The Impact of E-Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of E-Customer Trust in Online Travel Services

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Abstract. This study investigates the effect of E-Service Quality on E-Customer Satisfaction, with E-Customer Trust acting as a mediating variable, within the context of purchases made through the Tiket.com application, one of Indonesia's leading Online Travel Agents (OTAs). A quantitative approach was employed using a descriptive and associative research design. Primary data were collected via questionnaires distributed to Tiket.com users who had previously made purchases, using a non-probability sampling method with purposive sampling technique. A total of 271 respondents were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling. The results reveal that E-Service Quality has a significant effect on both E-Customer Satisfaction and E-Customer Trust. Furthermore, E-Customer Trust exerts a positive influence on E-Customer Satisfaction and plays a mediating role in the relationship between E-Service Quality and E-Customer Satisfaction. These findings underscore the critical role of digital service quality and customer trust in enhancing user satisfaction in digital service platforms. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the mediating role of trust in digital service environments, particularly in the Online Travel Agent context.

Keywords: E-Service Quality, E-Customer Trust, E-Customer Satisfaction, Tiket.com, Online Travel.

1 Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the travel and tourism industry, particularly through the emergence of Online Travel Agents (OTAs) [1]. These platforms enable users to search, compare, and purchase travel-related services efficiently through digital interfaces. In Indonesia, the widespread adoption of smartphones and internet accessibility has accelerated the use of platforms such as Tiket.com, reflecting a shift in consumer behavior toward convenience-oriented and time-efficient online transactions [2, 3].

In this digital environment, e-service quality has become a critical determinant of customer evaluation and platform competitiveness. E-service quality refers to the

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ability of an online platform to deliver services efficiently, reliably, and securely [4, 5]. It encompasses aspects such as system responsiveness, ease of use, information accuracy, and transaction security. Previous studies have demonstrated that higher levels of e-service quality contribute positively to customer satisfaction by improving user experience and reducing perceived effort in online transactions [6, 7]. This indicates that service performance plays a fundamental role in shaping customer perceptions in digital contexts.

However, customer evaluation in online environments is not solely determined by functional service attributes. One of the most important psychological factors influencing user behavior is e-customer trust. In contrast to offline transactions, digital interactions involve greater uncertainty due to the absence of physical contact [8–10]. Trust reflects the confidence of users in a platform's ability to deliver services reliably, protect personal information, and fulfill its promises. Prior research has shown that trust not only directly influences customer satisfaction but also strengthens the relationship between service quality and satisfaction [11, 12]. This suggests that even when service quality is perceived as high, the absence of trust may limit its impact on customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the relationship between e-service quality, e-customer trust, and e-customer satisfaction can be understood as an integrated mechanism. E-service quality serves as the foundation for building trust, while trust functions as a reinforcing factor that enhances satisfaction. Empirical evidence indicates that customers who perceive a platform as reliable and secure are more likely to develop trust, which subsequently leads to higher satisfaction levels and more positive evaluations of the service experience. This highlights the importance of examining not only direct effects but also indirect relationships among these variables [13, 14].

Despite the growing body of literature on e-service quality, trust, and satisfaction, several gaps remain. First, many previous studies have focused on general e-commerce settings, while limited attention has been given to the Online Travel Agent (OTA) sector, particularly in emerging markets such as Indonesia. Second, the mediating role of e-customer trust in the relationship between e-service quality and e-customer satisfaction has not been extensively explored in this specific context. Given the unique characteristics of Indonesian consumers—such as high reliance on mobile applications and sensitivity to service reliability—further investigation is necessary to provide context-specific insights.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of e-service quality on e-customer satisfaction, with e-customer trust as a mediating variable, in the context of the Tiket.com platform. By employing the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach, this research provides empirical evidence on how service quality and trust interact in shaping customer satisfaction. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital marketing and service management literature, as well as offer practical implications for online travel platforms in enhancing customer experience and maintaining competitiveness.

Therefore, this study is expected to provide insights for future research on service quality and its impact on consumer behavior in digital environments. Figure 1 illustrates

the conceptual framework of this study, showing the relationships among e-service quality, e-customer trust, and e-customer satisfaction.

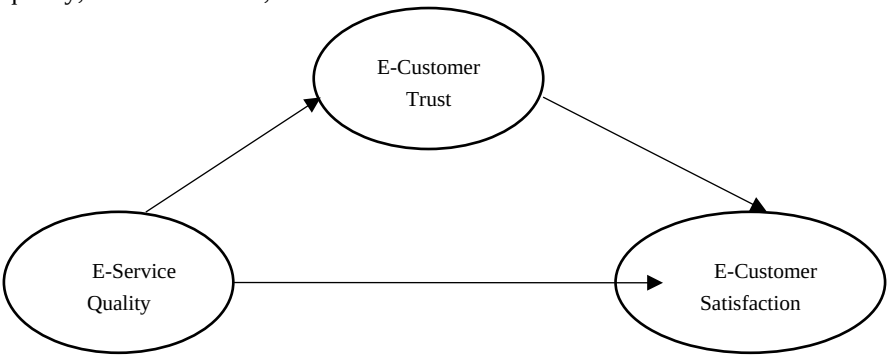

Fig. 1. Research Model

2 Methods

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a causal research design to examine the relationships between e-service quality, e-customer trust, and e-customer satisfaction. A causal approach is appropriate for identifying cause–effect relationships among variables and testing the proposed hypotheses within a structured model [15].

