

From Complaints to Loyalty: Service Factors Influencing Passenger Satisfaction at Poncol Station

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Abstract: This research investigates the impact of several key factors on customer satisfaction at the KAI Company, specifically for train services operating at Poncol Station in Semarang. Classified as causal research, the study focuses on identifying how variables such as electronic service quality (e-quality), complaint handling, station facilities, and punctuality contribute to improved satisfaction among passengers. The research population consists of all train users at the station, without a fixed number, while a sample of 100 respondents was selected using the Lemeshow formula. Data collection methods involved the use of structured questionnaires and interviews with passengers to gain both quantitative and qualitative insights. The data analysis revealed that 85% of customer satisfaction levels can be attributed to the four main factors mentioned: the quality of digital services, the effectiveness of complaint resolution, the availability and quality of facilities, and adherence to schedules. The remaining 15% of satisfaction is influenced by other, unexamined variables. Each of the four tested variables was found to have a statistically significant individual (partial) impact on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the simultaneous (overall) testing confirmed that these factors collectively have a strong and meaningful effect on how passengers perceive the quality of the rail service. The findings emphasize the importance of consistently improving these specific operational areas to enhance customer experiences. In particular, maintaining service reliability, responding to customer complaints efficiently, improving digital interfaces, and upgrading station facilities can lead to greater satisfaction and potentially increase customer loyalty. The study suggests that service providers like KAI must adopt a customer-centered approach that focuses on both digital and physical aspects of the travel experience to remain competitive in the transportation industry.

Keywords: Customer Complaint Handling; Customer Satisfaction; E-Quality Service; Facility; Punctuality.

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1. Introduction

Technological advances in recent years have made all transportation sectors very accessible. Service companies in the transportation sector strive to provide the best service to consumers (Mukhlidin, 2022). Consumers in the digitalization era now have very broad knowledge of how to choose and decide on something (Muslikhun et al., 2024). for this reason, it is necessary to provide an excellent service so that they get the right satisfaction. customer satisfaction is something that must be achieved by every service company, especially in the transportation sector. to be able to achieve a performance that can satisfy consumers, service companies have several factors to consider.

Factors that can support the creation of customer satisfaction have certainly been considered by service companies, one of which is E-quality service (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Technological developments make service companies must be able to serve both offline and online sectors. PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) is making full efforts to be able to serve consumers online. Consumers in the current era tend to focus more attention and choose to buy train tickets using an online system. A significant increase in passenger volume from several Executive Class, Business Class, and Economy Class. The passenger volume of

Executive Class trains increased by 42.6%, Business Class trains increased by 61.8%, and Economy Class trains increased by 40.8%. For this reason, KAI companies must always provide E-quality service that is well upgraded in order to be able to satisfy digital consumers. It can be said that e-quality service has an influence on customer satisfaction. several studies from (Aferi & Yeni, 2022), (M. Anwarul Islam et al., 2023), (Hsu & Lin, 2023), (Nafisah & Albari, 2024), (Fatimah Az Zahra & Septiadi Wirawan, 2025), and (Indrawati et al., 2024) state that online service quality is able to maintain consumer satisfaction using online transactions. the best service for now that can increase customer satisfaction is through improving good e-quality service.

Apart from e-quality service, customer satisfaction can also be achieved through handling customer complaints (Istanbulluoglu & Sakman, 2024). The development of technology is increasingly advanced, making consumers very selective in choosing transportation services (Wang et al., 2023). KAI companies strive to improve performance by resolving consumer complaints as quickly as possible. Media Indonesia Paper stated a survey of services and facilities at stations owned by KAI companies, as many as 88.5% of respondents stated that the cleanliness of waiting rooms and toilets at the station was in the good category. P thsthtfthe stthe das many as s was In addition, 89% of respondents claimed that the officers operating at the station were considered very responsive in responding to passenger needs. Consumers have religious complaints so that to be able to satisfy them requires good handling. Research from (Fadilah et al., 2023), (Sari et al., 2023), (Helmy et al., 2023), (Jemal Kasahun et al., 2024), (NurFitriyani et al., 2024), (Syafriada & Indrawati, 2024), and (Baptista et al., 2025) states that consumers who have complaints and can be given solutions quickly, then they will feel satisfied with the agency. Complaints that enter the KAI company will be resolved immediately by providing contact persons to consumers both offline and online. For the online process, it can be done through the official website of the KAI company or via email.

