

Air Travel as Part of the Tourism Experience: Antecedents of Travel Advocacy Among Airline Passengers

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Abstract

Air travel has increasingly evolved from a purely functional mode of transportation into an integral component of the tourism experience. Despite this transformation, airline research continues to emphasize service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty, while paying limited attention to the mechanisms by which travel experiences translate into advocacy behavior. This study investigates the influence of airline service quality and digital service experience on travel advocacy, with customer experience, perceived value, and memorable travel experience as mediating factors. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 500 airline passengers in Indonesia who had undertaken leisure travel by air within the previous twelve months. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that both airline service quality and digital service experience significantly enhance customer experience. Customer experience subsequently positively affects perceived value and memorable travel experience, thereby serving as a key mechanism linking airline experiences with advocacy behavior. In turn, perceived value and memorable travel experience significantly influence travel advocacy, with the latter emerging as the strongest predictor. The results highlight the central role of customer experience in transforming service encounters into advocacy behavior. The study extends airline and tourism literature by moving beyond the conventional service quality–satisfaction–loyalty paradigm and positioning travel advocacy as the ultimate behavioral outcome. The findings further suggest that airlines should focus on creating seamless, meaningful, and memorable travel experiences across both physical and digital touchpoints to encourage positive recommendations and advocacy.

Keywords: airline service quality; digital service experience; customer experience; perceived value; memorable travel experience; travel advocacy; air travel tourism.

A. INTRODUCTION

Air transportation occupies a unique position within the tourism system. Unlike many tourism services that are consumed at a destination, airline services are experienced before tourists arrive and often shape their initial impressions of a trip. For this reason, airlines increasingly compete not only through operational efficiency but also through the quality of experiences delivered across multiple customer touchpoints. Recent studies have demonstrated that passengers evaluate airlines through a combination of service performance, emotional responses, digital interactions, and experiential outcomes rather than solely on functional attributes (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024; Chand et al., 2024). At the same time, technological developments have transformed the passenger journey, making digital service encounters an integral component of travel experiences (Bakir et al., 2025; Lutzky, 2024). These developments suggest that air travel should be viewed as part of the broader tourism experience rather than merely a means of transportation.

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Despite this shift, empirical findings remain fragmented regarding the mechanisms through which airline experiences influence post-consumption behavior. Several studies have reported that airline service quality directly enhances passenger satisfaction and loyalty (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025), while others have argued that customer experience provides a stronger explanation of behavioural outcomes than service quality alone (Božić et al., 2024; Usun et al., 2024). Furthermore, research examining digital service environments has shown that mobile applications, self-service technologies, online communication, and digital engagement can substantially influence passengers' evaluations of airlines (Bakir et al., 2025; Lutzky, 2024). However, the relative importance of traditional service encounters and digital experiences remains inconclusive. Some studies position digital interaction as a complementary service element, whereas others suggest that digital touchpoints have become central determinants of customer experience in contemporary travel contexts (Bakir et al., 2025; Dike et al., 2024). This inconsistency indicates that a more integrated perspective is required.

Another issue concerns the dominant outcome variables employed in airline research. Existing studies largely focus on customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, continuance intention, and loyalty (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025; Usun et al., 2024). Although these constructs remain relevant, they may no longer fully capture how travellers create value for firms in digitally connected tourism environments. Contemporary tourists actively share experiences, post reviews, create social media content, and influence potential travellers' decisions through electronic word of mouth. Consequently, advocacy-oriented behaviours have become increasingly important for tourism and hospitality organizations. Nevertheless, empirical research investigating advocacy as an outcome of airline experiences remains relatively limited. More importantly, the pathways through which airline service quality and digital experiences stimulate advocacy behaviours are still poorly understood. Existing evidence suggests that customer experience and perceived value may play important intermediary roles (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024), yet these relationships have rarely been examined simultaneously within a single framework.

The literature also reveals a conceptual disconnect between airline research and tourism experience research. Studies in tourism consistently emphasize that memorable experiences are among the strongest predictors of future behavioural responses, including recommendations, storytelling, and destination promotion. However, investigations of memorable experiences have predominantly focused on destinations, hospitality services, events, and recreational activities, with considerably less attention devoted to commercial aviation contexts. Existing airline studies generally emphasize satisfaction and loyalty outcomes while overlooking the possibility that airline encounters themselves can become memorable tourism experiences that influence travellers' willingness to advocate for a service provider (Božić et al., 2024; Dike et al., 2024). As a result, limited knowledge exists regarding how customer experience translates into perceived value, memorable travel experiences, and ultimately advocacy behaviour among airline passengers.

Addressing these gaps, the present study conceptualizes air travel as an integral component of the tourism experience. Specifically, this research addresses three important gaps in the literature. First, existing airline studies continue to focus predominantly on satisfaction and loyalty outcomes, leaving travel advocacy comparatively underexplored. Second, the mechanisms through which airline service quality and digital service experience translate into advocacy behavior remain insufficiently understood. Third, limited research has integrated constructs of tourism experience, particularly perceived value and memorable travel experience, into airline passenger behavior models. It develops a model linking airline service quality and digital service experience with travel advocacy through customer experience, perceived value, and memorable travel experience. By integrating constructs that have largely been examined separately in previous studies, this research contributes to the growing convergence of tourism experience literature and air transport management research. The study also responds to calls for a broader understanding of

passenger behavior beyond satisfaction and loyalty by examining advocacy as a strategic outcome of airline experiences. Theoretically, the study extends customer experience and tourism experience research into the commercial aviation context. Empirically, it provides evidence regarding how airline encounters are transformed into perceived value, memorable travel experiences, and ultimately advocacy behavior among airline passengers.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Airline Service Quality

Airline service quality remains one of the most frequently investigated determinants of passenger evaluations and behavioral outcomes. Rooted in the service quality paradigm introduced by (Parasuraman et al., 1988), the concept traditionally emphasizes customers' assessments of service performance relative to their expectations. Within the airline context, however, service quality has evolved beyond operational reliability and functional efficiency. Recent studies increasingly characterize airline service quality as a multidimensional construct encompassing service interactions, employee responsiveness, cabin comfort, communication quality, safety perceptions, and overall service delivery throughout the passenger journey (Božić et al., 2024; Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025). This evolution reflects broader changes in tourism consumption, in which travellers evaluate experiences holistically rather than through isolated service encounters.

Despite broad agreement regarding its importance, the mechanisms through which airline service quality influences passenger outcomes remain debated. A substantial stream of research continues to position service quality as a direct antecedent of satisfaction, loyalty, repurchase intention, and customer retention (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025; Usun et al., 2024). Other studies report that perceived service quality contributes to trust, relationship quality, and positive behavioral intentions (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024). However, emerging evidence suggests that service quality may exert a stronger influence through experiential pathways. As competition among airlines increasingly extends beyond core transportation services, travelers are becoming more sensitive to the overall quality of experiences generated throughout their journeys. Consequently, the explanatory power of service quality appears to depend less on isolated service attributes and more on its ability to create meaningful customer experiences (Božić et al., 2024; Chand et al., 2024).