The population of this study consists of users of the Tiket.com application who have conducted at least one transaction. A purposive sampling technique was employed, targeting respondents who had recent experience using the platform. A total of 271 valid responses were collected, which meets the recommended minimum sample size for Structural Equation Modeling analysis [15].

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through digital platforms. The measurement items were adapted from established studies to ensure content validity. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was used to measure all constructs.

The measurement model was evaluated using outer loading, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Indicators were considered valid if the loading factor exceeded 0.70 and AVE values were above 0.50, following established guidelines in the literature (Hair et al. 2019).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was selected due to its suitability for complex models and its ability to handle non-normal data distributions [16]. The analysis involved evaluation of the measurement model (validity and reliability), structural model (path coefficients and significance), and mediation effects using a bootstrapping procedure.

3 Results and discussion

A total of 271 valid responses were obtained from users of the Tiket.com application who had conducted at least one transaction within the last three months. The majority of respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years, representing a digitally active segment with high familiarity with mobile-based services. Most respondents were students and employees, indicating a user group with frequent travel needs and reliance on online platforms for convenience and efficiency.

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study. The results indicate that all indicators meet the required thresholds. Specifically, the outer loading values exceed 0.70, confirming convergent validity. Composite reliability values are above 0.80, indicating high internal consistency, while average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, demonstrating adequate construct validity [15].

In addition, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis. The results confirm that each construct is distinct and adequately represented by its indicators. These findings indicate that the measurement model is reliable and suitable for further analysis.

The structural model was evaluated to examine the relationships among e-service quality, e-customer trust, and e-customer satisfaction. Table 1 presents the results of hypothesis testing in the structural model.

Table 1. Result of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	p-value	Result
E-Service Quality → E-Customer Satisfaction	0.451	7.872	0.000	Significant
E-Service Quality → E-Customer Trust	0.536	9.334	0.000	Significant
E-Customer Trust → E-Customer Satisfaction	0.317	6.415	0.000	Significant
E-Service Quality → E-Customer Satisfaction (via E-Customer Trust)	0.170	5.392	0.000	Significant (mediation)

The results indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant. E-service quality has a direct and significant effect on both e-customer satisfaction and e-customer trust. Furthermore, e-customer trust significantly influences e-customer satisfaction.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) shows that e-service quality explains 28.7% of the variance in e-customer trust, while e-service quality and e-customer trust jointly explain 53.4% of the variance in e-customer satisfaction. This suggests that the model has moderate to strong explanatory power.

This study finds that e-service quality has a significant influence on e-customer satisfaction, both directly and through the mediating role of e-customer trust. These

findings are consistent with previous studies, which highlight that e-service quality is a key factor in shaping customer experience in digital environments.

The findings of this study confirm that e-service quality plays a critical role in shaping e-customer satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through e-customer trust. This result highlights the importance of integrating functional and psychological factors in understanding customer behavior in digital platforms.

First, the significant effect of e-service quality on e-customer satisfaction indicates that customers evaluate their experience based on the efficiency, reliability, and usability of the platform. When digital services are perceived as responsive and easy to use, users tend to develop more positive evaluations, which leads to higher satisfaction levels. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of service quality in online environments [5, 6].

Second, e-service quality significantly influences e-customer trust, suggesting that trust is built through consistent service performance and system reliability. When users perceive that a platform operates securely and provides accurate information, their confidence in the platform increases. This finding supports prior research indicating that trust is strongly influenced by perceived service quality [9].

Third, the results demonstrate that e-customer trust has a significant positive effect on e-customer satisfaction. This implies that trust reduces perceived risk in online transactions and enhances users' confidence in the platform. Customers who trust a platform are more likely to feel satisfied because they believe that the service will meet their expectations. This finding aligns with previous research on trust in digital environments [10].

Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that e-customer trust partially mediates the relationship between e-service quality and e-customer satisfaction. This indicates that while service quality directly influences satisfaction, its impact becomes stronger when trust is established. In other words, trust functions as a reinforcing mechanism that enhances the overall customer experience.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the existing literature by confirming the mediating role of trust in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction within the context of Online Travel Agents. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that digital platforms should not only focus on improving technical service performance but also prioritize strategies that enhance customer trust, such as ensuring transaction security, transparency, and consistent service delivery.

4 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that e-service quality plays a significant role in influencing e-customer satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through e-customer trust. The findings indicate that high-quality digital services, characterized by efficiency, reliability, and security, enhance customer satisfaction while simultaneously strengthening trust in the platform. Furthermore, e-customer trust is confirmed to act as

a partial mediating variable, reinforcing the relationship between e-service quality and e-customer satisfaction.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of trust in digital service environments, particularly within the context of Online Travel Agents. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest that digital platforms such as Tiket.com should not only focus on improving service performance but also prioritize building customer trust through transparency, consistency, and secure transactions.

This study is limited to a specific platform and geographic context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to explore additional variables or different digital platforms to provide broader insights into customer behavior in online services.

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