

FROM SERVICE QUALITY TO LOYALTY: PASSENGER ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND TRUST MODEL IN THE THAI NATIONAL AIR CARRIER

Kanchanawan WIENGCHARORN¹, Bharis HONGSAKUL¹, Dusit SIRISOMBAT¹,
Tasnawadee PAIROJ-BORIBOON¹, Arunya PISITKASEM¹, Pacharawan SIRISOMBAT¹,
and Pongsakan KAEWMANAPRASERT¹

¹ Department of Aviation Business and Transport Management, Rangsit University,
Thailand; kanchanawan.w65@rsu.ac.th (Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between airline service quality, passenger engagement, airline brand trust, and airline brand loyalty, with the goal of understanding how service experience and engagement influence customer loyalty and repeated airline selection. A quantitative research design was employed, gathering data from 400 passengers who had used Thai commercial airlines within the past 12 months through an online questionnaire. Structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze causal relationships among the variables. The findings reveal that airline service quality is a critical factor that directly influences both airline brand trust and loyalty. Passenger engagement such as interactions with service touchpoints, receiving relevant information, and engaging through digital channels also significantly contributes to strengthening airline brand trust, which in turn is a key driver of long-term loyalty behavior. Moreover, airline brand trust functions as an important mechanism between airline service quality and passenger engagement, ultimately enhancing airline brand loyalty. In conclusion, the study highlights that continuously improving service quality, elevating the passenger experience, and reinforcing brand trust are essential strategies for fostering airline loyalty and enhancing competitive advantage in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving airline market.

Keywords: Airline Service Quality, Passenger Engagement, Airline Brand Trust, Airline Brand Loyalty, Thai National Air Carrier

CITATION INFORMATION: Wiengcharorn, K., Hongsakul, B., Sirisombat, D., Pairoj-boriboon, T., Pisitkasem, A., Sirisombat, P., & Kaewmanaprasert, P. (2025). From Service Quality to Loyalty: Passenger Engagement and Brand Trust Model in the Thai National Air Carrier. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(12), 63.

INTRODUCTION

The global airline industry has entered a period of unprecedented transformation, shaped by intensified market competition, increasingly sophisticated passenger expectations, and rapid technological disruption. Airlines are now compelled to redesign their service strategies across all stages of the travel journey—before, during, and after the flight—to deliver a coherent and meaningful passenger experience. Within this context, Airline Service Quality (ASQ) emerges as a central mechanism through which airlines differentiate themselves, cultivate perceived value, and ultimately secure sustained competitive advantage. Prior research consistently highlights that high service quality contributes not only to satisfaction but also to perceptions of reliability, emotional comfort, and long-term loyalty toward the airline (Wang, 2023; Badrillah et al., 2025; Mo & Nuangjamnong, 2023).

However, in the era of digital connectivity, traditional service encounters alone can no longer fully account for how loyalty is formed. Passengers today are embedded within a wider digital ecosystem, interacting with airlines through mobile applications, loyalty programs, virtual customer service, targeted communication, and social media engagement. These evolving touchpoints give rise to the importance of Passenger Engagement (PEN), which reflects both behavioral and psychological connections passengers develop with the airline. The literature in service marketing suggests that engaged customers are more likely to form favorable brand attitudes, develop trust, and maintain ongoing relationships with service providers (So et al., 2020; Kartanegara & Keni, 2022). In the airline sector specifically, engagement extends beyond transactions; it encompasses how passengers interpret digital experiences, evaluate service consistency, and form expectations for future travel (Ali et al., 2025).

Airline Brand Trust (ABT) further deepens this relational process by capturing passengers' confidence in the airline's professionalism, operational safety, and reliability. Trust serves as a stabilizing psychological force that reduces the perceived risks associated with air travel—an industry characterized by high involvement and limited tolerance for service failure. Empirical evidence demonstrates that brand trust not only directly encourages repeat patronage but also mediates the effects of service quality and engagement, reinforcing a cycle of confidence and loyalty (Siqueira et al., 2023; Ragab et al., 2024). For airlines, cultivating trust becomes not merely a marketing objective but a strategic necessity influencing long term brand resilience.

Despite the growing body of literature, an important gap remains: many existing studies treat service quality, engagement, and trust as isolated predictors of loyalty without examining how they interact to form a coherent psychological process. Prior work often focuses on the direct effects while overlooking the mechanisms that explain how passengers progress from experiencing service quality to forming attitudes and ultimately committing to loyalty behaviors (Bakır et al., 2024). As a result, the theoretical understanding of airline loyalty remains fragmented.