This shift is particularly relevant in tourism settings, where transportation services constitute an integral component of the travel experience rather than a purely utilitarian activity. Unlike routine service consumption, tourism-related travel often involves anticipation, emotional engagement, and experiential expectations. Under such conditions, superior service quality can reduce travel-related stress, enhance comfort and enjoyment, facilitate positive emotional responses, and strengthen passengers' evaluations of their journeys. Recent airline and tourism studies increasingly suggest that customer experience represents a more immediate consequence of service encounters than traditional attitudinal outcomes such as satisfaction or loyalty (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024; Usun et al., 2024). Therefore, airline service quality is expected to contribute positively to the formation of customer experience.

H1: Airline Service Quality positively affects Customer Experience.

Digital Service Experience

The rapid digitalization of air transportation has fundamentally altered how passengers interact with airlines before, during, and after travel. Traditionally, airline service encounters were dominated by physical interactions involving ticketing offices, airport personnel, and cabin crews. Contemporary passenger journeys, however, increasingly involve digital touchpoints such as online reservations, mobile applications, self-check-in systems, automated customer support, social media communication, artificial intelligence

(AI)-enabled services, and personalized digital engagement platforms (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Kalogiannaki, 2025; Simarmata et al., 2025). Consequently, passengers' evaluations of airlines are no longer derived solely from physical service encounters but also from their experiences with technology-mediated services. Digital service experience refers to customers' overall cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses arising from interactions with digital service interfaces and technology-enabled service environments (Klaus & Maklan, 2013).

Recent airline studies consistently demonstrate the growing strategic role of digital technologies in shaping passenger perceptions and experiences. Self-service technologies have been shown to improve convenience, efficiency, autonomy, and flow experiences throughout the passenger journey (Duran et al., 2024; Simarmata et al., 2025). Similarly, research on E-CRM suggests that digitally supported relationship management enhances customer engagement, strengthens service interactions, and contributes to more favorable evaluations of airline services (Ali & Alfayez, 2024). Emerging technologies such as AI-powered customer support, intelligent automation, service robots, and predictive service systems have further expanded airlines' opportunities to personalize services and improve customer interactions (Goktas & Dirsehan, 2025; Hwang et al., 2024; Kalogiannaki, 2025; Sağbaş & Aydoğan, 2025). Collectively, these studies suggest that digitalization has become an essential component of service delivery rather than a supplementary operational tool.

Nevertheless, the literature reveals differing interpretations regarding the consequences of digital service adoption. Several studies primarily emphasize operational outcomes, arguing that digital technologies improve efficiency, reduce service effort, facilitate information access, and streamline customer processes (Kalogiannaki, 2025; Lee & Leung, 2024; Simarmata et al., 2025). In contrast, a growing body of research argues that digital interactions generate experiential value that extends beyond functional benefits. Social media communication, personalized digital engagement, intelligent recommendation systems, and responsive online service environments can influence customers' emotions, perceptions, and overall service evaluations (Bakir et al., 2025; Dike et al., 2024; Lutzky, 2024). Moreover, evidence from online review studies indicates that passengers increasingly evaluate airline performance through digitally mediated experiences that shape perceptions of service quality, value, and satisfaction (Dike et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2025). These findings suggest that digital technologies may affect travellers not merely by improving service efficiency but also by shaping the quality of experiences throughout the travel journey.

This perspective is particularly relevant in tourism contexts, where travel experiences increasingly begin long before physical consumption occurs. Searching for information, comparing alternatives, booking tickets, selecting ancillary services, checking travel updates, communicating with service providers, and sharing travel experiences are now largely performed through digital platforms. Consequently, digital service encounters constitute a substantial portion of the overall travel experience. When digital interactions are seamless, responsive, personalized, and reliable, passengers are more likely to develop positive evaluations of their journeys. Therefore, the digital service experience is expected to enhance the customer experience for airline passengers.

H2: Digital Service Experience positively affects Customer Experience.

Customer Experience

Customer experience has become a central construct in contemporary tourism and service research because it captures travellers' holistic evaluations of interactions across their consumption journeys. Unlike traditional approaches that emphasize isolated service encounters, customer experience encompasses the cumulative cognitive, emotional, sensory, and behavioural responses generated before, during, and after service consumption (Verhoef et al., 2009). Within the airline industry, customer experience encompasses a broad spectrum of interactions, including digital engagement, airport services, cabin experiences,

employee interactions, and post-flight communications. As competition increasingly shifts from service provision to experience creation, airlines are under growing pressure to deliver integrated experiences that extend beyond functional transportation services (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024).

This study adopts Customer Experience as the central explanatory mechanism within the proposed framework. This positioning is consistent with contemporary experience-based perspectives, which argue that customers do not respond directly to service attributes but rather to the experiences generated through interactions with those attributes (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009). In the airline context, passengers encounter multiple physical and digital touchpoints throughout their journeys. Service quality and digital interactions, therefore, become meaningful only when they are interpreted and integrated into an overall experience. Consequently, Customer Experience provides an appropriate theoretical bridge linking airline encounters with subsequent value perceptions, memorable experiences, and advocacy behaviors.

Recent empirical evidence suggests that customer experience serves as a more comprehensive predictor of consumer responses than traditional service evaluations. While airline research has historically emphasized service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025; Usun et al., 2024), emerging studies indicate that customers increasingly evaluate airlines through experiential outcomes generated throughout their journeys (Bakir et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024). Studies examining digital engagement, self-service technologies, customer interaction platforms, and personalized services consistently report that positive experiences strengthen customers' overall evaluations of service providers (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Duran et al., 2024; Hwang et al., 2024). This evidence suggests that customer experience functions as a critical mechanism through which both physical and digital service encounters influence subsequent judgments and behaviors.

One important consequence of customer experience concerns value creation. Although perceived value has traditionally been associated with customers' evaluations of benefits relative to sacrifices (Zeithaml, 1988), recent studies increasingly argue that value emerges from experiences rather than from service attributes alone. Positive experiences enhance enjoyment, convenience, comfort, emotional fulfillment, and perceived benefits, thereby increasing customers' assessments of overall value (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024). This perspective is consistent with service-dominant logic, which views value as co-created through interactions between customers and service providers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In airline settings, passengers who experience seamless, enjoyable journeys are expected to perceive greater value from their travel experiences.

