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Factors Influencing Tourists' Satisfaction on Electric Train Service (ETS)

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Abstract: This study investigates the use of Electric Train Services (ETS) railway service by tourists. It seeks to understand factors influencing tourists' satisfaction with ETS train services. Data were collected from a survey with convenience and purposive sampling by selected tourists in ETS station in Kuala Lumpur Sentral. Theoretical frameworks for research units like the four dimensions of the level of satisfaction (accessibility, service quality, traveling comfort, cost). 213 respondents were gathered through a combination of a direct approach and an online survey using Google Forms. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS 27 and Excel. The findings revealed strong correlations between all the listed aspects and tourist satisfaction. Overall, tourists were highly satisfied with the ETS train services at KL Sentral. Consequently, this study contributes to our understanding of how tourists perceive and experience the ETS service. The conclusion of the study delves into the results obtained and explores potential implications and future possibilities.

Keywords: *Electric Train Services (ETS), Tourist Satisfaction, Railway, service quality*

1. Introduction

Public transport is a critical component of the tourism industry, as it is often the primary means of transportation for visitors to a destination. It plays a vital role in ensuring that tourists can easily move around a city or region and access the various attractions, activities, and amenities that the destination has to offer (Truong & Shimizu, 2017). Besides, the growth of the tourism industry has led to increased pressure on cities to provide efficient and sustainable transportation services to accommodate the increasing number of visitors (Hall et al., 2017). With the trend towards smart cities, the development of public transportation services has become a crucial aspect in creating a sustainable and attractive tourist destination.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the availability and accessibility of public transport are essential elements in creating a positive tourist experience. Public transport systems can help reduce congestion on roads and minimize the environmental impact of tourism activities (Hashim et al., 2019). Additionally, tourists who use public transport are often more likely to interact with locals and immerse themselves in the local culture, leading to a more authentic travel experience (Westcott, 2015).

Railway trains are considered one of the basic forms of public transport that can deliver services to tourists or locals. Public transportation systems, such as railways, are an integral component of the public transport network that plays a crucial role in mitigating traffic congestion, particularly during rush hours and holiday seasons (Mohamad, 2022). Minimizing stop-and-go driving and decreasing fuel consumption, not only saves passengers' time and energy but also reduces traffic congestion. Railway trains play a significant role in the tourism industry, offering a unique and enjoyable way for tourists to explore different destinations. On the other hand, there is another term that can relate to the railway and tourism industry which is railway tourism. According to Blancheton & Marchi (2013) and other sources, railway tourism is a form of travel in which the train not only serves as a means of transportation to a location but also serves as the destination itself (Lee & Chen, 2016).

Previous studies have stated that trains have problems in terms of service quality, comfortability, and accessibility. According to Khalid et al. (2014), there has been a notable dissatisfaction among passengers regarding the quality of service provided by the Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB), particularly in terms of train punctuality and frequency. Passengers have expressed their disappointment and frustration over the unreliability of train schedules. In 2022, ETS had a problem with a power outage that involved disruption of the line's electricity which caused a force stop of the train (Focus Malaysia, 2022). According to Bezyak et al. (2017) in their research, almost half of respondents with disabilities and senior citizens are dissatisfied with the public transportation system. Whether buses, taxis or trains, it still lacks ramps for the elderly and disabled

who use wheelchairs when traveling (New Straits Times, 2015). Therefore, this study aims to determine the factors influencing tourists' satisfaction with ETS train services.

2. Literature Review

Tourist Satisfaction: According to Oliver (1997) as cited in (Saayman et al., 2018), tourist satisfaction is defined as a determination that a feature of a good or service, or the good or service itself, offered a delightful level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of excess and under fulfillment. Satisfaction is a component of attitude that persistently predicts loyalty (Mohamad, 2022). Ercan et al. (2023) stated tourist satisfaction has been studied for decades by researchers who applied a variety of approaches to examine tourists' satisfaction levels. Cao & Cheng (2012) mentioned Pizam, the earliest researcher on tourist satisfaction because of the comparison between the expectations of tourist destinations and the actual conception after arriving. In another study, tourist satisfaction is defined as what a tourist feels about the service after experiencing it (Eltayeb, 2017). According to Virkar & Mallya, (2018), several elements, such as expectations generated before and during the trip as well as the tourists' perceptions of the services obtained, may contribute to tourist satisfaction. According to previous studies that have been done, tourist satisfaction will be affected by several factors in the aspects of product, service, brand or business. According to Saporna et al., (2012), the amenities and facilities offered by the provider of train services are made available for the passengers' satisfaction. SERVQUAL method has been used to measure customer satisfaction in various contexts. In addition, service quality measurement has been studied previously in the same context of railway service, but at other locations and for different applications. For instance, studies found that reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles (SERVQUAL attributes) are important factors influencing customer satisfaction among KTMB users in Penang (Abdul Rahim & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Omar et al., 2022). However, in this research, we measure the level of satisfaction with ETS service that influences tourists.