In light of this gap, the present study explicitly positions its contribution in clarifying these mechanisms by integrating all three constructs within a unified framework. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of both direct and indirect pathways, allowing for a more complete understanding of how service experiences translate into loyalty. This contribution advances theoretical insight by linking fragmented findings into a cohesive model while offering practical guidance for airlines seeking strengthening engagement and trust-building strategies. Additionally, this clarification helps reduce conceptual redundancy and enhances the coherence of the introduction, in line with academic writing standards.

To address these issues, the present study proposes an integrated causal model that brings together airline service quality, passenger engagement, brand trust, and airline brand loyalty within a unified analytical framework. By employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study seeks to uncover both the direct and indirect pathways that shape loyalty and provide a more comprehensive explanation of how psychological processes interact with service experiences. Such an understanding is crucial not only for academic advancement but also for guiding airlines in designing strategies that support sustainable customer retention, operational alignment, and long-term business growth.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to examine how service quality, passenger engagement, and brand trust collectively influence airline brand loyalty, thereby providing a more complete perspective on the determinants of loyalty in today's highly dynamic and competitive airline environment. The overall objective of this study is to examine how airline service quality, passenger engagement, and brand trust interact to influence airline brand loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEWS AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Airline Service Quality (ASQ)

Airline service quality refers to passengers' perceptions of service excellence across all stages of the travel journey. This includes punctuality, cabin cleanliness, seating comfort, clarity of information, staff attentiveness, and the overall reliability of ground and in-flight processes. Prior studies identify service quality as a central determinant of passenger satisfaction and intentions to reuse the same airline (Wang, 2023).

Recent evidence in airline research further shows that passengers' evaluations of service quality are strongly associated with positive attitudes and behavioral outcomes such as perceived value, brand trust, and long-term loyalty (Badrillah et al., 2025; Bakır et al., 2024). Within the aviation sector, characterized by high involvement and risk—perceptions of high service quality play a decisive role in shaping the passenger experience.

Moreover, empirical work indicates that when passengers perceive an airline's service as consistently high quality, they are more likely to express satisfaction, form favorable brand judgements, and develop trust in the airline (Wang, 2023; Siqueira et al., 2023). These positive perceptions have been shown to strengthen loyalty and contribute to a more positive brand image (Badrillah et al., 2025; Bakır et al., 2024).

However, prior studies report variations in how service quality influences passenger outcomes across different airline contexts, suggesting inconsistent findings and a need for further research on how digital service elements shape quality perceptions.

H1: Airline service quality (ASQ) positively influences airline brand loyalty (ABL).

H2: Airline service quality (ASQ) positively influences airline brand trust (ABT).

Passenger Engagement (PEN)

Passenger engagement encompasses the level of interaction, emotional connection, and behavioral involvement passengers demonstrate toward an airline across physical and digital touchpoints. Engagement may arise through travel experiences, participation in loyalty programs, interactions on social media, or the use of airline mobile applications. Research in services marketing identifies engagement as a key driver of stronger customer-brand relationships and long-term loyalty formation (So et al., 2020).

Studies within the Asian airline context further show that engaged passengers—those who follow airline content, browse reviews, earn miles, or frequently use digital platforms—tend to demonstrate higher levels of brand connection and trust (Kartanegara & Keni, 2022; Ali et al., 2025). Engagement has also been shown to predict repeat usage, positive recommendations, and strengthened intentions to remain with the same airline. Passengers with higher engagement are consistently more likely to repurchase and advocate for the airline (So et al., 2020; Kartanegara & Keni, 2022).

Yet, existing research often measures engagement narrowly, resulting in inconsistent conclusions about whether it acts as a driver, mediator, or outcome, indicating the need for clearer theoretical positioning.

H3: Passenger engagement (PEN) positively influences airline brand trust (ABT).

H4: Passenger engagement (PEN) positively influences airline brand loyalty (ABL).

Airline Brand Trust (ABT)

Airline brand trust reflects the extent to which passengers believe that an airline can deliver safe, dependable, and consistent service. Trust captures perceptions of the airline's competence, integrity, and professionalism. Research shows that brand trust functions as a significant

psychological factor shaping loyalty in service industries involving uncertainty and risk, particularly air travel (Siqueira et al., 2023).