The facilities of an organization are very supportive in increasing customer satisfaction. Facilities from small to large things need to be considered properly, especially in service companies. The latest innovation from the KAI company is to provide drinking water stations at 22 stations since July 2024. This is a new breakthrough in facilities to support the reduction of the use of plastic bottles and towards achieving net zero emissions. KAI companies engaged in train transportation services always improve facilities to satisfy consumers. Train facilities from economy class to VIP have shown a good improvement. research from (Sukron et al., 2023), (Al Hidayat et al., 2024), (Fadlis & Retnaningtyas Susanti, 2024), (Sutarjo et al., 2024), and (Miranda Ariyanti & Vonny Tiara Narundana, 2025) explain that the best facilities are a reference for consumers to achieve satisfaction. For that, the company tries to continue to improve its facilities.

In addition to e-quality services, customer complaint handling, and facilities. Punctuality supports customer satisfaction. Timely arrival of trains can minimize delays in arriving at the place. KAI company closed 2024 in terms of punctuality or on time performance (OTP) departures reached 99.77 percent and on time arrival of 96.05 percent. This figure is the highest in the last five years. Consumers have busy schedules that require punctuality to manage their work well. Time is important for a person, for that the KAI company promises on time from departure to arrival at the destination. this has also been researched by (Risal et al., 2024), (Duarte et al., 2025), (Kulal et al., 2025), (Taufik, 2025), and (Wulan Tiara Sani & Erwin Susanto, 2025) state that service companies must be able to provide guarantees on time to consumers because it is related to their satisfaction. Consumers who arrive late tend to be dissatisfied with the services provided, so the need for continuous improvement to improve timeliness.

KAI Company is engaged in Indonesian railway transportation services which has operational areas on the islands of Java and Sumatra. KAI has several train travel routes spread throughout the island of Java and has many stations in big cities, one of which is in the city of Semarang. Semarang City has two large stations, which are Poncol and Tawang stations. Poncol Station is an operational area that is quite crowded with train users. The KAI company strives to be able to satisfy consumers well. Along with the development of technology, Poncol Station has become a high-tech station. Train access can be reached online on the official KAI website and users can use tickets that have been purchased directly. Consumers come to the station and just print the ticket. after that you can immediately get on the train. KAI also provides criticism and suggestion services that can be submitted directly using mail, website, social media, or email. This is to improve the performance of the KAI company in charge of Poncol station in order to satisfy consumers.

This research tries to reveal the phenomenon of increasing customer satisfaction of train transportation services at Poncol station. Consumer satisfaction can be detected due to several factors including e-quality service, handling consumer complaints, facilities, and punctuality. technological changes and advances in the times make consumers more selective and utilize technology to order train tickets. KAI companies try to make consumers satisfied with their services by improving the quality of service to digitalization, handling consumer complaints quickly, facilities, and timeliness of arrival and arrival. The problem in this study can be formulated how the influence of factors that can increase consumer satisfaction of Poncol Semarang station users.

2. Literature Review

Customer satisfaction is very important for service companies to achieve (Azlan & Farid, 2020). The KAI company maximizes e-quality service well at Poncol Semarang station. Service quality is not only on the offline side, but has begun to shift to online because many consumers have made online transactions to purchase train tickets. Consumers who buy tickets online can pick up tickets directly at Poncol station. Payment for train tickets can also be accessed through Moblie banking or other payment services. It can be said that e-quality service has an influence on customer satisfaction. several studies from (Aferi & Yeni, 2022), (M. Anwarul Islam et al., 2023), (Hsu & Lin, 2023), (Nafisah & Albari, 2024), (Fatimah Az Zahra & Septiadi Wirawan, 2025), and (Indrawati et al., 2024) state that online service quality is an important factor in customer satisfaction, state that online service quality is able to maintain consumer satisfaction using online transactions. the best service for now that can increase customer satisfaction is through improving good e-quality service. based on the above statements, hypotheses can be formulated, among others:

H1 : E-Quality Service Affects Customer Satisfaction At Semarang Poncol Station.

Handling customer complaints is a major component in satisfying customers. The majority of consumers are now online users. They are more flexible when making online purchases so there needs to be good handling. Poncol Station has been designed by the KAI company to be able to handle consumer complaints. Employees placed at Poncol station have been well trained to be able to provide good service, one of which is handling incoming complaints from consumers. For this reason, it can be said that good handling of consumer complaints will affect the increase in customer satisfaction. Research from (Fadilah et al., 2023), (Sari et al., 2023), (Helmy et al., 2023), (Jemal Kasahun et al., 2024), (NurFitriyani et al., 2024), (Syafrida & Indrawati, 2024), and (Baptista et al., 2025) states that consumers who have complaints and can be given solutions quickly, then they will feel satisfied with the agency. Based on this, it can be stated in a hypothesis formulated as follows:

H2 : Customer Complaint Handling Affects Customer Satisfaction At Semarang Poncol Station.

