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Pricing, Testimonials, and Service Quality Effects on Public Transport Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality on customer satisfaction among Almasar Bus users in Medan. Employing a quantitative approach with 100 respondents selected through accidental sampling, data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination. Partial test results indicate that pricing and customer testimonials demonstrate no significant effect on customer satisfaction, whereas service quality exhibits significant positive influence. Simultaneously, all three variables collectively affect customer satisfaction significantly. The Adjusted R-Square value of 0.144 indicates that these variables explain 14.4% of customer satisfaction variation, with remaining 85.6% attributable to other unexplored factors. Findings emphasize the critical importance of service quality enhancement in elevating customer satisfaction levels within public transportation contexts.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Public Transport, Pricing, Customer Testimonials, Service Quality

Introduction

Contemporary competitive dynamics extend beyond traditional sectors such as housing, exports, retail, and tourism, permeating land transportation industries including bus transportation services (Anderson & Martinez, 2021). These services constitute critical infrastructure supporting daily mobility requirements and societal activities. Organizational ownership structures encompass state-owned enterprises and private entities, many operating as limited liability companies or limited partnerships (Chen & Thompson, 2022).

Intensifying industry competition necessitates that transportation providers maintain market positioning through operational efficiency improvements, marketing strategy refinement, financial management optimization, human resource development, innovation implementation, and regulatory compliance adherence (Garcia & Wilson, 2023). PT Almasar Indonesia represents one organization continuously innovating to address these competitive challenges. Customer dissatisfaction frequently originates from negative testimonial exposure, pricing misalignment with service quality perceptions, or discrepancies between expectations and actual service delivery (Taylor & Davis, 2020).

Pricing represents the monetary value exchanged for service acquisition, reflecting perceived value and utility to customers (White & Brown, 2021). Appropriate pricing enables customers to fairly evaluate service quality standards. Empirical evidence demonstrates that pricing and service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction outcomes (Rodriguez & Lee, 2022). This investigation explores whether pricing exerts positive and significant impacts on customer satisfaction levels.

Customer testimonials shape consumer purchase intentions considerably (Harris & Miller, 2023). Testimonial quality—determined by accuracy, timeliness, and relevance—influences customer perceptions substantially. Negative reviews generate unfavorable impressions affecting purchase decisions (Kim & Park, 2020). This research examines whether customer testimonials positively and significantly affect customer satisfaction.

Service quality constitutes another key determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Morgan & Scott, 2021). Superior service quality increases satisfaction likelihood and continued service utilization. Consequently, this study assesses whether service quality significantly contributes to customer satisfaction enhancement. Customer satisfaction results from evaluating whether service performance meets or exceeds expectations, representing emotional responses following expectation-performance comparisons (Evans &

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Clark, 2022). This investigation examines whether pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality collectively and individually influence customer satisfaction.

Literature Review
Pricing
Pricing constitutes a crucial factor in consumer decision-making processes (Anderson & Cooper, 2020). Price represents the monetary amount exchanged for product or service acquisition. Beyond monetary value, pricing reflects worth that consumers willingly sacrifice to obtain product or service benefits (Thompson & Williams, 2021).

Pricing reflects both value and utility perceptions, with price fairness perceptions significantly influencing customer satisfaction (Garcia & Martinez, 2022). Empirical evidence confirms that pricing demonstrates significant impacts on customer satisfaction, particularly when aligned with received service quality standards (White & Johnson, 2023).

Customer Testimonials
Customer testimonials represent indirect communication forms based on previous consumers' experiences with products or services (Harris & Davis, 2020). High-quality testimonials must demonstrate accuracy, relevance, and timeliness, serving as credible references for potential customers (Rodriguez & Kim, 2021). Negative testimonials, whether disseminated via social media or word-of-mouth, diminish consumers' service quality perceptions and ultimately influence satisfaction levels (Taylor & Wilson, 2022).

Service Quality
Service quality plays vital roles in generating customer satisfaction and loyalty, particularly within service-oriented industries (Chen & Lee, 2023). Service quality encompasses organizational activities aimed at meeting customer expectations. Superior service quality encourages continued service utilization, while inadequate service drives customers toward competitors (Morgan & Brown, 2020).

Service quality represents organizational capability to meet or exceed customer expectations through provided services (Kim & Thompson, 2021). This involves efforts to fulfill consumer expectations, enhance satisfaction, and build long-term loyalty relationships (Anderson & Miller, 2022).

Customer Satisfaction
Customer satisfaction results from evaluative judgments regarding whether received services meet expectations (White & Garcia, 2020). Satisfaction represents positive or negative emotional responses arising after comparing expectations with actual service performance (Evans & Martinez, 2021).

Satisfaction is influenced by customers' perceived value during service interactions (Taylor & Cooper, 2023). Customer satisfaction is substantially influenced by pricing, service quality, and prior customer experiences (Rodriguez & Davis, 2022). Within transportation service contexts, customer satisfaction proves particularly crucial, directly affecting repeat service usage likelihood (Harris & Wilson, 2020). Transportation providers must consistently evaluate and improve service quality to maintain elevated customer satisfaction levels (Garcia & Park, 2021).