Ragab et al. (2024) found that brand trust contributes not only to loyalty but also to passengers' willingness to pay a premium when they perceive that the airline fulfills its promises and maintains high standards of safety and service. Prior work also indicates that trust is strengthened through positive service experiences and sustained engagement with the airline (Ali et al., 2025). As such, brand trust consistently emerges as one of the strongest predictors of airline loyalty (Ragab et al., 2024; Siqueira et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, prior studies show mixed results regarding the conditions under which trust exerts the strongest influence, highlighting the need to examine how trust develops and fluctuates across different airline models.

H5: Airline brand trust (ABT) positively influences airline brand loyalty (ABL).

Airline Brand Loyalty (ABL)

Airline brand loyalty refers to a passenger's intention to repeatedly choose the same airline, recommend it to others, and express an emotional preference toward the brand. Prior studies consistently acknowledge loyalty as one of the most important strategic outcomes for airlines, contributing to stable long-term revenue and improved competitive positioning (Hongsakul & Subongkod, 2023).

Loyalty is shaped by several key antecedents, including service quality, brand trust, satisfaction, and brand engagement. Evidence from China, Myanmar, Indonesia, and other Asian markets shows that these factors collectively influence loyalty across full service and low-cost carriers (Mo & Nuangjamnong, 2023; Kartanegara & Keni, 2022).

However, loyalty is frequently treated as a static intention rather than a dynamic process, and distinctions between emotional and calculative loyalty remain underexplored in airline research. From the literature review, the conceptual framework can be drawn as shown in Figure 1.

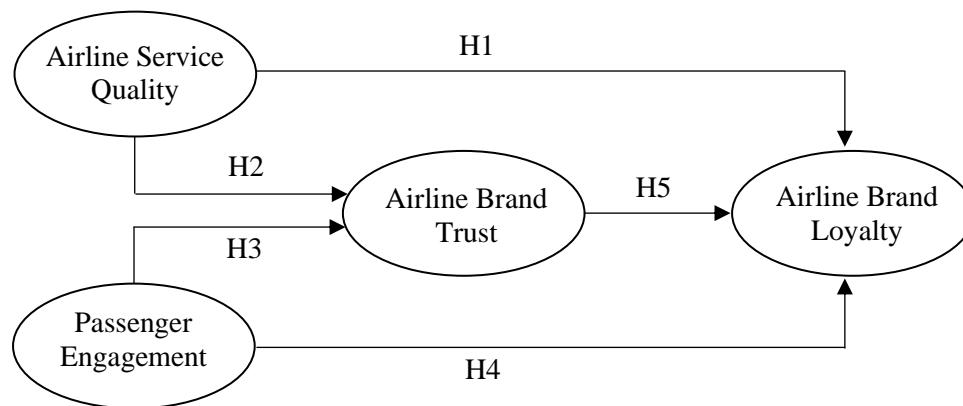


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study aimed to examine the causal relationship between airline service quality, passenger engagement, brand trust, and brand loyalty. PLS-SEM structural equation modeling was used using the SmartPLS 4 program, which is recognized as suitable for models with multiple latent variables, non-normal data distribution, and model prediction capability assessment (Hair et al., 2021; Henseler, 2020). The population consisted of passengers who had used commercial airlines within the past 12 months.

The sample was selected using a convenient, non-probability sampling method via an online questionnaire. The sample size was approximately 400 participants, meeting the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021) and in line with the PLS-SEM principle of requiring a moderate to high sample size for stable estimation results (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: general information of the respondents; The questionnaire measured four abstract variables: airline service quality (ASQ), passenger engagement (PEN), airline brand trust (ABT), and airline brand loyalty (ABL) using a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was reviewed for content validity by experts and pilot tested to assess reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, which should be greater than 0.70 to be considered sufficient for behavioral research (Kline, 1999; Hair et al., 2021).

Data analysis was conducted in two steps: (1) evaluating the measurement model to test the validity of the indicators by considering factor loadings (≥ 0.70), composite reliability ($CR \geq 0.70$), average variance extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$), and discriminant validity via HTMT (≤ 0.85), as recommended by Henseler (2020); and (2) evaluating the structural model by examining the significance of causal paths using the Bootstrapping of 5,000 samples and estimating the R^2 value to measure the model's ability to explain the variance of the dependent variable, the f^2 value to assess the magnitude of the influence, and the Q^2 value to assess the model's predictive ability, with the criterion $Q^2 > 0$ indicating that the model has good predictive potential (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondents' Profiles

The demographic analysis of the 400 respondents indicates that the majority were female, representing 60.50% of the sample, while males accounted for 39.50%. Most participants were between 20 and 29 years old (66.50%), followed by those aged 30–39 (18.30%). In terms of educational background, a substantial proportion of respondents held a bachelor's degree (95.50%), reflecting a predominantly well-educated sample.