To be able to increase customer satisfaction, one of them is by providing facilities. Poncol Station in conducting train operations has very good facilities. the infrastructure owned is maximized properly to be able to satisfy consumers. facilities such as toilets, canteens, parking, and others are the main considerations. the better the facilities at Poncol Semarang station, the satisfaction of train service users will increase. Research from (Sukron et al., 2023), (Al Hidayat et al., 2024), (Fadlis & Retnaningtyas Susanti, 2024), (Sutarjo et al., 2024), and (Miranda Ariyanti & Vonny Tiara Narundana, 2025) explain that the best facilities are a reference for consumers to achieve satisfaction. Based on statements and previous research that examines facilities on customer satisfaction. then the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3 : Facility Affects Customer Satisfaction At Semarang Poncol Station.

The timeliness of arrival and arrival at the destination is something that consumers want. They will feel satisfied if the train is on time. The KAI company tries its best to guarantee on-time train departures. This can be seen from the schedule of train departures and arrivals at all stations in Indonesia, especially at Poncol Semarang station. for that, timeliness has an influence on customer satisfaction. some research from (Risal et al., 2024), (Duarte et al., 2025), (Kulal et al., 2025), (Taufik, 2025), and (Wulan Tiara Sani & Erwin Susanto, 2025) mentioned that service users will feel satisfied if served well and on time. For this reason,

punctuality is expected to be a major component in serving consumers. Based on the above statement, a hypothesis can be concluded as follows:

H4 : Punctuality Affects Customer Satisfaction At Semarang Poncol Station.

2.1. Framework

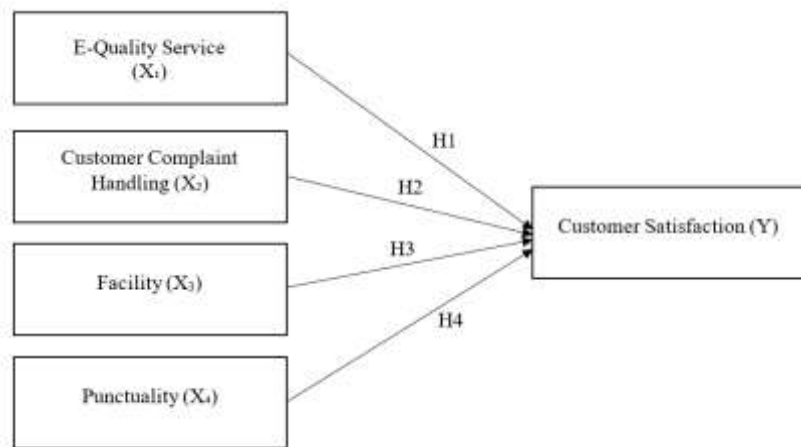


Image 1. Thought of Framework.

3. Method

This research is included in causal research that reveals the influence of factors that can affect consumer satisfaction of train service users at Poncol Semarang station (Ferdinand, 2020). The population in this study can be revealed, namely all consumers who use train services at Poncol Semarang station with an unlimited number. The sample was determined using the Lemeshaw formula and obtained a total of 100 respondents (Sugiyono, 2022). The data used are primary and secondary data. Primary data obtained by distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews. While secondary data is obtained from references and the official website of the KAI company. The data that has been obtained will be tabulated and processed using the SPSS 25 program (Ghozali, 2018). The data analysis tool used uses multiple linear regression tests.

$$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Y = Customer Satisfaction

β_1 -4 = Beta

X1 = E-quality Service

X2 = Consumer Complaint Handling

X3 = Facility

X4 = Punctuality

e = Error

4. Results

4.1. General Description Of Respondents

This research was conducted by examining how consumers assess the services provided by PT. KAI at Poncol station Semarang to satisfy consumers. respondents in this study were calculated using the lemeshaw formula with the number obtained of 100 people. consumers can be generalized as follows:

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

Gender	Amount	%
Male	70	70%
Female	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Table 2. Age of Respondents

Age	Amount	%
21-30	30	30%
31-40	40	40%
41-50	25	25%

51-60	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Description :

Based on the 100 respondents who have been interviewed, it can be seen that 70 respondents are male while the remaining 30 are female. The most train users are at the age of 31-40 years while the least users are at the age of 51-60 years. 31-40 years old is the most productive age in traveling to work out of town.