Accessibility: Accessibility is an important aspect of rail journeys with influence on the overall satisfaction of the traveler (Yanık et al., 2017). Accessibility is one of the important factors in train services as it can bring changes to transport, economy and social life (Jamaludin et al., 2022). A famous city like Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh Johor Bharu is a common attraction city among local tourists and international tourists to plan for their visit to Malaysia. Due to the variety of connections available between stations, it is crucial to accurately advise passengers on the schedules, routes, and transfers for both metro-rail services (Ercan et al., 2023) and the accessibility of navigation within the stations themselves (Zhai et al., 2021). According to Le-Klähn & Hall (2014), accessibility is the third highest dimension in the study which comes after traveling comfort and service quality. The dimension of the study focuses on the stations and the vehicle itself. According to Ercan et al. (2023), using screen displays for schedules, train departures/arrivals, route information, route map(s), announcements in stations during and after breakdowns, and announcements in trains during travel can increase the accessibility of rail service. However, this study measures the level of accessibility based on the following criteria: accessibility of train stations, guidance in trains, easier transfer within trains and stations, staff service and amenities.

Service Quality: According to Wang et al., (2020), many researchers are dedicated to assessing the service quality of public transport from the passengers' perspective and identifying the preferred aspects of the service, as it is regarded as a comprehensive measure of travel behavior. According to (de Oña, 2020) in general, service quality is linked to attributes of the service, such as frequency, cleanliness, comfort, and speed, while satisfaction is connected to more intricate perceptions and affective evaluations, encompassing factors like liking, feeling, and pleasure. Furthermore, although most people believe that service quality is a factor in determining customer satisfaction, there is debate over the type of relationship that exists between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Service quality is always the main issue when it comes to public transport (Mohamad, 2022). Most passengers expressed dissatisfaction with the level of service in terms of the punctuality of train arrival and departure (Mat et al., 2019). It always influences the level of satisfaction experienced by users when using a service based on experience. Service quality or SERVQUAL instruments have been used and tested in many studies to determine the level of satisfaction of consumers. In railway studies, measuring service quality for public transport has two dimensions: the first would be the objective dimension, whereby, service quality is objectified in performance indicators such as frequency and speed while the subjective dimension measures service quality through consumer judgments (Eltayeb, 2017). A study in

Indonesia states that RAILQUAL was used on intercity trains in the country, such as platform and in-train services, found punctuality (reliability), employee services, and security (assurance) significantly influenced satisfaction among their respondents (Ali et al., 2022). Based on Le-Klähn et al. (2014) studies, punctuality, reliability, network connection, and service frequency were highly appreciated characteristics of public transport in Munich.

Travelling Comfort: Some researchers stated that comfort has been considered one of the main variables that affects the loyalty and satisfaction of rail transit passengers (Ercan et al., 2023). According to a study, traveling comfort is an important service dimension and it contains the requirements for vehicles such as space, cleanliness, seat availability, and safety as well as stations (Le-Klähn et al., 2014). Other studies found comfort level was assessed based on factors such as seat size, cleanliness, and noise, and the findings strongly indicated that the level of comfort significantly influences traveler satisfaction and loyalty (Ercan et al., 2023). According to Cao & Cheng (2012) studies, cleanliness and comfort of high-speed train compartments are the most satisfactory factors for tourists, especially long-distance tourists, train compartment cleanliness and comfort affect the travel effects and the quality of travel. A study by Mohamad (2022) showed that the comfort and cleanliness of trains had an impact on the most attractive feature of using the ETS system. Other studies stated providing passengers with comforts like cleanliness and air conditioning enhances their traveling satisfaction (Abdul Rahim & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Omar et al. 2022).