With regard to average monthly income, the largest group of respondents reported earnings between 15,000 and 30,000 baht (46.90%), followed by those earning below 15,000 baht (28.70%). In examining travel behavior, 30.20% of respondents reported flying between one and five times within the past 12 months. Airline usage patterns further showed that a slight majority preferred low-cost carriers, accounting for 53.20% of the sample, while 46.80% traveled primarily with full-service airlines.

Data Analysis Results Using PLS-SEM Structural Equation Modeling

This research utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques through the SmartPLS 4 program to evaluate both the measurement model and the structural model of the relationships between airline service quality (ASQ), passenger engagement (PEN), airline brand trust (ABT), and airline brand loyalty (ABL). The analysis results are summarized as follows:

Measurement Model Evaluation

Before testing the structural model, the quality of the measurement model must be assessed to ensure that the observed variables accurately and consistently reflect the values of the latent variables. Table 1 shows the internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, which are used to assess the overall reliability of each latent variable.

Table 1 Reliability and Overall Reliability of Latent Variables

| Latent Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | CR | AVE |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Airline Service Quality (ASQ) | 0.843 | 0.845 | 0.889 | 0.615 |
| Passenger Engagement (PEN) | 0.839 | 0.839 | 0.886 | 0.609 |
| Airline Brand Trust (ABT) | 0.853 | 0.854 | 0.901 | 0.696 |
| Airline Brand Loyalty (ABL) | 0.893 | 0.893 | 0.921 | 0.782 |

The results in Table 1 show that all four latent variables, ASQ, PEN, ABT, and ABL, have good internal reliability. (Cronbach's Alpha and CR) values were above 0.70, and the AVE values were above 0.50 for all variables, indicating good internal consistency and adequate overall validity according to standard criteria. In conclusion, the instruments used to measure all variables were of high quality and reliability, suitable for further model analysis.

After examining the overall validity of the latent variables, it was necessary to assess their discriminant validity to ensure that each latent variable clearly distinguishes itself from another. This research utilized both the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which considers the square root of the AVE (the value on the diagonal of the Fornell–Larcker table) to be higher than the correlation coefficient in the same row and column, indicating appropriate discriminant validity. The Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value, which is considered more sensitive and precise, with HTMT values below 0.85 indicating that each latent variable is clearly distinguishable from another. These criteria were based on Fornell & Larcker (1981), Henseler et al. (2016), and Hair et al. (2021). The results of both criteria ensured comprehensive evaluation of the measurement model. Shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity of Latent Variables (Fornell–Larcker and HTMT)

| | Fornell–Larcker | | | | Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | PEN | ASQ | ABT | ABL | PEN | ASQ | ABT | ABL |
| PEN | 0.780 | | | | - | 0.696 | 0.518 | 0.518 |
| ASQ | 0.584 | 0.785 | | | | - | 0.617 | 0.681 |
| ABT | 0.443 | 0.525 | 0.835 | | | | - | 0.550 |
| ABL | 0.449 | 0.592 | 0.480 | 0.884 | | | | - |

Note: PEN = Passenger Engagement, ASQ = Airline Service Quality, ABT = Airline Brand Trust, ABL = Airline Brand Loyalty

Structural Model Evaluation

After the measurement model evaluation revealed adequate reliability and validity, the next step was to evaluate the structural model to test the causal relationships between the variables according to the established hypotheses. This examination included evaluating the explained variance (R^2), path coefficients, and statistical significance (t-value and p-value).

Before conducting the structural path analysis, a multicollinearity assessment was performed by examining the VIF values of all predictor variables. All values were found to be in the range of 1.48–2.66, which is below the threshold of 3.3, indicating no cross-collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2021).

Regarding the ability to explain the variance of the dependent variable, the model was found to be able to explain the variance of Brand Trust (ABT) explained 30.4% ($R^2 = 0.304$) and airline brand loyalty (ABL) explained 39.8% ($R^2 = 0.398$), which is considered moderate according to PLS-SEM standards.