4.2. Analyze Data

Model Feasibility Test

Based on the results of data processing through testing the coefficient of determination, the results show that the four independent variables (E-quality Service, Handling Consumer Complaints, Facilities, and Timeliness) have an influence of 85% on increasing customer satisfaction while the remaining 15% is influenced by other variables not used in this study. This can be interpreted if customer satisfaction can be created if the manager of Poncol Semarang station is able to serve well, handle complaints well, provide appropriate facilities, and the train arrives on time. Further testing is using the F test to determine how much influence the variables simultaneously. This can be shown in the following table:

Table 3. F test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1748.439	4	737.217	146.483	.000 ^a
	Residual	528.715	96	5.412		
	Total	2277.154	100			

Based on the table above, it can be said that all factors that are used as independent variables in the study have a simultaneous influence on customer satisfaction. customer satisfaction can be detected through factors that have a big share.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

This causal research is tested through the data that has been collected using the t test which can be stated in the table as follows:

Table 4. T test

Model		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		3.875	.549
	E-quality Service (X1)	.329	2.513	.001
	Handling Complaint Consumer (X2)	.315	2.381	.004
	Facility (X3)	.301	2.039	.009
	Punctuality (X4)	.421	3.256	.000

Based on the table above, it can be stated that :

- Hypothesis testing (H1) states that e-quality service has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the significance value of 0.001 less than 0.005. So it can be said that increasing good e-quality service will increase customer satisfaction (H1 accepted).
- Hypothesis testing (H2) states that handling consumer complaints has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the significance value in the table above is smaller than 0.05, so it can be stated that handling complaints that are responsive and fast will make consumers feel satisfied with train services at Poncol Semarang station (H2 accepted).
- Hypothesis testing (H3) states that facilities have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the significance value in the table above is smaller than 0.05, so it can be stated that the availability of adequate facilities will

increase customer satisfaction when using train services at Poncol Semarang station (H3 accepted).

- d. Hypothesis testing (H4) states that punctuality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This is evidenced by the significance value in the table above is smaller than 0.05, so it can be stated that the timeliness of train departures and arrivals will make consumers feel satisfied when using train services at Poncol Semarang station (H4 accepted).

4.4. Multiple Linear Regression Tests

Based on several tests that have been carried out in this study, the Multiple Linear Regression Tests value can be found as follows:

$$Y = 0.329X_1 + 0.315X_2 + 0.301X_3 + 0.421X_4 + e$$

description:

Y = customer satisfaction value

X₁ = if there is an increase in the value of 1 E-quality Service on services at Poncol Semarang station, it can be predicted that there will be an increase in customer satisfaction of 0.329.

X₂ = if there is an increase in value by 1 Consumer Complaint Handling on services at Poncol Semarang station, it is predicted that there will be an increase in customer satisfaction by 0.31.

X₃ = if there is an increase in value by 1 Facility at Poncol Semarang station, it can be predicted that there will be an increase in customer satisfaction by 0.301.

X₄ = if there is an increase in value by 1 timeliness on the arrival and departure of trains at Poncol Semarang station, it is predicted that there will be an increase in customer satisfaction by 0.421.

5. Discussion

5.1 E-Quality Service Affects Customer Satisfaction at Semarang Poncol Station.

The results of hypothesis testing (H1) state that e-quality service has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. For this reason, it can be said that good service quality, especially in the online system, will increase customer satisfaction of train service users at Poncol Semarang station. This agrees with the results of previous research from (Aferi & Yeni, 2022), (M. Anwarul Islam et al., 2023), (Hsu & Lin, 2023), (Nafisah & Albari, 2024), (Fatimah Az Zahra & Septiadi Wirawan, 2025), and (Indrawati et al., 2024) which state that increasing e-quality service will have a good impact on increasing customer satisfaction.

E-quality service in recent years has indeed become a full concern in every service company. This is due to the increase in increasingly sophisticated technology which makes humans switch from offline to online systems. The KAI company operating at Poncol Semarang station is also trying to improve service quality in the online system. Purchasing train tickets through the KAI Access website is easy, the payment system is easy, and the train schedule can be checked at any time. This allows consumers to determine their own ticket purchase schedule according to their needs. Consumers feel a satisfaction with KAI services at Poncol Semarang station because of the integration of online services with the same offline. with this, it is evident that if the KAI company at Poncol Semarang station continues to improve e-quality service, it will make consumers feel satisfied.

5.2. Customer Complaint Handling Affects Customer Satisfaction at Semarang Poncol Station.

The results of hypothesis testing (H2) which states that handling consumer complaints has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. For this reason, it can be said that service companies that are able to handle consumer complaints properly will increase customer satisfaction of train service users at Poncol Semarang station. This is in line with the results of previous research from (Fadilah et al., 2023), (Sari et al., 2023), (Helmy et al., 2023), (Jemal Kasahun et al., 2024), (NurFitriyani et al., 2024), (Syafriada & Indrawati, 2024), and (Baptista et al., 2025) explaining that the main key to satisfying consumers is handling complaints as a top priority.