Cost: Cost can significantly influence the level of satisfaction with train services, presenting another crucial factor to consider. Numerous research now in existence concentrates on the effects of differences in transportation costs on travel satisfaction (Zhai et al., 2021). According to Ibrahim et al. (2020), authors stated that to convince the public to use the service, service authorities must concentrate on crucial ticket prices. Furthermore, the authors explain one of the key factors affecting how satisfied a customer is with any public transportation service is the cost of the trip. According to Le-Klähn & Hall (2014), price is a crucial determinant in visitor choice and satisfaction with public transportation, necessitating appropriate and appealing pricing to motivate passengers. Ercan et al., (2023) stated in the study that a price-quality ratio can be thought of as the basis for the charge as a measure of tourist satisfaction, and they can assess the fee's value based on the quality of the service they receive. The authors explain more if the price tourists pay for the ticket meets the expectation of quality service from their perspective, the result will be satisfied. Otherwise, it should be low or none. Le-Klähn et al. (2014) studies found that ticket price is one of the most important items to visitor satisfaction with public transport. According to Virkar & Mallya (2018), the authors stated previous study has investigated a relationship between price value and tourist' satisfaction. Furthermore, it explained that price plays an important part in tourist satisfaction and decision-making. However, other studies stated that customer satisfaction is a result of purchase, the result of the contrast between the cost to purchase products (such as money, time, and effort) and the product's effectiveness (Cao & Cheng, 2012).

3. Research Methodology

The research data collected for this study was collected at the ETS departure platform in Kuala Lumpur Sentral, by surveying the tourists of the area. The participants in this study were those who used the ETS train in Kuala Lumpur. The sample for this study included tourists. Convenience sampling was used because of the availability of the respondent and their willingness to answer the questionnaire. This allows group members to collect data from a large sample of people at one point in time during the event. The survey questionnaire is distributed physically, with respondents being approached by the researcher at Kuala Lumpur Sentral to complete the survey by scanning the provided QR code, which would take them directly to the survey questionnaire's site. To facilitate analysis, the quantitative data was initially coded and imported into SPSS. The correlation coefficient was utilized to assess the relationship between variables, aligning with the research objective of the study.

4. Results

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	18 – 29 years old	169	79.3
	30 – 45 years old	23	10.8
	46 – 60 years old	12	5.6
	61 years and above	9	4.2
Gender	Male	50	23.5
	Female	163	76.5
Marital Status	Single	171	80.3
	Married	40	18.8
	Divorced	1	0.5
	Others	1	0.5
Employment	Public	24	11.3
	Private	19	8.9
	Own Business	8	3.8
	Student	151	70.9
	Unemployed	10	4.7
	Others	1	0.5
)f visitor's status	Domestic tourist	207	97.2
	International tourist	6	2.8
I use ETS to	Visit tourist spots	13	6.1
	Travel to different states	193	90.6
	Others	7	3.3
Preferred mode of transport when I travel in Malaysia (ground)	Car	91	42.7
	Bus / Coach	8	3.8
	Train	114	53.5

Demographic Analysis: Based on Table 1, it was found that 76.5% or 163 individuals, identified as female, and 23.5% of respondents, equivalent to 50 individuals, identified as male. In terms of age, 79.3% or 169 individuals fell within the age range of 18 to 29. The age range of 30 to 45 years old accounted for 10.8% of the respondents, with 23 individuals. The age range 46 to 60 years old represented 5.6% of the participants, with 12 individuals. The remaining 4.2% of the respondents, corresponding to 9 individuals, were aged 61 or older. Next, 80% or 171 individuals reported being single. The second highest category was married couples, with 40 individuals, accounting for 18.8% of the total respondents. The remaining categories, including divorced and others, each represented 0.5%, with one individual falling into each of those categories. In terms of employment status, 70.9% of the total 151 participants, identified themselves as students, and the public sector was reported to employ 24 individuals, which accounted for 11.3% of the respondents. On the other hand, the private sector employed 19 individuals, representing 8.9% of the respondents. Approximately 3.8% indicated they were involved in their own business or self-employed. Additionally, 4.7% of the respondents were unemployed, indicating that they were actively seeking employment but currently without a job. Finally, a negligible percentage of 0.5% fell into the "Others" category, which likely includes individuals who did not fit into any of the specified employment categories mentioned earlier. Based on the data, a significant majority of 207 individuals, which accounts for approximately 97.2% of the participants, were identified as domestic tourists. On the other hand, a much smaller proportion of the respondents, specifically 6 individuals, representing approximately 2.8% of the remaining participants, were classified as international tourists and as for the motive to use ETS, 193 individuals, which accounts for 90.6% of the total respondents, stated that they use the ETS (Electric Train Service) for traveling to a different state. 13 individuals, or 6.1% of the respondents, reported using the ETS for visiting tourist destinations. 7 individuals, or 3.3% of the respondents, mentioned other reasons for using the ETS. For transportation mode preference within Malaysia, a total of 114 individuals, accounting for 53.5% of the respondents, indicated that they preferred the train as their mode of transportation. The second most preferred mode of transportation was the car, with 91 individuals, representing 42.7% of the respondents, choosing it as their preferred option. Following closely behind was the bus/coach, which was preferred by 8 individuals, making up 3.8% of the respondents.