Beyond value creation, customer experience may also contribute to outcomes that are particularly relevant within tourism contexts. Tourism scholars increasingly recognize that memorable experiences are among the strongest antecedents of favorable behavioral responses because they remain accessible in individuals' memories long after consumption has ended (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015). Experiences characterized by enjoyment, involvement, emotional intensity, and personal relevance are more likely to be remembered and shared with others. At the same time, customer experience has been linked to recommendation behavior, customer engagement, and positive word of mouth across various tourism and hospitality settings (Bakir et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024; Usun et al., 2024). In increasingly connected tourism environments, travelers frequently communicate their experiences through social media platforms, online reviews, and interpersonal networks. Consequently, positive customer experiences are expected not only to enhance value perceptions but also to foster memorable travel experiences and encourage advocacy behavior among airline passengers.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Customer Experience positively affects Perceived Value.

H4: Customer Experience positively affects Memorable Travel Experience.

H7: Customer Experience positively affects Travel Advocacy.

Perceived Value

Perceived value is widely recognized as a key determinant of consumer evaluations and behavioral intentions across service industries. Traditionally, value has been conceptualized as customers' overall assessment of the utility received from a product or service relative to the sacrifices incurred during consumption (Zeithaml, 1988). However, contemporary tourism research increasingly argues that perceived value extends beyond economic considerations and incorporates emotional, experiential, social, and symbolic benefits derived from consumption experiences (Prebensen et al., 2013; Williams & Soutar, 2009). In the airline context, passengers evaluate value not only through ticket prices and service performance but also through convenience, comfort, enjoyment, personalization, and the overall quality of the travel journey.

Recent studies consistently identify perceived value as a critical outcome of service encounters and an important predictor of future behavior. Existing airline research has largely focused on the influence of perceived value on satisfaction, loyalty, repurchase intentions, and customer retention (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025). Similarly, studies in tourism and hospitality settings report that travellers who perceive greater value are more likely to revisit destinations, recommend services, and engage in positive word-of-mouth behaviours (Božić et al., 2024; Williams & Soutar, 2009). While these findings demonstrate the importance of perceived value in shaping behavioral responses, they also reveal a dominant emphasis on attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, leaving other experiential consequences relatively underexplored.

An emerging stream of tourism research suggests that perceived value may play an important role in memory formation. Memory theories argue that experiences are more likely to be encoded and retained when individuals perceive them as personally meaningful, rewarding, and beneficial. Similarly, tourism scholars have noted that travellers tend to remember experiences that generate a strong sense of worth, emotional fulfillment, and personal significance (Prebensen et al., 2013; Williams & Soutar, 2009). From this perspective, perceived value represents more than a post-consumption evaluation; it contributes to the process through which experiences acquire meaning and become memorable. In airline settings, passengers who perceive substantial value from their journeys are more likely to retain positive memories and regard their experiences as memorable. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Perceived Value positively affects Travel Advocacy.

H8: Perceived Value positively affects Memorable Travel Experience.

Memorable Travel Experience

The concept of a memorable travel experience (MTE) has become increasingly prominent in tourism research because it captures experiences that are positively remembered and retrievable after the trip ends. Unlike ordinary experiences that gradually fade from memory, memorable travel experiences leave enduring impressions that continue to influence individuals' attitudes and future behaviors. Research has identified several dimensions associated with memorability, including novelty, meaningfulness, involvement, hedonism, local culture, refreshment, and knowledge acquisition (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015). Collectively, these dimensions explain why certain travel experiences remain salient long after consumption while others are quickly forgotten.

A substantial body of tourism literature has established the importance of memorable experiences in shaping post-consumption behaviors. Previous studies have shown that memorable travel experiences positively influence destination loyalty, revisit intentions, recommendation intentions, place attachment, and positive word of mouth (Kim, 2018; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2018). However, most

empirical investigations have focused on destinations, cultural attractions, hospitality services, festivals, and recreational activities. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to transportation experiences, despite their integral role within the tourist journey. This imbalance is surprising because transportation often constitutes one of the longest, most intensive, and emotionally significant stages of travel.

The limited attention given to commercial aviation is particularly notable given recent shifts in passenger expectations. Contemporary travelers increasingly seek enjoyable, seamless, personalized, and meaningful experiences throughout their journeys rather than merely efficient transportation. Airline experiences can generate anticipation, excitement, comfort, relaxation, social interaction, and emotional engagement, all of which possess characteristics associated with memorability. Moreover, digital technologies, personalized services, and enhanced customer experiences have expanded airlines' ability to create distinctive travel experiences that remain meaningful after the journey ends. However, existing airline studies continue to prioritize satisfaction and loyalty outcomes while largely overlooking memorability as an antecedent of traveler behavior.

From a behavioral perspective, memorable experiences are particularly important because individuals tend to share, discuss, and recommend experiences that remain vivid in memory. Experiences that are emotionally engaging and personally meaningful are more likely to be communicated through interpersonal recommendations, online reviews, social media posts, and other forms of advocacy behavior. In contemporary tourism environments, where user-generated content increasingly influences travel decisions, memorable experiences serve as a powerful organic promotional tool. Therefore, passengers who perceive their airline journey as memorable are expected to exhibit stronger advocacy behaviour toward the airline.

H6: A memorable travel experience positively affects Travel Advocacy.

Travel Advocacy

Travel advocacy has emerged as an increasingly important behavioral outcome within tourism and hospitality research. Traditionally, studies examining post-consumption behavior have focused on satisfaction, loyalty, revisit intention, and repurchase intention as indicators of favorable customer responses. While these constructs remain relevant, they primarily capture customers' intentions to maintain future relationships with service providers. Contemporary tourism environments, however, are characterized by extensive information sharing, user-generated content, and digital social interactions that enable travellers to influence others' decisions actively. Consequently, advocacy behavior has gained growing attention as a more proactive and influential form of customer engagement. Travel advocacy refers to travelers' willingness to voluntarily recommend, endorse, defend, or promote a service provider, destination, or travel experience through interpersonal communication, online reviews, social media engagement, and other forms of positive word-of-mouth (Rather, 2020; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). Accordingly, travel advocacy is conceptualized not merely as an extension of loyalty but as a distinct form of value co-creation through which passengers voluntarily contribute to an airline's reputation and influence future travel decisions.

Compared with loyalty, advocacy represents a stronger behavioral manifestation, as travelers not only maintain favorable attitudes toward a service provider but also actively promote it. Existing tourism studies indicate that advocacy behavior is associated with positive experiences, emotional attachment, perceived value, customer engagement, and memorable tourism experiences (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025; Rather, 2020; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). In increasingly competitive tourism markets, advocacy is particularly valuable because traveler-generated recommendations are often perceived as more credible than firm-generated communications. This is especially relevant in the airline industry, where online reviews, social media content, and peer recommendations frequently influence travel decisions. Despite its strategic importance, travel advocacy remains relatively underexplored within airline research, where loyalty and

repurchase intention continue to dominate as primary outcome variables (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025; Usun et al., 2024). By positioning travel advocacy as the outcome of airline service quality, digital service experience, customer experience, perceived value, and memorable travel experience, the present study extends existing airline literature beyond traditional loyalty-based frameworks. It aligns more closely with contemporary tourism behavior.

Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes air travel as an integral component of the tourism experience rather than merely a transportation service. Drawing upon contemporary tourism and service literature, the proposed framework integrates airline service quality, digital service experience, customer experience, perceived value, memorable travel experience, and travel advocacy within a single explanatory model. The model proposes that airline service quality and digital service experience function as key antecedents shaping passengers' customer experiences. As travelers increasingly interact with airlines through both physical and digital touchpoints, the quality of these interactions is expected to influence their overall evaluation of the travel journey. Customer experience subsequently serves as a central mechanism through which passengers develop value perceptions, form memorable travel experiences, and engage in advocacy behaviors.

Furthermore, the framework recognizes perceived value as an important outcome of the customer experience and a contributor to memorable travel experiences and travel advocacy. Consistent with tourism experience literature, experiences perceived as valuable are more likely to generate meaningful and memorable impressions that remain accessible in travelers' memories after consumption. These memorable experiences, in turn, are expected to stimulate advocacy behaviors, including recommendations, positive word of mouth, and voluntary promotion of airline services. Unlike traditional airline studies that primarily focus on satisfaction and loyalty, the present framework positions travel advocacy as the ultimate behavioral outcome. This perspective reflects the growing importance of user-generated content, peer influence, and digital communication in shaping tourism decisions. By integrating experiential, value-based, and behavioral perspectives, the proposed model provides a more comprehensive explanation of how airline experiences are transformed into advocacy behavior among contemporary travelers.

The framework extends Customer Experience Theory by positioning Customer Experience as the primary mechanism through which airline service encounters are transformed into higher-order tourism outcomes. Rather than treating service quality and digital service interactions as direct predictors of behavioral responses, the model assumes that passengers interpret these encounters through experiential evaluations, which subsequently shape value perceptions, memory formation, and advocacy behavior.

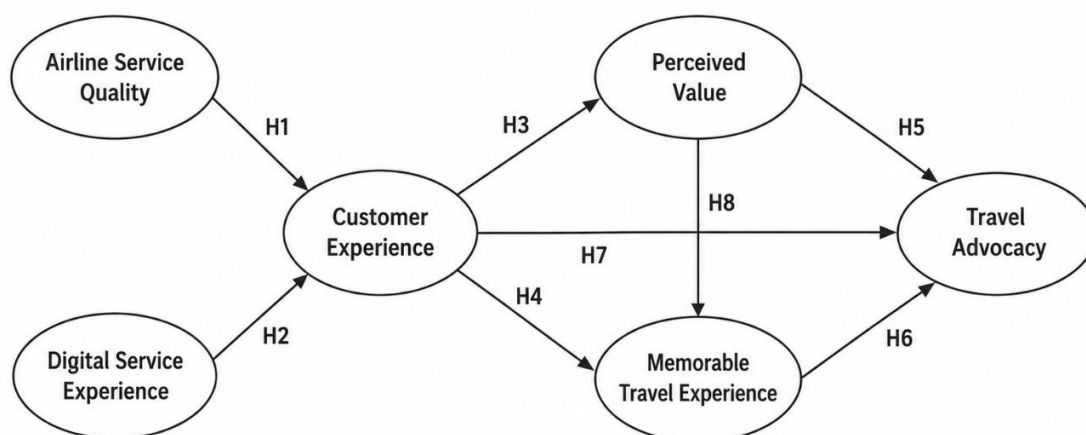


Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework

Source: Research Data, 2025

The proposed research framework consists of eight hypotheses, as summarised below:

- H1: Airline Service Quality positively affects Customer Experience.
- H2: Digital Service Experience positively affects Customer Experience.
- H3: Customer Experience positively affects Perceived Value.
- H4: Customer Experience positively affects Memorable Travel Experience.
- H5: Perceived Value positively affects Travel Advocacy.
- H6: A memorable travel experience positively affects Travel Advocacy.
- H7: Customer Experience positively affects Travel Advocacy.
- H8: Perceived Value positively affects Memorable Travel Experience.

C. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationships among Airline Service Quality, Digital Service Experience, Customer Experience, Perceived Value, Memorable Travel Experience, and Travel Advocacy. The target population comprised individuals who had used commercial airlines for leisure travel within the previous 12 months. To ensure respondents could adequately evaluate both physical and digital service encounters, only passengers who had purchased airline tickets independently and completed at least one flight during the reference period were included. Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire using purposive sampling. The survey link was distributed through travel-related online communities, social media platforms, and personal networks. Screening questions were included at the beginning of the questionnaire to ensure that respondents had completed at least one leisure-oriented airline trip within the previous 12 months and had experience using the airline's digital services during their trip. A total of 527 responses were received, of which 500 met the screening criteria and were retained for analysis. Given the complexity of the proposed model and the prediction-oriented nature of the study, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was selected as the analytical approach. PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for examining complex relationships among latent variables while simultaneously assessing measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2022). The final sample size exceeded the minimum requirements for PLS-SEM applications and was deemed sufficient to yield stable parameter estimates and adequate statistical power.

All constructs were operationalized as reflective measures and adapted from previously validated scales. Because the original scales were developed in different service contexts, minor wording modifications were made to align the measurement items with airline travel experiences while preserving their underlying conceptual meanings. Airline Service Quality was measured using items adapted from airline service quality and transportation service studies emphasizing reliability, responsiveness, employee competence, service consistency, and overall service performance (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Digital Service Experience was operationalized using indicators capturing the effectiveness, convenience, responsiveness, personalization, and usability of digital service interactions, adapted from studies on online customer experience, airline digitalization, self-service technologies, and electronic customer relationship management (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Duran et al., 2024; Klaus & Maklan, 2013; Simarmata et al., 2025). Customer Experience was measured using items reflecting passengers' overall cognitive and emotional evaluations of their airline journey, adapted from (Verhoef et al., 2009) and subsequently refined using airline and tourism experience studies (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024).

Perceived value was assessed using indicators capturing the extent to which passengers perceived the airline experience as beneficial, worthwhile, and valuable relative to the resources invested, drawing on

(Zeithaml, 1988), Williams and Soutar (2009), and recent tourism value studies (Božić et al., 2024). Memorable Travel Experience was measured using items adapted from the Memorable Tourism Experience scale developed by Kim et al. (2012), focusing on meaningfulness, memorability, emotional significance, and the enduring impression of the airline travel experience. Travel Advocacy was operationalized through indicators reflecting travellers' willingness to recommend, endorse, discuss positively, and promote the airline to others, adapted from tourism advocacy and customer engagement research (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025; Rather, 2020; Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). All measurement items were contextualized to the airline setting while preserving their original conceptual meanings.

