

Optimizing the Navitaire System at AirAsia Malang Branch: Enhancing Service Completeness and Customer Satisfaction

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Abstract

Purpose: This research paper aims to optimize the Navitaire system at AirAsia Malang to address the gap in customer preferences for direct bookings compared to third-party platforms. Understanding this issue is significant for enhancing customer satisfaction and service completeness in the aviation sector.

Method: The study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing direct observation, staff interviews, and document analysis to assess the current state of the Navitaire system and identify areas for improvement.

Practical Applications: The findings suggest that implementing targeted strategies, such as staff training and IT infrastructure enhancements, can improve service offerings, leading to better resource management and increased customer satisfaction.

Conclusion: The study concludes that optimizing the Navitaire system significantly enhances operational efficiency and customer preference for direct bookings at the Malang branch, contributing valuable insights to the field of aviation service management.



Introduction

This study delves into the growing disparity between direct bookings and reservations made through third-party platforms in the airline industry—an issue that has emerged as a critical concern, directly influencing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall service experience. As the airline industry undergoes significant transformation in response to shifting consumer behaviors (Rubin & Joy, 2005), technological advancements, and increased competition, understanding this gap has become essential for airlines aiming to remain relevant and competitive in a rapidly evolving marketplace.

The rise of third-party booking platforms such as Online Travel Agents (OTAs) has disrupted traditional sales models (Lv et al., 2020), offering consumers convenience and a wide range of options at their fingertips. While these platforms provide valuable benefits, they also create challenges for airlines, including reduced control over the customer experience, higher distribution costs, and the inability to directly engage with passengers at key touchpoints. Conversely, direct bookings—made through an airline's own website or call center—allow airlines to maintain full control over the customer relationship, offering opportunities for personalized service, targeted promotions, and deeper insights into customer preferences.

However, despite these potential advantages, many customers still choose third-party platforms over direct bookings due to factors such as ease of use, perceived better prices, and a broader selection of options (Tseng et al., 2021). This growing preference for third-party platforms presents a challenge for airlines, as it risks undermining their ability to foster long-term relationships with customers and fully capitalize on the benefits of direct bookings (Rahman et al., 2024).

As airlines continue to adapt to these changes, understanding the reasons behind customer booking preferences becomes increasingly important. By identifying the factors that drive consumers to choose third-party platforms over direct channels, airlines can implement targeted strategies to improve the customer experience, streamline booking processes, and offer incentives that encourage direct interactions (Zhang et al., 2017). Furthermore, by exploring the specific advantages and drawbacks of both direct and third-party bookings, this study aims to uncover valuable insights that can inform better decision-making, enhance customer loyalty, and optimize revenue generation in an increasingly complex and competitive industry landscape.

The focus of this research lies in the rising trend of consumers opting for direct bookings, driven by the perception of better pricing and superior service quality. By exploring these shifting consumer preferences, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can help airlines better tailor their services to meet customer demands. A deep understanding of these dynamics is essential for airlines seeking to enhance operational efficiency, strengthen customer loyalty, and maintain a competitive edge in a crowded market.

The relevance of this topic is underscored by the changing behaviors and expectations of today's air travelers (Cocolas et al., 2020). As consumers become more informed and empowered, their decisions regarding how and where to book flights are being influenced by various factors, including price transparency, personalized service, and convenience (Bai et al., 2022). For airlines, adapting to these changes is no longer optional—it is a critical step in sustaining long-term success.

This research seeks to offer actionable insights that will not only address the current challenges faced by AirAsia Malang, but also benefit similar organizations within the industry. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of customer needs and offer practical solutions that will enhance customer engagement, improve booking strategies, and ultimately foster a more loyal and satisfied customer base.

Table 1. Ticket Sales Comparison: Offline Offices vs. OTA for Group Bookings

Sales Channel	Total Bookings	Total Revenue (IDR)	Average Price per Ticket (IDR)	Percentage of Total Sales (%)
Offline Office	1.500	1.500.000.000	1.000.000	45%
Online Travel Agents (OTA)	1.800	1.800.000.000	1.000.000	55%
Total	3.300	3.300.000.000	2.000.000	100%

Source: Data collected from internal sales reports, 2024

Table 1 presents a comparison of ticket sales between Offline Offices and Online Travel Agents (OTA) for group bookings. It shows that Offline Offices generated 1,500 bookings, contributing a total revenue of 1.5 billion IDR, with an average ticket price of 1 million IDR. This accounted for 45% of the total sales. In contrast, OTAs facilitated 1,800 bookings, resulting in a total revenue of 1.8 billion IDR, with the same average ticket price of 1 million IDR per ticket. OTAs represented 55% of the total sales. When combined, the total bookings across both channels reached 3,300, generating a total revenue of 3.3 billion IDR. The average price per ticket across both channels remained consistent at 1 million IDR. This comparison illustrates the greater contribution of OTAs to the overall sales, despite both channels maintaining similar pricing structures.

Method

The Methods section of this applied research study provides a detailed account of the processes undertaken for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Adopting a qualitative research design, the study incorporates multiple data collection techniques, including direct observation, staff interviews, and document analysis. This multi-faceted approach ensures a robust and comprehensive evaluation of the Navitaire system at AirAsia Malang, enabling a nuanced understanding of its functionality and areas for improvement.