The hypothesis testing used a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples to assess the significance of the structural paths. Details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficients)

| Hypothesis Path | β | SD | t-value | P-value | Results |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| H1: ASQ \rightarrow ABL | 0.414 | 0.057 | 7.325 | 0.000*** | Hypothesis supported |
| H2: ASQ \rightarrow ABT | 0.405 | 0.061 | 6.582 | 0.000*** | Hypothesis supported |
| H3: PEN \rightarrow ABT | 0.206 | 0.061 | 3.403 | 0.001** | Hypothesis supported |
| H4: PEN \rightarrow ABL | 0.113 | 0.055 | 2.066 | 0.039* | Hypothesis supported |
| H5: ABT \rightarrow ABL | 0.213 | 0.059 | 3.616 | 0.000*** | Hypothesis supported |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis testing results are shown in Table 3 show that all causal paths in the model have positive and statistically significant coefficients, reflecting consistent relationships with passenger behavior theory and airline industry loyalty. Airline service quality (ASQ) plays a crucial role in both passenger brand trust (ABT) and brand loyalty (ABL). The high significance of the $ASQ \rightarrow ABL$ and $ASQ \rightarrow ABT$ paths confirms that when passengers consistently perceive good service quality, it leads to a high level of trust and commitment to the airline brand, which is a key factor in long-term customer retention.

Similarly, passenger engagement (PEN), whether through interactions, information acquisition, or interaction with airline services, directly impacts brand trust (ABT) and brand loyalty (ABL). Although the direct effect of the $PEN \rightarrow ABL$ path is smaller than that of ASQ, it remains statistically significant, demonstrating that engaging passenger experiences can also drive airline loyalty and commitment.

Furthermore, airline brand trust (ABT) has a significant direct effect ($p .000$), confirming the conceptual framework that brand trust is a key mechanism for translating positive passenger experiences into long-term loyalty. This includes repeat service selection or positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

In summary, the results of the structural model indicate that service quality and passenger engagement are crucial factors influencing the creation of airline brand trust and loyalty. The significant results across all hypotheses confirm that the model is theoretically consistent and effectively explains passenger behavior.

After evaluating the path coefficients in the structural model, The quality and robustness of the model must be assessed using three key indicators: (1) the R^2 value, which indicates the model's ability to explain the variance of the dependent variable; (2) the f^2 value, which assesses the magnitude of the influence of each independent variable on the change in the dependent variable; and (3) the Q^2 value, which is an index used to examine the predictive relevance of the model through blindfolding, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2 values of the structural model

| Dependent Variables | Independent Variables | R^2 | f^2 | f^2 Level | Q^2 | Q^2 Level |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|
| ABT | ASQ | 0.304 | 0.18 | Moderate | 0.17 | Moderate Prediction |
| ABT | PEN | 0.304 | 0.07 | Small | 0.17 | Moderate Prediction |
| ABL | ASQ | 0.398 | 0.22 | Moderate | 0.24 | Good Prediction |
| ABL | PEN | 0.398 | 0.03 | Small | 0.24 | Good Prediction |
| ABL | ABT | 0.398 | 0.09 | Small–Moderate | 0.24 | Good Prediction |

The results in Table 4 show that the model has a moderate ability to explain the variance of the dependent variables ($R^2 = 0.304\text{--}0.398$). This is particularly true for airline brand loyalty (ABL), which is moderately influenced by service quality ($f^2 = 0.22$) and supported by a small to moderate effect from airline brand trust (ABT) ($f^2 = 0.09$). Meanwhile, the influence of participation passenger engagement (PEN), although small, is statistically significant. Furthermore, the Q^2 values are moderate to good (0.17–0.24), indicating that the model has the potential to appropriately predict passenger behavior. This indicates that the constructed model is robust and can effectively explain airline passenger loyalty.

The results of the structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis presented above can be summarized into the final model shown in Figure 2, which summarizes all causal relationships that are empirically supported by real data.