Responses were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Before large-scale data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by three scholars with expertise in tourism marketing and consumer behavior to evaluate content validity, clarity, and contextual appropriateness. Minor revisions were subsequently made to improve consistency in wording and item readability. Structural model assessment included collinearity diagnostics, path coefficient estimation, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapping procedures to test the significance of hypothesized relationships. This procedure follows current recommendations for PLS-SEM applications in tourism, hospitality, and service research (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1. Measurement Sources

Construct	Main Sources
Airline Service Quality	Parasuraman et al. (1988); Chand et al. (2024); Gurler (2025)
Digital Service Experience	Klaus (2013); Ali & Alfayez (2024); Simarmata et al. (2025); Duran et al. (2024)
Customer Experience	Verhoef et al. (2009); Božić et al. (2024); Abdul Rahman et al. (2025)
Perceived Value	Zeithaml (1988); Williams & Soutar (2009); Božić et al. (2024)
Memorable Travel Experience	Kim et al. (2012); Chandralal & Valenzuela (2015)
Travel Advocacy	Rather et al. (2019); Rather & Hollebeek (2021); Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021)

Source: Research Data, 2025

D. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Respondent Profile

A total of 500 valid responses were included in the analysis. The sample exhibited a balanced gender distribution, comprising 251 female respondents (50.2%) and 249 male respondents (49.8%). Most participants belonged to the economically active age groups, with respondents aged 25–34 years accounting for the largest proportion of the sample (38.6%), followed by those aged 35–44 years (23.0%) and 18–24 years (19.6%). Participants aged 45–54 years represented 11.4% of the sample, while those aged 55 years and above accounted for 7.4%. In terms of educational attainment, bachelor's degree holders formed the largest group (39.8%), followed by high school graduates (22.6%), master's degree holders (20.0%), diploma graduates (14.0%), and doctoral degree holders (3.6%). Regarding occupation, private-sector employees constituted the largest segment (35.2%), followed by professionals (17.2%), entrepreneurs (16.2%), students (14.6%), government employees (12.4%), and other occupations (4.4%).

The geographical profile of respondents reflects the concentration of air travel demand within Indonesia's major population centers. More than half of the respondents resided in Java (55.0%), followed by Sumatra (18.2%), Kalimantan (11.0%), Bali and Nusa Tenggara (7.4%), Sulawesi (6.6%), and Papua–Maluku (1.8%). The sample was predominantly urban, with 64.8% of respondents living in urban areas, 22.2% in suburban areas, and 13.0% in rural areas. This distribution is consistent with the spatial concentration of commercial aviation infrastructure and tourism mobility patterns across Indonesia, where urban residents generally enjoy greater access to air transportation services and digital travel platforms.

Regarding travel characteristics, leisure travel was the primary purpose of air travel among respondents (69.0%), followed by business travel (21.0%) and visits to friends and relatives (10.0%). Most respondents reported relatively moderate flight activity, with 39.4% taking one to two flights annually and 34.0% flying three to five times per year. More frequent travelers, comprising those taking six to ten flights annually and more than ten flights annually, accounted for 17.2% and 9.4% of the sample, respectively. Domestic travel dominated the sample (59.0%), while 26.2% reported experience with both domestic and international flights, and 14.8% primarily undertook international travel. These characteristics suggest that respondents possessed sufficient exposure to airline services to provide informed evaluations of both physical and digital service encounters.

The psychographic profile further indicates a travel-oriented and digitally capable sample. Respondents reported relatively high levels of technology readiness ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 0.99$), suggesting familiarity with technology-enabled travel services such as online booking platforms, mobile applications, and self-service systems. Travel involvement was also relatively high ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 0.89$), indicating that travel plays a meaningful role in respondents' lifestyles and decision-making processes. Similarly, experience-seeking tendencies recorded the highest average score among the psychographic variables ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 0.87$), indicating a strong inclination to pursue enjoyable, novel, and memorable travel experiences. Collectively, these characteristics indicate that the sample is well aligned with the study's objectives, as respondents possess both experiential background and technological engagement necessary to evaluate airline service quality, digital service experiences, and their influence on travel advocacy.

Measurement Model Assessment

Before testing the structural relationships, the measurement properties of the proposed model were evaluated to ensure adequate reliability and validity. Following the recommendations of (Hair et al., 2022), the assessment focused on indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and overall model fit. As all constructs were operationalized as reflective measures, indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c), and average variance extracted (AVE) were examined. Table 1 shows that all indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.724 to 0.904. These results indicate that each indicator contributed substantially to its respective latent construct. Internal consistency reliability was also satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.843 to 0.916, while composite reliability values ranged from 0.889 to 0.937, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.70 and remaining below the upper threshold of 0.95. Furthermore, the AVE values ranged from 0.616 to 0.763, indicating that each construct explained more than half of the variance in its indicators. Collectively, these findings provide evidence of adequate indicator reliability, internal consistency, and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Indicator Loadings, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Measurement Item	Load.	α	CR	AVE
Airline Service Quality (ASQ)	ASQ1	The airline consistently delivers on its promises.	0.796	0.862	0.900	0.643
	ASQ2	Airline employees provide services reliably.	0.784			
	ASQ3	The airline responds promptly to passenger needs and requests.	0.775			
	ASQ4	I found the airline's service to be reliable throughout my journey.	0.840			
	ASQ5	Overall, the airline provides high-quality services.	0.814			
	CE1	My overall experience with this airline was enjoyable.	0.887	0.916	0.937	0.749

Construct	Item	Measurement Item	Load.	α	CR	AVE
Customer Experience (CE)	CE2	The airline provided a positive travel experience.	0.858	0.843	0.889	0.616
	CE3	Interactions with the airline met my expectations.	0.836			
	CE4	I had a pleasant experience throughout my journey.	0.890			
	CE5	Overall, I am satisfied with my experience with this airline.	0.856			
Digital Service Experience (DSE)	DSE1	The airline's digital platforms are easy to use.	0.851	0.905	0.930	0.726
	DSE2	The airline's digital services make travel planning convenient.	0.762			
	DSE3	The airline provides useful information through its digital channels.	0.754			
	DSE4	The airline's digital services respond efficiently to my needs.	0.724			
	DSE5	Overall, I had a positive experience using the airline's digital services.	0.824			
Memorable Travel Experience (MTE)	MTE1	My experience with this airline is memorable.	0.792	0.861	0.906	0.707
	MTE2	This airline experience will remain in my memory for a long time.	0.841			
	MTE3	The experience was meaningful to me.	0.887			
	MTE4	I can easily recall my experience with this airline.	0.858			
	MTE5	The experience left a lasting impression on me.	0.879			
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	Using this airline provides good value for money.	0.848	0.896	0.928	0.763
	PV2	The benefits received from this airline exceed the costs incurred.	0.822			
	PV3	Overall, this airline offers valuable travel experiences.	0.879			
	PV4	Choosing this airline was a worthwhile decision.	0.812			
Travel Advocacy (TA)	TA1	I would recommend this airline to others.	0.858	0.896	0.928	0.763
	TA2	I would say positive things about this airline.	0.904			
	TA3	I would encourage others to use this airline.	0.888			
	TA4	I would actively promote this airline when discussing travel options.	0.844			