Descriptive Analysis: Table 2 provides the results that describe the mean score for accessibility, service quality, travel comfort, cost, and overall satisfaction.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accessibility		
ETS train services are convenient for tourists.	4.57	.551
ETS stations are connected to many significant tourist spots.	4.21	.751
ETS train network connection is connected to important cities.	4.35	.716
ETS stations provide adequate parking areas.	3.75	.868
ETS station provides shuttle services for transfer to other destinations.	4.08	.912
ETS station provides facilities to people with disabilities.	4.33	.805
Service Quality		
ETS train is punctual.	4.45	.742
ETS train is very reliable.	4.52	.611
ETS train frequency of service is adequate.	4.12	.869
ETS train schedule is convenient for tourists.	4.31	.738
ETS train network connectivity is flexible.	4.20	.784
ETS staff service responsiveness is good.	4.33	.642
Information changes on the train schedule are updated.	4.15	.777
Travel Comfort		
ETS seating availability is adequate.	4.11	.912
ETS seating is comfortable for long-distance rides.	4.06	.945
ETS train space is comfortable.	4.19	.865
ETS train space is clean.	4.40	.634
ETS train ambiance is good.	4.32	.722
Cost		
ETS stations provide comfortable space for waiting.	4.14	.874
I feel safe traveling on the ETS train.	4.56	.543
ETS ticketing pricing is affordable.	4.06	.734
ETS price is cheaper than other modes of transport available to go to my intended destination.	3.74	.970
Overall Satisfaction		
Overall, I'm satisfied with ETS services.	4.46	.586
I will use ETS services again in the future.	4.61	.536
I will recommend ETS services to family and friends.	4.56	.601

Accessibility: The item "ETS train services are convenient for tourists" received the highest mean score of 4.57. This high score suggests that tourists generally agree with the statement that ETS train services are convenient for them. It indicates that most respondents perceive the ETS train services as a convenient mode of transportation for tourists. On the other hand, the item "ETS stations provide adequate parking area" received the lowest mean score of 3.75. This lower score indicates that tourists are not as confident in the availability of adequate parking areas at ETS stations. It suggests that there might be room for improvement in providing sufficient parking facilities for tourists at ETS stations.

Service Quality: It is evident that tourists have a strong positive perception of the ETS train, as indicated by the highest mean score of 4.52. This suggests that tourists find the ETS train to be dependable and trustworthy for their travel needs. On the other hand, tourists expressed disagreement with the statement regarding the adequacy of the frequency of ETS train services, as it received the lowest mean score of 4.12. This implies that tourists feel that the frequency of train services offered by ETS is not sufficient to meet their travel

requirements or preferences. They may perceive a need for more frequent train schedules or better availability of train services.

Travel Comfort: Tourists have a positive perception of the safety of traveling on the ETS train, as indicated by the highest mean score of 4.56. This suggests that tourists generally feel secure and protected during their journeys on the ETS train. However, it is worth noting that the lowest mean score of 4.06 suggests that tourists are slightly less satisfied with the comfort of the seating on the ETS train, particularly for long-distance rides. This indicates that there may be room for improvement in terms of providing more comfortable seating options to enhance the overall travel experience for passengers on long journeys.

Cost: The data shows that tourists generally agree that the pricing of ETS tickets is affordable, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.06. However, when comparing the pricing of ETS tickets to other available modes of transportation to reach their intended destination, tourists indicated a slightly lower perception of affordability. The mean score for this aspect was 3.74, suggesting that tourists believe other modes of transport may be cheaper or more cost-effective compared to ETS for reaching their desired location.

Overall Satisfaction: Tourists generally have a positive perception of ETS services and their willingness to use ETS services again in the future is strong, as indicated by a high mean score of 4.61. The lowest mean score of 4.46 suggests that tourists are not satisfied with ETS services.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

		IV1	IV2	IV3	IV4	DV1
Accessibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.621	.583	.342	.611
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.001	.001	.001
	N	213	213	213	213	213
Service Quality	Pearson Correlation	.621	1	.671	.301	.654
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.001	.001	.001
	N	213	213	213	213	213
Travel Comfort	Pearson Correlation	.583	.670	1	.513	.715
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		.001	.001
	N	213	213	213	213	213
Cost	Pearson Correlation	.342	.301	.513	1	.439
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001		.001
	N	213	213	213	213	213
Overall Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.611	.654	.715	.439	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.001	
	N	213	213	213	213	213

