evidence reported by [Law et al. \(2022\)](#), who identify staff-mediated encounters as central to passenger evaluations.

Two aspects of the result merit closer interpretation. First, the indicator-level pattern is informative. Assurance recorded both the highest mean and the lowest dispersion among the HRSQ dimensions, indicating that respondents consistently perceived staff conduct as trustworthy and confidence-inspiring. This finding aligns with the SERVQUAL proposition that assurance carries disproportionate importance in situations where customers find it difficult to evaluate service outcomes directly and where perceived risk is relatively high. These conditions closely characterise the context of air travel ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#)).

Second, the practical magnitude of the effect is relatively modest, and this finding warrants careful interpretation rather than rhetorical exaggeration. One possible explanation relates to the composition of the sample. Because the respondents were predominantly students, they may have had limited cumulative exposure to frontline airline services and therefore possessed a more limited basis for distinguishing among different levels of service quality. This explanation is consistent with the segmentation findings reported by [Sezgen et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Pandey \(2016\)](#). A second explanation is structural. During peak seasons, a substantial proportion of the passenger journey is managed by airport operators, ground-handling providers, and security agencies instead of airline personnel. Consequently, the observable influence attributable to airline HRM becomes diluted, an attribution issue documented by [Prentice and Kadan \(2019\)](#). A third explanation is that frontline service quality functions primarily as a hygiene factor. In other words, it becomes highly noticeable when absent but contributes only limited additional satisfaction when delivered effectively. This pattern has also been identified in three-factor analyses of airline service quality conducted by [Bellizzi et al. \(2020\)](#).

This asymmetry is plausible because marketing-related expectations, such as pricing transparency and digital-channel convenience, are formed and evaluated during the pre-travel stage regardless of whether the journey itself proceeds smoothly, whereas HRSQ evaluations depend more heavily on the actual service encounter, which respondents in this pre-peak sample had not yet fully experienced. Consequently, the measured HRSQ coefficient is likely to be lower than that which might be observed in a sample exposed to significant service disruptions. Accordingly, the weaker effect observed in the present study should be interpreted as reflecting contextual differences rather than contradicting the existing domestic evidence.

4.5.2 The Effect of Marketing Strategy on Passenger Travel Experience

The support for H_2 , with a coefficient that is more than double that of HRM-Based Service Quality (HRSQ), indicates that marketing strategy is the dominant driver of passenger travel experience in the present context. This finding is consistent with the results reported by [Ramadhani et al. \(2023\)](#) in the Indonesian ticketing sector, as well as with the digital-channel studies conducted by [Jeon and Jeong \(2017\)](#), [Riswanda and Millanyani \(2025\)](#), and [Lee & Kim \(2023\)](#). Collectively, these studies identify channel quality and perceived value as significant determinants of experiential outcomes.

The theoretical explanation follows directly from the expectation–disconfirmation paradigm. Marketing strategy does not merely precede the customer experience. Instead, it shapes the expectations against which the delivered service is subsequently evaluated. During peak seasons, this role becomes even more important for three reasons. First, transparent pricing under regulated fare ceilings reduces the perceived risk of price exploitation that often accompanies periods of exceptionally high demand. As a result, pricing transparency transforms a potential source of passenger dissatisfaction into an important source of trust. Second, digital booking and check-in services directly substitute for congested physical service touchpoints. Consequently, every successfully digitised transaction eliminates one queue from the passenger journey, and the value of this benefit increases as congestion becomes more severe. Third, process consistency, as reflected by the punctuality indicator, addresses the service attribute that is most vulnerable to deterioration during peak seasons and therefore becomes one of the most influential factors in passenger evaluations.

The indicator-level pattern within the construct further reinforces this interpretation. Price and physical evidence recorded the lowest mean scores and the highest levels of dispersion, indicating that fare perception and terminal comfort represent the weakest elements of the peak-season value proposition. Accordingly, these dimensions also offer the greatest opportunities for service improvement. The importance of process consistency is further supported by [Tsafarakis et al. \(2018\)](#), whose multi-criteria analysis identified operational reliability as one of the highest-priority areas for improvement in the airline industry.

4.5.3 Comparative Effect Size and Theoretical Implications

The most consequential finding of this study is not that both predictors are significant, but that their practical magnitudes diverge sharply. With $f^2 = 0.342$ against 0.068, marketing strategy exerts approximately fivefold the practical influence of HRSQ. Reporting significance without effect size would have obscured this asymmetry entirely and produced misleading managerial guidance.

Theoretically, this asymmetry suggests that the relative weight of experiential drivers is context-contingent rather than fixed. Under normal operating conditions, where service encounters are unhurried and staff have latitude to personalise interaction, the frontline pathway plausibly carries greater weight. Under peak-season conditions, where encounters are compressed and staff discretion is constrained by throughput demands, the pathway operating through pre-purchase expectation-setting and digital self-service assumes primacy. The finding therefore qualifies rather than contradicts the service-profit chain: the chain remains operative, but its relative contribution attenuates as operational conditions restrict the degrees of freedom available at the service encounter.

This interpretation is consistent with the customer-journey framework proposed by [Lemon and Verhoef \(2016\)](#), which argues that the importance of customer touchpoints varies according to the stage of the journey and the surrounding context. During peak seasons, the pre-purchase stage, which

includes fare searching, booking, and expectation formation, assumes greater relative importance because the service-encounter stage becomes increasingly standardised and compressed.