Source: Research Data, 2025

To establish discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was employed. Recent PLS-SEM literature recommends HTMT as a more sensitive criterion than the traditional Fornell–Larcker approach for detecting potential violations of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2016). As shown in Table 2, all HTMT values were substantially below the conservative threshold of 0.85. The highest HTMT value was observed between Perceived Value and Travel Advocacy (0.570), followed by Memorable Travel Experience and Travel Advocacy (0.615). These values indicate that each construct captures a distinct conceptual domain and that discriminant validity is satisfactorily established.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Assessment (HTMT)

Construct	ASQ	CE	DSE	MTE	PV
CE	0.499	—			
DSE	0.317	0.505	—		

MTE	0.301	0.597	0.170	—	
PV	0.262	0.636	0.246	0.551	—
TA	0.246	0.563	0.257	0.615	0.570

Source: Research Data, 2025

Finally, the overall model fit was evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), normed fit index (NFI), and discrepancy measures. The SRMR values for both the saturated (0.038) and estimated (0.048) models were well below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating a satisfactory approximation between the empirical and model-implied covariance matrices. Likewise, the NFI values exceeded 0.90 for both model specifications, suggesting acceptable model fit. The low discrepancy values observed for d_ULS and d_G further support the adequacy of the measurement model. Taken together, the results provide strong evidence that the measurement model possesses satisfactory psychometric properties and is suitable for subsequent structural model assessment.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.038	0.048
d_ULS	0.601	0.922
d_G	0.238	0.250
Chi-square	707.339	734.052
NFI	0.917	0.914

Source: Research Data, 2025

Structural Model Assessment

Following confirmation of the measurement model's adequacy, the structural model was evaluated by examining collinearity, explanatory power, predictive relevance, effect sizes, and the significance of the hypothesized relationships. Consistent with current PLS-SEM recommendations, variance inflation factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and bootstrapping results were used to assess the quality and predictive capability of the proposed model (Hair et al., 2022). Before interpreting the structural relationships, collinearity among predictor constructs was examined. As shown in Table 3, all inner VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 1.468, well below the conservative threshold of 3.3 and substantially below the maximum acceptable value of 5.0. These results indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern and that the estimated path coefficients are unlikely to be distorted by excessive correlations among predictor constructs.

Table 5. Collinearity Assessment

Endogenous Construct	Predictor	VIF
Customer Experience	Airline Service Quality	1.081
Customer Experience	Digital Service Experience	1.081
Perceived Value	Customer Experience	1.000
Memorable Travel Experience	Customer Experience	1.468
Memorable Travel Experience	Perceived Value	1.468
Travel Advocacy	Memorable Travel Experience	1.315
Travel Advocacy	Perceived Value	1.315

Source: Research Data, 2025

The model explains a meaningful proportion of variance across all endogenous constructs. As reported in Table 4, the model accounts for 31.5% of the variance in Customer Experience, 31.9% in Perceived Value, 34.5% in Memorable Travel Experience, and 37.9% in Travel Advocacy. According to commonly accepted benchmarks, these values indicate moderate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2022). The highest explanatory power was observed for Travel Advocacy, suggesting that the combination of perceived value and a memorable travel experience provides a substantial explanation of travellers' advocacy intentions. Predictive relevance was further assessed using the blindfolding procedure. All Q^2 values exceeded zero,

ranging from 0.223 to 0.285, thereby confirming that the model possesses satisfactory predictive relevance for all endogenous constructs.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Construct	R^2	Q^2
Customer Experience	0.315	0.233
Perceived Value	0.319	0.223
Memorable Travel Experience	0.345	0.247
Travel Advocacy	0.379	0.285

Source: Research Data, 2025

The significance of the proposed relationships was examined using a bootstrapping procedure. The results presented in Table 5 and Figure 2 indicate that all hypothesized relationships are positive and statistically significant at the 0.001 level. Airline Service Quality positively affects Customer Experience ($\beta = 0.350$, $t = 9.317$), supporting H1. Likewise, Digital Service Experience positively influences Customer Experience ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 9.712$), supporting H2. Together, these findings suggest that travelers evaluate their airline experiences through both traditional service encounters and technology-enabled interactions.

Customer Experience emerged as a central mechanism within the proposed framework. It significantly influences Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.565$, $t = 18.918$) and Memorable Travel Experience ($\beta = 0.393$, $t = 9.778$). The relationship between Customer Experience and Perceived Value was the strongest path in the model, underscoring the role of experiential evaluations in shaping travellers' value perceptions. Furthermore, Perceived Value positively affects both Memorable Travel Experience ($\beta = 0.268$, $t = 6.831$) and Travel Advocacy ($\beta = 0.303$, $t = 7.535$). Memorable Travel Experience also exerts a significant positive effect on Travel Advocacy ($\beta = 0.408$, $t = 10.540$), representing the strongest predictor of advocacy behavior in the model. Collectively, these findings indicate that advocacy is driven not only by perceived benefits but also by the extent to which airline experiences become memorable and personally meaningful.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	ASQ $\rightarrow$ CE	0.350	9.317	<0.001	Supported
H2	DSE $\rightarrow$ CE	0.354	9.712	<0.001	Supported
H3	CE $\rightarrow$ PV	0.565	18.918	<0.001	Supported
H4	CE $\rightarrow$ MTE	0.393	9.778	<0.001	Supported
H5	PV $\rightarrow$ TA	0.303	7.535	<0.001	Supported
H6	MTE $\rightarrow$ TA	0.408	10.540	<0.001	Supported
H8	PV $\rightarrow$ MTE	0.268	6.831	<0.001	Supported