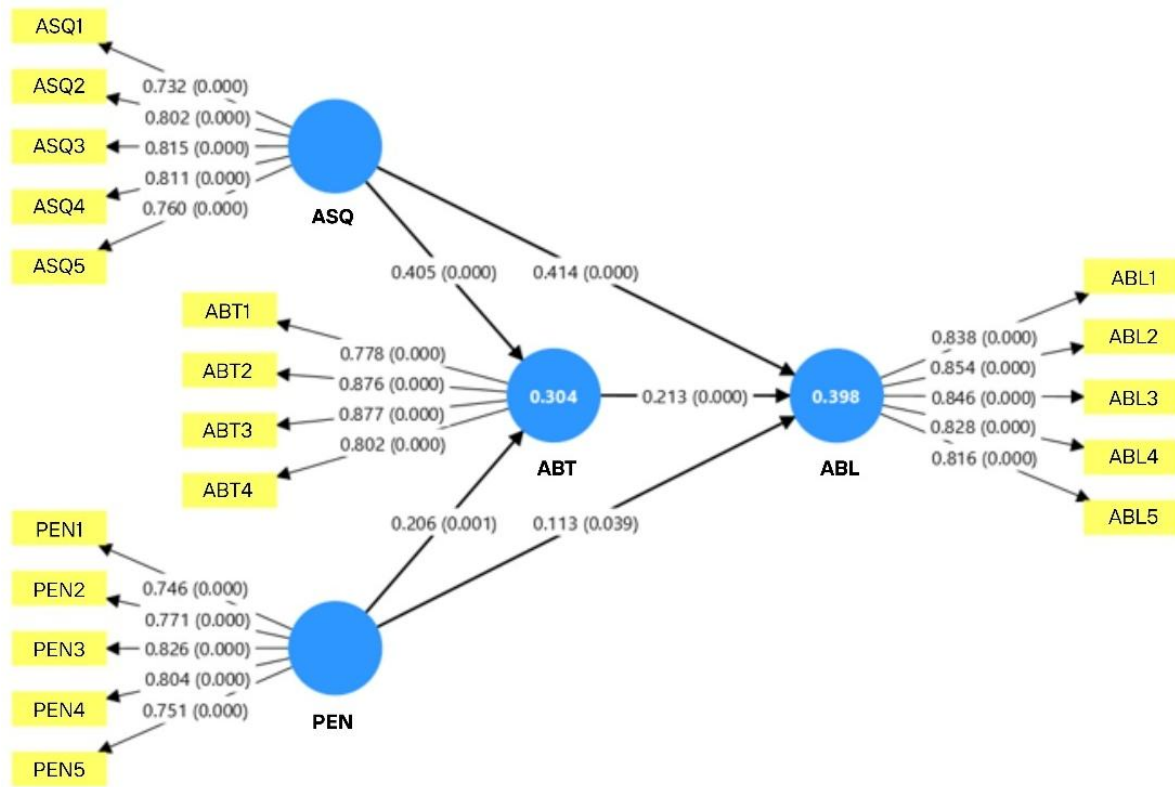


Figure 2 Finalized Model

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The results of this research highlight the significant role of airline service quality (ASQ) in building both airline brand trust (ABT) and airline brand loyalty (ABL) among passengers. This is consistent with the concept of service quality in the aviation industry, which emphasizes that satisfaction and impression resulting from service standards are the precursors to long-term loyalty (Shen & Yahya, 2021; Law et al., 2022). Hypothesis testing in this research found that airline service quality (ASQ) has the highest direct influence on airline brand loyalty (ABL) ($\beta = 0.414$), and also has an indirect effect through brand trust, resulting in a significant increase in the total influence (Total $\beta = 0.500$). This demonstrates that good service quality is a key mechanism determining the passenger experience and is a key foundation for building airline brand engagement.

Furthermore, the research found that passenger engagement (PEN), although having a modest direct influence on airline brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.113$), has a significant indirect effect through airline brand trust. This is consistent with the work of Chathoth et al. (2016) and Perez Benegas & Zanfardini (2025), who found that interactions between passengers and airlines, whether through digital channels, informational content, or personalized experiences, contribute to building trust and increasing long-term airline loyalty. These results demonstrate that while passenger engagement (PEN) is not the variable with the highest direct impact on loyalty, it is a strategic supportive variable that enhances airline brand trust, ultimately mediating loyalty.