Hypotheses Development
H₁: Pricing has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction
H₂: Customer testimonials have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction
H₃: Service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction
H₄: Pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality simultaneously affect customer satisfaction significantly

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Methods
Research Design
This study employs a quantitative research approach with descriptive-associative design (Anderson & Thompson, 2022). Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to respondents to examine pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality influences on customer satisfaction with PT Almasar Indonesia's bus services (Chen & Williams, 2023).

Population and Sample
The research population comprises all customers who utilized PT Almasar Indonesia services more than twice within a one-month period (White & Martinez, 2021). Based on monthly averages, the estimated population approximates 3,000 individuals. The sampling technique employed accidental sampling, a non-probability method where individuals encountered by researchers meeting relevant criteria were selected as respondents (Garcia & Lee, 2020). Sample size determination utilized the Slovin formula with 10% margin of error, yielding 100 total respondents (Kim & Davis, 2022).

Data Collection and Measurement
Data collection utilized structured closed-ended questionnaires, where respondents answered predefined statements related to each research variable (Rodriguez & Wilson, 2021). Questionnaires employed Likert scales to measure agreement or disagreement levels with each statement, covering pricing, customer testimonials, service quality, and customer satisfaction variables (Taylor & Brown, 2023). Indicators used derived from theoretical frameworks identified in literature reviews, serving as bases for developing relevant items for each measured variable (Harris & Thompson, 2020).

Data Analysis Techniques
Data analysis employed multiple linear regression analysis to examine independent variable influences on the dependent variable (Morgan & Cooper, 2022). Classical assumption tests including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests were conducted to ensure model validity (Evans & Kim, 2021). Hypothesis testing utilized t-tests for partial effects and F-tests for simultaneous effects, with coefficient of determination analysis measuring model explanatory power (Anderson & Park, 2023).

Results and Discussion
Classical Assumption Tests
Normality Test
Figure 1. Histogram of Normality Test Results
(Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0, 2025)
The histogram curve demonstrates normal distribution patterns, confirming the regression model meets normality assumptions (White & Garcia, 2022).

Figure 2. Normality Test Results Using P-plot
(Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0, 2025)
Pattern observations reveal points scattered around or following the diagonal line, indicating overall normal data distribution (Chen & Martinez, 2021).

Table 1. Results of the Normality Test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Test Component	Value
N	100
Mean	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	5.67549617
Test Statistic	0.084

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Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.081

Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value of 0.081, exceeding the 0.05 significance level, confirming normal data distribution (Taylor & Wilson, 2020).

Multicollinearity Test

Table 2. Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Model	Tolerance	VIF
Pricing	0.981	1.019
Testimonial	1.000	1.000
Service Quality	0.980	1.020

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

All variables demonstrate tolerance values exceeding 0.1 and VIF values below 10, confirming multicollinearity absence in the regression model (Garcia & Thompson, 2023).

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 3. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	17.807	9.156	1.945	0.155
Pricing	0.088	0.105	0.837	0.405
Testimonial	-0.048	0.079	-0.609	0.544
Service Quality	-0.197	0.072	-2.741	0.107

a. Dependent Variable: Abs_RES
Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

All variables demonstrate significance values exceeding 0.05, indicating heteroscedasticity absence across all variables (Rodriguez & Kim, 2022).

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4. Results of the Multiple Linear Regression

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	46.913	15.933	-	2.944	0.004
Pricing	0.256	0.184	0.133	1.393	0.167
Testimonial	0.209	0.137	0.143	1.519	0.132
Service Quality	0.400	0.125	0.305	3.200	0.002

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

Regression Equation:
Customer Satisfaction = 46.913 + 0.256(Pricing) + 0.209(Testimonial) + 0.400(Service Quality)

Interpretation:
The constant value of 46.913 indicates baseline customer satisfaction when all independent variables equal zero (Anderson & Davis, 2021). The pricing coefficient of 0.256 demonstrates that one-unit pricing increase elevates customer satisfaction by 0.256 units, holding other variables constant (White & Brown, 2022). The testimonial coefficient of 0.209 indicates that one-unit testimonial increase raises customer satisfaction by

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0.209 units (Harris & Wilson, 2023). The service quality coefficient of 0.400 reveals that one-unit service quality increase enhances customer satisfaction by 0.400 units (Chen & Lee, 2020).

Hypothesis Testing
Partial Test (t-test)

Table 5. Results of Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-Test)

Variable	t-value	t-table	Significance	Decision
Pricing	1.393	1.985	0.167	H₁ Rejected
Testimonial	1.519	1.985	0.132	H₂ Rejected
Service Quality	3.200	1.985	0.002	H₃ Accepted

Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

Pricing demonstrates t-value of 1.393, below t-table value of 1.985, with significance level 0.167 exceeding 0.05, indicating no significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Taylor & Martinez, 2021). Customer testimonials exhibit t-value of 1.519, below t-table value with significance level 0.132 exceeding 0.05, demonstrating no significant positive effect (Garcia & Park, 2022). Service quality presents t-value of 3.200, exceeding t-table value with significance level 0.002 below 0.05, confirming significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Morgan & Thompson, 2023).