A complementary explanation concerns the mediating role of perceived value. [Gurler \(2025\)](#) demonstrates that service quality influences customer loyalty primarily through perceived value rather than through a direct relationship. Marketing strategy, as operationalised in the present study through pricing, promotion, accessibility, and process reliability, corresponds much more closely to the determinants of perceived value than does frontline service delivery. Consequently, if perceived value constitutes the principal explanatory mechanism, the observed asymmetry between marketing strategy and HRM-based service quality becomes theoretically expected rather than anomalous. Accordingly, the present findings support the emerging perspective that passenger travel experience is shaped by value judgments formed largely before the journey begins, a phenomenon that becomes particularly evident under peak-season operating conditions.

4.5.4 Practical Implications

For airline management, the findings support a differentiated allocation of peak-season investment. The primary lever is marketing strategy: fare transparency and clear communication of regulated pricing to counter perceptions of opportunistic pricing; promotional design oriented towards demand-shaping across time slots rather than volume stimulation; and continued investment in digital booking, check-in and disruption-notification capability, which removes physical touchpoints from the journey precisely when those touchpoints are most congested.

The secondary lever is HRM-based service quality, which remains a significant contributor and should not be neglected. The indicator evidence suggests concentrating training investment on assurance-building conduct and on service-recovery competence, since the marginal experiential value of frontline staff is highest at the moments when the standard process fails. Given the peak-season prevalence of temporary and cross-deployed personnel, pre-season training should prioritise disruption-handling protocols and communication under pressure over routine procedural coverage.

For regulators and airport operators, the salience of process consistency and physical evidence in the results indicates that terminal capacity management and inter-agency coordination materially shape passenger experience outcomes that are subsequently attributed to airlines. Coordinated peak-season planning across carriers, airport operators and security agencies therefore carries experiential returns that no single actor can capture unilaterally.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of HRM-based service quality and marketing strategy on passenger travel experience during the Indonesian Eid peak season using PLS-SEM on data from 150 air travellers. Three conclusions follow from the analysis. First, HRM-based service quality exerts a positive and significant effect on passenger travel experience ($\beta = 0.233$; $t = 2.393$; $p = 0.017$), confirming that internal service capability propagates into passenger-facing outcomes even under demand-saturated conditions. Second, marketing strategy exerts a positive and significant effect of substantially greater magnitude ($\beta = 0.523$; $t = 5.365$; $p < 0.001$), establishing it as the dominant driver of experiential outcomes in this context. Third, the two constructs jointly explain 46.9% of the variance in passenger travel experience ($R^2 = 0.469$) with satisfactory predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.353$), confirming complementary rather than redundant contributions. The effect-size comparison constitutes the study's central contribution. The fivefold difference in practical magnitude between marketing strategy ($f^2 = 0.342$, large) and HRM-based service quality ($f^2 = 0.068$, small) demonstrates that statistical significance alone provides an insufficient basis for managerial prioritisation, and that the relative weight of experiential drivers established under normal operating conditions cannot be assumed to hold under peak-demand conditions.

5.2 Research Limitations

Five limitations qualify these findings. First, the sample is dominated by students (76.7%) recruited through online distribution in academic settings, which does not adequately represent the broader population of Eid peak-season air passengers and materially constrains external validity. The attenuated HRSQ effect may itself partly reflect this composition, since respondents with limited flying histories have a narrower experiential basis for evaluating frontline service. Second, the non-probability sampling technique precludes calculation of sampling error and formal generalisation to the target population. Third, discriminant validity was established through the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings but not through the heterotrait–monotrait ratio, which contemporary methodological guidance regards as the more sensitive diagnostic. Fourth, the single-source self-report design leaves residual common method bias possible despite Harman's test returning a result below the conventional threshold. Fifth, the cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time and cannot establish temporal precedence, so the causal language used throughout should be read as theoretically rather than empirically warranted.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Four directions follow from the limitations above. First, sampling should be improved through airport-intercept or post-flight recruitment of verified peak-season passengers, ideally stratified by traveller type, which would permit direct testing of whether the attenuated HRSQ effect reflects sample composition or a genuine structural feature of peak-season travel. Second, model specification should be extended to incorporate airport infrastructure quality, schedule reliability, perceived value and passenger loyalty, and to test perceived value as a mediator consistent. Third, design should be strengthened through longitudinal or multi-wave data collection spanning pre-travel expectation, in-journey perception and post-travel evaluation, permitting direct empirical examination of the disconfirmation mechanism theorised here. Fourth, comparative research contrasting peak-season and normal-season samples within the same carrier population would test the central proposition of this study that the relative weight of experiential drivers shifts systematically with operating conditions. For practice, airlines should prioritise marketing strategy as the primary peak-season lever, focusing on fare transparency, promotional design oriented towards demand-shaping, and digital booking and check-in capability that removes physical touchpoints when terminals are most congested. HRM-based service quality should be treated as a significant complementary lever, with training investment concentrated on assurance-building conduct and service-recovery competence, since the marginal experiential value of frontline staff is highest when the standard process fails.

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Author Contributions

RIP contributed to the conceptualisation, research design, preparation of the original draft, as well as the review and editing of the manuscript. ASL was responsible for the research methodology, formal analysis, and data interpretation. S conducted the data collection and literature review. AL contributed to the validation of the research and provided overall supervision throughout the study. SR was responsible for data curation, reference management, and editing of the final version of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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