The KAI company operating at Poncol Semarang station tries to serve consumers well regardless of status. workers are given good training to be able to serve every railroad service user. Poncol Station Semarang also has a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on how to handle consumer complaints and consumers can follow the procedure when requesting

complaint handling. This SOP is used so that consumers know how the complaint handling mechanism works. consumers can also ask officers about train arrivals and departures. For this reason, this research has proven that Poncol Semarang station has carried out the best complaint handling procedures so that consumers are satisfied.

5.3. Facility Affects Customer Satisfaction at Semarang Poncol Station.

The results of hypothesis testing (H3) state that facilities have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. For this reason, it can be said that good and adequate facilities at Poncol Semarang station for train passengers will increase customer satisfaction of train service users. This is in line with the results of previous research from (Sukron et al., 2023), (Al Hidayat et al., 2024), (Fadlis & Retnaningtyas Susanti, 2024), (Sutarjo et al., 2024), and (Miranda Ariyanti & Vonny Tiara Narundana, 2025) explaining that facilities are one of the main factors of service companies to satisfy customers. The KAI company has adequate facilities for all train passengers.

The facilities provided by the KAI Company at Poncol Semarang station are very diverse. spacious parking, canteen, toilet, online purchase ticket exchange, waiting room, and others. the waiting room is made as comfortable as possible so that passengers waiting for the arrival of the train can feel comfortable. The facilities provided by the manager of Poncol Semarang station are also increasingly improved such as the availability of ATM machines, prayer rooms, CCTV, clinics, and minimarkets. This increase in facilities is for the convenience and satisfaction of users of train services at Poncol Semarang station. This research proves that facilities are able to influence the increase in customer satisfaction.

5.4. Punctuality Affects Customer Satisfaction at Semarang Poncol Station.

The results of hypothesis testing (H4) state that punctuality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. For this reason, it can be said that the punctuality of departure and arrival times at Poncol Semarang station will increase customer satisfaction of railroad service users. This is in line with the results of previous research from (Risal et al., 2024), (Duarte et al., 2025), (Kulal et al., 2025), (Taufik, 2025), and (Wulan Tiara Sani & Erwin Susanto, 2025) stating that service companies that are able to serve consumers in a timely manner will increase customer satisfaction. The KAI company has a standardized train departure and arrival schedule. This can be seen through the official KAI access website which shows the schedule and hours of departure. prospective ticket buyers can buy at the station or online.

The schedule of train departures and arrivals at Poncol Semarang station is almost never late because it has been scheduled with certainty. The speed of the train is set in such a way by the machinist so that it can arrive on time to the destination. The train schedule has been structured neatly and coherently and even train ticket buyers can estimate ticket purchases on certain dates. This program is given to consumers so that they can determine the right time according to their schedule.

6. Conclusions

This research provides quite a lot of things and experiences about how the railway company manages Poncol station to provide customer satisfaction. This can be summarized in the following points:

- a. E-quality service shows that it can increase customer satisfaction. KAI Company in increasing customer satisfaction makes every effort to provide the best service, especially in E-quality service to consumers. a high increase in e-quality service can also increase customer satisfaction.
- b. Good handling of consumer complaints can increase customer satisfaction. consumers always want to get the best service in using train services. if the poncol station manager can handle consumer complaints well and quickly, then consumers will feel satisfied with the services provided by KAI Company in charge at poncol station.
- c. The facilities provided by KAI Company are also increasing. this is related to customer satisfaction. this study produces findings that the improvement of existing facilities at poncol station is getting better in order to increase customer satisfaction of railroad service users.
- d. Punctuality to destination can also provide customer satisfaction. KAI Company in charge of the poncol station makes every effort to work on time in driving the train.

consumers who arrive at their destination on time, then they will feel that the train provides good service so that they feel very satisfied.

7. Limitation

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the research was only conducted at Poncol Station Semarang so that the results cannot be generalized to all train service users in other regions. Second, the approach used is quantitative with multiple linear regression analysis tools, which although it shows positive and significant results on the variables of E-Quality Service, Customer Complaint Handling, Facility, and Punctuality on Customer Satisfaction, but is unable to capture in depth qualitative aspects such as emotional perceptions and customer experience. Third, the data was obtained through a closed questionnaire which potentially contains subjective bias from respondents as well as limitations in exploring the reasons behind customer satisfaction as a whole.

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