ABT has a significant direct effect on airline brand loyalty (ABL) ($\beta = 0.213$). This is consistent with previous studies in the airline context, which indicate that brand trust is a key factor in passengers' repurchase decisions, despite the increasing number of airline options in a highly competitive market (Zeren & Kara, 2020; Vuong et al., 2024). These results suggest that building a trustworthy and transparent image, as well as maintaining consistent safety and service standards, are crucial. This is a key factor in fostering long-term brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the variance explanation (R^2) values of the dependent variables were moderate for both airline brand trust (ABT) ($R^2 = 0.304$) and airline brand loyalty (ABL) ($R^2 = 0.398$), consistent with Hair et al.'s (2021) criteria, which stipulate that a model of this type should have a moderate R^2 for suitability in service and consumer behavior research. Meanwhile, the moderate to good Q^2 values (0.17–0.24) confirm that the model has robust behavioral prediction capabilities, aligning with trends in PLS-SEM research in modern service (Sarstedt et al., 2022). The research results show that in the airline industry, where competition is intense and passenger behavior is rapidly changing, investment in service quality remains the most important factor in building loyalty. Meanwhile, increasing passenger engagement through various channels helps build brand trust, which serves as a key mediator in driving long-term loyalty. Consequently, the ASQ–PEN–ABT–ABL model is appropriate for explaining and predicting passenger behavior in the current era. This is also beneficial for the development of service strategies and customer experience management in the aviation industry.

These findings directly reinforce the research objectives by confirming that airline service quality and passenger engagement jointly contribute to airline brand trust and loyalty, consistent with relationship-marketing and service-experience theory (Chung et al., 2022; Siqueira et al., 2023). The pattern of causal paths supports the theoretical proposition that service evaluations shape trust, which subsequently translates into stronger behavioral intentions, reflecting an integrated psychological process emphasized in contemporary airline loyalty models (Chanpariyavatevong et al., 2021). This connection demonstrates that the model not only aligns with prior theoretical assumptions but also extends them by empirically validating the sequential $ASQ \rightarrow ABT \rightarrow ABL$ and $PEN \rightarrow ABT \rightarrow ABL$ relationships.

From a managerial perspective, the results highlight the need for airlines to prioritize both service consistency and engagement-driven strategies, as passengers increasingly expect seamless service across digital and physical touchpoints. Enhancing reliability, punctuality, cabin cleanliness, and staff responsiveness remains essential for strengthening service-based trust. Additionally, airlines should invest in personalized communication, loyalty program innovation, and transparent safety messaging to improve trust and reinforce long-term customer retention (Santos et al., 2024; Chung et al., 2022). These insights provide actionable guidance for managers seeking to sustain competitiveness in an environment where service failures and inconsistent communication can quickly erode trust.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The research results indicate that airline service quality (ASQ) plays a crucial role in building passenger confidence and loyalty. Therefore, airlines should prioritize enhancing service standards at every stage, such as speed, safety, staff professionalism, and effective problem management.

Furthermore, passenger engagement (PEN) fosters brand trust. Therefore, more channels for passenger interaction with the airline should be developed, such as loyalty programs, personalized service apps, or digital communication platforms, to enhance long-term engagement. Meanwhile, maintaining transparency, punctuality, and safety standards will help build and maintain airline brand trust.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study collected data cross sectionally. Therefore, longitudinal studies should be conducted in the future to analyze changes in passenger behavior as travel experiences increase. Furthermore, additional variables, such as satisfaction, perceived value, or emotional experiences, which are important influences on loyalty, as per current literature.

Furthermore, research in diverse contexts, such as comparing low-cost and full-service airlines or conducting studies across multiple countries, could enhance external validity and make the model more comprehensive.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study employed a convenience sampling method, which, although efficient for large-scale online data collection, limits the representativeness of the sample and may affect the generalizability of the findings to the wider population of airline passengers. Additionally, the use of a cross-sectional design restricts the ability to capture temporal variations in passenger engagement, trust, and loyalty, which are inherently dynamic and may evolve over time. Future research would benefit from employing probability-based sampling procedures or utilizing longitudinal designs to examine how passenger perceptions and loyalty-related behaviors develop across different service encounters and changing travel contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher sincerely thanks all participants who contributed their time to complete the survey and provided valuable insights for this study. Appreciation is also extended to the experts who reviewed the questionnaire and offered helpful suggestions. Special thanks are given to the advisory faculty of the Aviation Business and Transport Management Program, Rangsit University, for their guidance and academic support throughout the research process. The researcher is also grateful to colleagues and the institution for their assistance during data collection.

The authors declare that Grammarly was used solely for language proofreading and minor grammatical corrections. The tool was not used to generate, alter, or rewrite the academic content of the manuscript. All ideas, analyses, and interpretations presented in this article are entirely the authors' own.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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