Source: Research Data, 2025

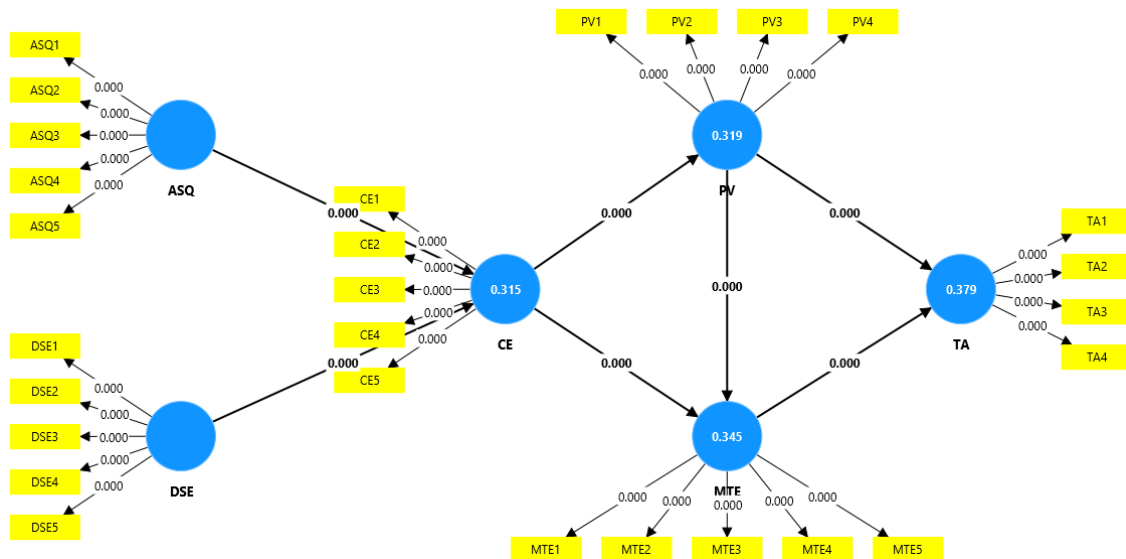


Figure 2. Evaluated Model

Source: Research Data, 2025

To complement the significance testing, effect sizes were examined to determine the substantive contribution of each predictor. As shown in Table 6, Customer Experience exhibits a large effect on Perceived Value ($f^2 = 0.468$), underscoring its pivotal role within the model. Moderate effects were observed for Memorable Travel Experience on Travel Advocacy ($f^2 = 0.203$), Airline Service Quality on Customer Experience ($f^2 = 0.165$), Digital Service Experience on Customer Experience ($f^2 = 0.169$), and Customer Experience on Memorable Travel Experience ($f^2 = 0.161$). In contrast, the effects of Perceived Value on Memorable Travel Experience ($f^2 = 0.074$) and Travel Advocacy ($f^2 = 0.113$) were comparatively smaller, although still statistically significant. These results reinforce the notion that customer experience and memorability are the primary drivers of advocacy behavior among airline passengers.

Table 6. Effect Size Assessment (f^2)

Relationship	f^2	Magnitude
ASQ → CE	0.165	Medium
DSE → CE	0.169	Medium
CE → PV	0.468	Large
CE → MTE	0.161	Medium
PV → MTE	0.074	Small
PV → TA	0.113	Small
MTE → TA	0.203	Medium

Source: Research Data, 2025

Overall, the structural model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory and predictive capabilities. The results support all proposed hypotheses and reveal a coherent pathway through which airline service quality and digital service experience shape customer experience, subsequently enhancing perceived value and memorable travel experiences that ultimately encourage travelers to advocate for the airline.

Discussion

Experience Formation

The findings underscore the central role of customer experience in shaping how airline passengers interpret and evaluate their journeys. Both Airline Service Quality and Digital Service Experience exerted significant, nearly identical effects on Customer Experience ($\beta = 0.350$ and $\beta = 0.354$, respectively), suggesting that travellers no longer separate physical and digital encounters when assessing an airline.

Instead, experiences are formed through a sequence of interconnected touchpoints that span booking, pre-departure communication, airport services, in-flight interactions, and post-travel engagement. This result aligns with recent airline and tourism studies arguing that service experiences emerge from the integration of physical and technology-mediated encounters rather than from operational performance alone (Abdul Rahman et al., 2025; Bakir et al., 2025; Božić et al., 2024).

An interesting pattern emerges from the comparable effect sizes of Airline Service Quality ($f^2 = 0.165$) and Digital Service Experience ($f^2 = 0.169$). Historically, service quality dominated airline research, with digital channels viewed primarily as supporting mechanisms. The present findings suggest a different reality. For contemporary travellers, mobile applications, self-service technologies, online information systems, and digital communication channels contribute almost as much to experience formation as traditional service encounters do. This observation reflects broader changes in tourism consumption, in which travellers increasingly interact with service providers through digital interfaces long before physical consumption occurs (Ali & Alfayez, 2024; Duran et al., 2024; Kalogiannaki, 2025). Consequently, airlines seeking to enhance customer experience should regard digital touchpoints as strategic experience platforms rather than operational utilities.

The results further demonstrate that Customer Experience serves as the primary mechanism through which airline encounters generate value. The relationship between Customer Experience and Perceived Value was the strongest in the model ($\beta = 0.565$; $f^2 = 0.468$), indicating that travellers derive value more from the overall quality of their journeys than from isolated service attributes. This finding supports recent developments in tourism research that conceptualize value as an outcome of experience co-creation rather than a simple evaluation of benefits relative to costs (Prebensen et al., 2013; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In the airline context, passengers appear to evaluate value through the cumulative experience of convenience, comfort, reliability, and emotional satisfaction generated throughout the travel process.

Beyond supporting prior findings, the results contribute to Customer Experience Theory by demonstrating that customer experience functions as an interpretive mechanism rather than merely an outcome of service encounters. In the proposed framework, passengers do not respond directly to airline service quality or digital service interactions. Instead, these encounters are filtered through experiential evaluations that subsequently shape value perceptions and behavioral outcomes. This finding supports the view that customer experience occupies a central position within contemporary service systems, particularly in tourism contexts where multiple touchpoints collectively shape travellers' evaluations of a journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2009).

Value and Memorability

One of the study's most notable findings concerns the pathways leading to a memorable travel experience. Customer Experience exerted a substantial influence on memorability ($\beta = 0.393$), while Perceived Value also contributed positively, albeit with a smaller effect ($\beta = 0.268$). Together, these results suggest that memorable airline experiences emerge from both experiential and evaluative processes. Travellers are more likely to remember journeys that are enjoyable, seamless, and emotionally engaging, but they are also influenced by how worthwhile and meaningful those journeys are perceived to be.

This finding extends the literature on memorable tourism experiences, which has traditionally focused on destinations, attractions, events, and hospitality settings (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2015). Transportation services have received comparatively limited attention despite constituting a substantial portion of many travel experiences. The present results indicate that airline encounters can also become memorable tourism experiences when they successfully combine functional excellence with experiential value. Such a perspective broadens the conceptual boundaries of memorable tourism experiences and

reinforces the argument that air travel should be viewed as an integral component of the tourism experience rather than merely a means of reaching a destination.