Correlation: The results presented in Table 3 demonstrate the associations between several factors, namely accessibility (IV1), service quality (IV2), travel comfort (IV3), and cost (IV4), with overall satisfaction (DV1). The findings from the study indicate that these factors are related to overall satisfaction to varying degrees. According to the data, there is a moderate correlation coefficient of 0.611 between accessibility and overall satisfaction. This correlation is statistically significant, as indicated by a p-value of 0.001. These results suggest

that accessibility has a meaningful relationship with overall satisfaction. Similarly, the correlation between service quality and overall satisfaction is moderate, with a coefficient of 0.654. This correlation is also statistically significant, with a p-value less than 0.001. Hence, the study indicates that service quality significantly influences overall satisfaction. Furthermore, the correlation between travel comfort and overall satisfaction is found to be strong, with a coefficient of 0.715. The statistical analysis confirms that this relationship is significant ($p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the close connection between travel comfort and overall satisfaction. Regarding cost, the correlation coefficient is 0.439, indicating a moderate correlation with overall satisfaction. The statistical analysis further supports this relationship as significant ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, the study suggests that cost plays a moderate role in influencing overall satisfaction. In summary, the results from this study indicate that accessibility, service quality, travel comfort, and cost are all correlated with overall satisfaction. However, the strength of these associations varies, with travel comfort having the strongest correlation, followed by service quality, accessibility, and then cost. These findings emphasize the importance of these factors in shaping overall satisfaction in the context of the study.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

This research aims to identify the factors that contribute to tourist satisfaction with the Electric Train Service (ETS) and focuses on four variables: travel comfort, service quality, accessibility, and cost. Firstly, service quality is the most significant factor leading to tourist satisfaction which is supported by previous findings (Mohamad, 2022) and reliability of ETS trains is the most satisfied dimension in tourist satisfaction. Next, in these studies, the second most significant factor is traveling comfort also supported by (Le-Klahn et al., 2014; Ercan et al., 2023) and the safety of the trains is the most satisfied dimension based on tourist satisfaction. However, Le-Klahn et al. (2014) study, traveling comfort, cleanliness of vehicles and space on vehicles are the most significant dimensions based on visitor satisfaction. Besides, Ercan et al. (2023) noise level, ventilation, and crowdedness as significant dimensions of passenger's comfort level. Furthermore, accessibility is the third most significant factor leading to tourist satisfaction and ETS trains are convenient to tourists is the most satisfied dimension in accessibility. According to Le-Klahn et al. (2014) and Ercan et al. (2023), in their studies also they found that accessibility is one of the important factors that related to tourist satisfaction. Lastly, the cost result does not give an excellent result like the rest because these studies found that the correlation between overall satisfaction is moderate. However, in studies, Le-Klahn et al. (2014) and Ercan et al. (2023) studies stated that fee or ticket price is the most significant dimension to shape the experience satisfaction of people who use public transport and necessitating clearer pricing systems, including smart ticketing, to promote usage among locals and tourists, despite concerns about high prices in Munich compared to other European cities.

To point out, the objective of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence tourists' decision to use the ETS service within a unified theoretical framework. The findings of this study, based on the Le-Klähn et al. (2014) dimension, demonstrate a positive correlation with tourists' overall satisfaction. The survey results reveal that a significant number of respondents consider travel comfort as a crucial factor influencing their decision to use ETS services. The findings indicate that tourists feel comfortable while using ETS services, despite the potential influence of other factors. The study also suggests that service quality has a positive impact on tourist satisfaction, and the data supports this claim. However, the decision to expand services may be influenced by various factors, such as financial considerations and budget constraints. Nonetheless, one potential solution could involve offering more services on major tourist routes. The findings suggest that accessibility and cost also play significant roles in their effects on tourist satisfaction. The study has examined the overall framework of tourist satisfaction and explored its theoretical and practical implications.

In conclusion, this study focused on identifying the factors contributing to tourist satisfaction with the Electric Train Service (ETS) and explored their impact within a unified theoretical framework. The findings revealed that factors such as travel comfort, service quality, accessibility, and cost have significant influences on tourist satisfaction. The results supported the hypotheses related to travel comfort and service quality, emphasizing their positive correlations with overall satisfaction. The study also recommended practical measures to enhance the ETS service, such as increasing seating allocation at waiting areas and improving parking facilities for tourists. However, the research encountered limitations, including a limited time frame and restricted data

collection opportunities, which affected the breadth and diversity of insights gathered. Despite these constraints, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into improving tourist satisfaction with the ETS service. The findings provide valuable insights for ETS operators and policymakers to improve the service and meet tourists' needs and expectations. Future research can address the limitations encountered in this study and further expand the understanding of tourist satisfaction with railway services.

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