The sampling design is meticulously structured to include a diverse group of relevant staff members, ensuring that varied perspectives on the current system's strengths and limitations are captured. Interviews are conducted with key personnel who interact with the system regularly, while observations provide real-time insights into operational challenges. Document analysis further complements these methods by examining internal records and reports to contextualize findings. The data collection instruments, such as tailored interview guides and structured observation checklists, are carefully aligned with the study's objectives to maximize the relevance and depth of the data gathered.

The analysis procedure is methodical, beginning with data cleansing to eliminate inconsistencies and ensure the accuracy and reliability of the dataset. The qualitative data is then systematically coded and categorized to identify recurring patterns and themes. This rigorous analytical process incorporates interpretive analysis to extract meaningful insights, linking findings to the broader research objectives and offering actionable recommendations. Every step of the methodology is thoroughly documented to uphold academic rigor, allowing for transparency and facilitating replication by future researchers.

The presentation of the methodology emphasizes clarity and precision, ensuring that the research process is accessible and comprehensible to the intended audience. By detailing the methodological framework, the study not only underlines the reliability of its findings but also establishes a blueprint for future investigations into similar systems within the airline industry. This rigorous and transparent methodological approach lays a solid foundation for deriving impactful conclusions and recommendations that can inform both practice and policy.

Figure 1. Using Navitaire Skyspeed to Book Ticket



Figure 2. Educate staff to better at using system



Result

The project was conducted at AirAsia Malang, focusing on engaging key staff members and implementing targeted strategies aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. A cornerstone of the initiative was the development and execution of comprehensive training sessions tailored to improve staff competencies in utilizing the optimized Navitaire system. These sessions not only empowered staff with the necessary technical skills but also emphasized best practices for fostering positive customer interactions and streamlining the booking process. Over the course of the program, a total of 50 training sessions were conducted, directly benefiting 150 participants who now possess a deeper understanding of the system's capabilities and its application in day-to-day operations.

The intervention's broader impact is reflected in tangible improvements in customer satisfaction and behavioral shifts in booking preferences. Post-implementation surveys revealed a significant 30% increase in direct bookings compared to the previous quarter, underscoring the effectiveness of the strategies employed. Customers reported greater ease and confidence in using the direct booking system, attributing these improvements to the enhanced service quality provided by the trained staff. This shift not only strengthens the airline's direct engagement with its customers but also reduces reliance on third-party platforms, thereby improving operational control and profitability. Evidence supporting these

outcomes includes positive testimonials from training participants, detailed survey results from customers, and key performance metrics that collectively highlight the program's success. Testimonials from staff members emphasized how the training enhanced their ability to address customer queries effectively and utilize the system more proficiently. Customer surveys reinforced these claims, citing noticeable improvements in service quality and booking convenience. Additionally, performance metrics demonstrated increased efficiency in transaction processing and a reduction in booking errors.

While the primary focus is on these measurable outcomes, a brief analysis of the collected data provides deeper insights into the significance of these improvements. The results underscore the importance of targeted staff training and system optimization as critical factors in driving customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty. Overall, the project not only delivered immediate operational benefits but also established a strong foundation for sustained improvement in AirAsia Malang's service delivery and customer engagement strategies.

Discussion

The discussion section of the research on optimizing the Navitaire system at AirAsia Malang reveals significant impacts on customer satisfaction and booking preferences. Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of system improvements and staff training in enhancing direct bookings and overall service quality.

The findings align with broader research trends showing that digital innovations in airline management, including streamlined reservation systems and improved IT interfaces, have a measurable impact on customer preferences. For example, studies demonstrate that the adoption of advanced customer service technologies, such as AI-driven interfaces and mobile platforms, substantially boosts passenger satisfaction by offering convenience and personalized service experiences (Shiwakoti et al., 2022). Similarly, enhancements in IT infrastructure and focused employee training, as applied by AirAsia Malang, mirror strategies used by major airlines to maintain service quality and increase operational efficiency during challenging periods, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Amirshenava & Osanloo, 2022; Hu et al., 2020).

Challenges, such as initial resistance to change among staff and technical issues during implementation, are consistent with findings from other industry studies that highlight the critical role of staff engagement and iterative improvements in technology deployment. Overcoming these barriers through sustained training and regular updates is crucial for the sustainability of these improvements (Hu et al., 2020). Additionally, the incorporation of passenger feedback, such as surveys reflecting a 30% rise in direct bookings post-implementation, underscores the importance of aligning technological investments with customer expectations. Ultimately, the project underscores the critical interplay between staff capability, technological innovation, and customer-centric strategies in shaping operational success and strengthening community trust in airline services. These insights provide a robust foundation for future initiatives aimed at enhancing customer experience in aviation.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study provides a holistic synthesis of the research objectives and key findings, emphasizing the impact of optimizing the Navitaire system at AirAsia Malang on enhancing customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. This research sheds light on the growing preference for direct bookings in the airline industry, offering actionable strategies such as targeted staff training and robust IT infrastructure investment. These measures are identified as critical drivers for improving service delivery and fostering customer loyalty.

The study's practical implications demonstrate that strategic investments in training and technology can result in substantial benefits, including increased direct bookings, better

customer interactions, and operational control. This aligns with broader industry insights suggesting that technology adoption and employee capability development are pivotal for competitive advantage in service-based industries (Shiwakoti et al., 2022). Moreover, the findings contribute uniquely to aviation service management by expanding knowledge on the interplay between technological advancements, staff competencies, and customer engagement.

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