The relatively smaller effect of Perceived Value on Memorable Travel Experience compared with that of Customer Experience is also theoretically meaningful. While value contributes to memorability, memorable experiences appear to be driven primarily by what travelers feel and experience rather than by what they cognitively evaluate. This observation is consistent with research suggesting that emotionally rich experiences are more likely to remain accessible in memory than experiences evaluated solely on utilitarian grounds (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2025). The findings further suggest that value contributes to memorability by increasing the perceived significance of travel experiences. When passengers perceive that the benefits derived from a journey exceed the resources invested, the experience becomes more meaningful and therefore more likely to be retained in memory.

Advocacy

The results reveal that a combination of experiential, evaluative, and memory-based mechanisms shapes Travel Advocacy. Memorable Travel Experience emerged as the strongest predictor of advocacy behavior ($\beta = 0.408$), followed by Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.303$). These findings suggest that travellers are more willing to recommend and promote airlines when their experiences remain vivid and meaningful after the journey ends. The importance of memorability is particularly relevant in contemporary tourism environments characterized by extensive information sharing through social media platforms, online reviews, and digital communities.

The dominance of Memorable Travel Experience over Perceived Value provides an important contribution to airline research. Traditional airline studies often treat satisfaction, loyalty, or repurchase intention as the primary behavioural outcomes (Chand et al., 2024; Gurler, 2025). The present findings indicate that advocacy follows a different logic. Travelers do not necessarily recommend airlines simply because they perceive good value; they recommend airlines because they have experienced something worth sharing. This distinction is particularly important in an era where user-generated content exerts considerable influence on travel decisions.

Taken together, the findings support a broader shift from loyalty-centred to advocacy-oriented perspectives. Loyalty reflects a customer's intention to maintain a relationship with a service provider, whereas advocacy involves actively promoting that provider to others (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). In this study, advocacy emerged not as a direct consequence of service quality but as the culmination of a chain of experiences involving customer experience, perceived value, and memorability. Such a pathway highlights the importance of designing airline journeys that are not only efficient and reliable but also meaningful enough to motivate voluntary recommendation behavior. This finding reinforces the notion that advocacy represents a distinct behavioural outcome rather than a simple extension of loyalty, as it requires travellers to create value for service providers through recommendation and promotion actively.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature in three important ways. First, it extends Customer Experience Theory by positioning customer experience as the primary mechanism linking airline encounters with value creation, memory formation, and advocacy behavior. While previous airline studies have typically examined service quality as a direct antecedent of satisfaction and loyalty, the present findings demonstrate that passengers interpret both physical and digital service encounters through experiential evaluations before forming subsequent judgments and behaviors. Second, the study broadens airline research by integrating digital service experience and traditional service quality within a single framework, reflecting the

increasingly hybrid nature of contemporary travel experiences. Third, it advances tourism experience research by showing that airline journeys themselves can generate memorable travel experiences that subsequently stimulate advocacy behavior, thereby extending memorability research beyond destinations and hospitality settings.

Managerial Implications

The results provide several implications for airline managers. First, investments in service quality should be accompanied by equal attention to digital service environments. Improvements in mobile applications, self-service technologies, online communication systems, and personalised digital interactions are likely to yield benefits comparable to those from traditional service enhancements. Second, customer experience should be managed across the entire travel journey rather than at isolated touchpoints. Airlines that successfully integrate physical and digital interactions can create more coherent and enjoyable passenger experiences, thereby increasing perceived value and memorability.

Third, airlines should actively design moments that enhance memorability throughout the passenger journey. These may include personalized communications, proactive service recovery, seamless digital support, meaningful interactions with frontline employees, and destination-related content that enriches anticipation and post-travel reflection. Such initiatives may strengthen passengers' emotional engagement and increase their willingness to share experiences with others. Finally, managers should recognize that advocacy is not merely a by-product of customer satisfaction. In an era dominated by user-generated content and peer-to-peer communication, advocacy has become a strategic asset that can amplify brand visibility and influence future travellers. Efforts aimed at creating memorable experiences may therefore generate benefits that extend well beyond immediate customer retention and repurchase outcomes.

E. CONCLUSION

This study examined how airline service quality and digital service experience contribute to travel advocacy through customer experience, perceived value, and memorable travel experience. The findings demonstrate that customer experience occupies a central position within the proposed framework. Both airline service quality and digital service experience significantly enhance customer experience, which subsequently strengthens perceived value and memorable travel experience. The results further reveal that a memorable travel experience is the strongest determinant of travel advocacy, followed by perceived value. These findings suggest that travellers are more likely to recommend and promote an airline when their journeys leave lasting, meaningful impressions rather than merely satisfying functional expectations.

The study contributes to the growing convergence between tourism experience research and airline service literature. While previous airline studies have predominantly focused on service quality, satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase intentions, the present research advances a broader perspective by positioning travel advocacy as the ultimate behavioral outcome. The findings indicate that the pathway from service encounters to advocacy is neither immediate nor exclusively transactional. Instead, airlines build advocacy through a sequence of experiential and value-generating mechanisms that culminate in memorable travel experiences. By integrating physical service encounters, digital interactions, experiential evaluations, and post-consumption behavioral responses within a single framework, this study offers a more comprehensive explanation of how contemporary travelers evaluate and communicate their airline experiences.

The findings also carry important managerial implications. Airlines should recognize that competitive advantage increasingly depends on their ability to orchestrate integrated experiences across physical and digital touchpoints. Investments in operational reliability, employee service performance, and digital service platforms should be viewed as complementary rather than independent initiatives. More importantly,

managers should move beyond traditional performance metrics and focus on creating experiences that passengers are willing to remember and share. Personalized services, seamless travel processes, responsive digital interfaces, and emotionally engaging interactions can strengthen perceived value and increase the likelihood of positive advocacy. In an environment where travel decisions are strongly influenced by user-generated content and peer recommendations, advocacy represents a valuable strategic asset that extends the impact of service delivery beyond the immediate travel experience.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, limiting the ability to capture changes in travellers' perceptions over time. Future studies may benefit from longitudinal approaches that examine how experiences evolve before, during, and after travel. Second, the analysis was conducted at an aggregate level without distinguishing between full-service and low-cost carriers. Given the differences in service configurations and passenger expectations, future research could explore whether the proposed relationships vary across airline business models. Third, although the study focused on airline experiences within the broader tourism journey, other contextual factors, such as destination characteristics, travel motivations, and cultural backgrounds, were not incorporated into the model. Future research may extend the framework by examining these factors to provide a more nuanced understanding of travel advocacy within diverse tourism settings. Ultimately, the findings reinforce the notion that air travel is not merely a means of transportation but a meaningful component of the tourism experience, shaping how travellers perceive, remember, and advocate for the services they consume.

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