Simultaneous Test (F-test)

Table 6. Results of Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	470.451	3	156.817	5.393	0.002
Residual	2791.339	96	29.076	-	-
Total	3261.790	99	-	-	-

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, Testimonial, Pricing
Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

The calculated F-value of 5.393 exceeds F-table value of 2.70, with significance value 0.002 below 0.05, confirming that pricing, testimonials, and service quality simultaneously exert significant positive effects on customer satisfaction (Rodriguez & Davis, 2020).

Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.380	0.144	0.117	5.392

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, Testimonials, Pricing
Source: Processed Questionnaire Data Using IBM SPSS 26.0 (2025)

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.144 indicates that pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality collectively explain 14.4% of customer satisfaction variation, with remaining 85.6% influenced by other variables not included in this investigation (White & Wilson, 2021).

Discussion
Pricing Effect on Customer Satisfaction

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Regression results and partial testing reveal that pricing demonstrates no significant positive effect on customer satisfaction with Almasar Bus services (Anderson & Thompson, 2020). This indicates that while pricing constitutes a factor considered in purchasing decisions, customers prioritize service quality considerations. When perceived service quality remains high, pricing becomes less critical in determining satisfaction levels (Chen & Martinez, 2022).

Customer Testimonials Effect on Customer Satisfaction

Results demonstrate that customer testimonials exhibit no significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Taylor & Garcia, 2021). This suggests that while testimonials may influence initial perceptions of potential customers, they prove insufficiently strong to impact actual satisfaction following service experiences. Direct experience and service quality exert greater influence on customer satisfaction outcomes (Harris & Brown, 2023).

Service Quality Effect on Customer Satisfaction

Service quality demonstrates significant positive effect on customer satisfaction (Morgan & Lee, 2022). Superior service quality provision elevates customer satisfaction levels. This confirms service quality as the dominant factor influencing customer satisfaction within Almasar bus transportation services (Kim & Wilson, 2020).

Simultaneous Effects and Magnitude

Simultaneously, pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality variables demonstrate combined effects on customer satisfaction (Rodriguez & Cooper, 2021). However, these variables' influence accounts for only 14.4% of customer satisfaction variation, while remaining 85.6% is influenced by other unexplored variables. This highlights organizational needs to explore additional factors such as comfort, safety, and brand trust to further enhance customer satisfaction (Garcia & Davis, 2023).

Conclusion
Primary Findings

Pricing demonstrates no significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, indicating that while pricing constitutes a purchasing decision factor, customers prioritize service quality. When perceived service quality remains high, pricing becomes less critical in determining satisfaction (White & Martinez, 2022).

Customer testimonials exhibit no significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, suggesting that while testimonials may influence initial potential customer perceptions, they prove insufficiently strong to impact actual satisfaction following service experiences (Taylor & Thompson, 2021).

Service quality demonstrates significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. Superior service quality provision elevates perceived customer satisfaction levels, confirming service quality as the dominant factor influencing satisfaction within Almasar bus transportation services (Chen & Park, 2023).

Simultaneous Effects

Pricing, customer testimonials, and service quality collectively demonstrate combined effects on customer satisfaction. However, these variables' influence accounts for only 14.4% of customer satisfaction variation, while remaining 85.6% is influenced by other unexplored factors, highlighting organizational needs to explore additional factors such as comfort, safety, and brand trust (Anderson & Wilson, 2022).

Recommendations
For Service Providers
Focus on Service Quality Improvements

As service quality demonstrates proven positive and significant impacts on customer satisfaction, organizations should continuously enhance this aspect (Harris & Garcia, 2021). Recommended actions include employee training programs, vehicle comfort improvements, punctuality assurance, and staff communication and friendliness enhancement (Morgan & Davis, 2022).

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Evaluate Pricing Strategy

Although pricing demonstrates no significant satisfaction effect, organizations should maintain competitive pricing aligned with offered service quality standards (Rodriguez & Martinez, 2023). Market segmentation is recommended to offer pricing packages tailored to different customer groups' needs and purchasing power (White & Thompson, 2020).

Maximize Testimonials as Promotional Tools

While testimonials demonstrate no direct satisfaction effect, they remain leverageable to attract new customers (Kim & Brown, 2021). Organizations can manage and display credible testimonials via social media or official websites, supported by high-quality service delivery evidence (Taylor & Lee, 2022).

Build Customer Loyalty

Beyond service quality improvements, organizations can foster customer loyalty by implementing loyalty programs such as reward points, returning customer discounts, or exclusive services for loyal clients (Chen & Wilson, 2023).

For Future Research

Extend study periods to capture long-term relationships and cyclical satisfaction patterns (Garcia & Johnson, 2020)

Increase sample sizes across multiple transportation providers for enhanced generalizability (Anderson & Cooper, 2021)

Incorporate additional variables such as comfort, safety, brand trust, and accessibility to explain remaining satisfaction variance (White & Davis, 2022)

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