Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTMB) Services: The Role of Service Quality and Recovery Towards Satisfaction and Loyalty

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Abstract **- KTMB has been operating in Malaysia for decades, but the public transportation environment is changing, putting pressure on the industry to improve its services and facilities in order to satisfy customers. As a service-oriented corporation, it is critical for KTMB to preserve its reputation as the preferred high-speed rail service provider. Accordingly, this study intends to examine the impact of variables pertaining to service quality associated with KTMB service on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, this study examines the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Using the survey method, this study collected data from 406 KTM users, and subsequently, the data was analysed using SPSS. The finding of the analysis reveals that service recovery is the most influential factor towards customer satisfaction. Also, customer satisfaction significantly influences customer loyalty. In conclusion, the findings of this research assist the management of KTMB in enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.**

Keywords - *Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, service recovery*

I. Introduction

A good transport system plays a critical role in a country's economic growth and development (Agbaeze and Onwuka, 2014). The railway transportation is still considered important in the movement of goods and passengers in many countries around the world (Agbaeze and Onwuka, 2014). Railway transportation is also

considered to be safer, low cost, environmentally friendly and able to offer a better fuel efficiency compared to other types of transportation (Mulenga and Lusaka, 2019).

In Malaysia, Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) has become the main railway operator for more than 100 years. The history of KTMB goes all the way back to the year 1885 when the first railway track was built, linking the mining town of Taiping to Port Weld. This was followed by railway tracks linking Padang Besar to Singapore in 1913 and from Gemas to Tumpat in 1930. Formerly known as the Malayan Railway Administration (a corporate body solely established under Section 4 of the repealed Railway Ordinance 1948), it came to be known as KTMB after a government-led corporatisation in 1992 but remains wholly owned by the Malaysian government. In its 135 years of history, KTMB has undergone tremendous changes, especially after the corporatisation of KTMB, where a number of modernisation and ambitious projects have taken place. The remarkable achievements of KTMB have led to the establishment of Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) Intercity, KTM Komuter, KTM Electric Train Service (ETS), KTM Kargo, and the KTM Myra.

KTMB has been striving to achieve its mission, which is to be the preferred land transportation system by providing safe, efficient, and reliable integrated rail services for people and goods. The realisation of this effort can be seen with the accomplishment of KTM Komuter as the preferred transport due to its accessibility to the majority of the Klang Valley's population, not to mention other benefits such as comfort, safety, and speed compared to the highly crowded road transportation network (Khalid, Bachok, Osman and Ibrahim, 2014). The women only coach which was launched on 28 April 2010, has added more value and satisfaction towards the KTM Komuter service since it improves the safety and comfort levels of women while travelling on public transport vehicles (Bachok, Osman, Murad and Ibrahim, 2014). Another breakthrough of the KTM service is KTM ETS, a high-speed passenger train service, which has become the preferred choice of public transport. This service is in high demand from those travelling along the routes from Padang Besar to Kuala Lumpur. In addition, KTMB has been known to provide customers with a viable and competitive cargo service in the most cost-effective manner (Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad, 2012).

Generally, railway operators face various issues and challenges to meet and satisfy their customers' expectation and at the same time be able to maintain a high performance (Heng and Hamid, 2021). Several scholars have exerted that customer satisfaction and retention become important factors in measuring the quality of products or services in the railway industry (Mulenga and Lusaka, 2019). Taking that into consideration, KTMB's services have improved significantly over the years owing to the company's efforts to remain competitive and responsive to market demands. KTMB's commitment towards improving the quality of their service has prompted them to be extremely cautious about the service quality they provide and their clients' satisfaction with it. The company's performance is inextricably linked to service quality (Ramayah, Samat and Lo, 2011). As a service-oriented company, it is vital to ensure top service quality as it will not only encourage more people to use their services but will also provide satisfaction and a good corporate image to society as a whole. Philip and Hazlett (1997) posited that service quality measurement may differ from one company to another, even within the same industry, suggesting that quality control in the service industry is rather unique. While KTMB has put so much effort into providing quality service to the public, there are still some emergent issues that KTMB needs to deal with.

Among the concerns are a new ticketing system that is long overdue — KTM Komuter tickets can only be bought at the counter, 'Touch n Go' reader malfunctions, limited parking space at KTMB stations, train breakdowns that cause issues to the passengers especially during peak hours, cleanliness of train and station areas such as public toilets, waiting areas and the coach; safety on the train and station; the availability of well-trained staff and service disruption management (The Malay Mail, 2009; Zaherawati et al., 2010). Of great concern is that there are increased cases of security concerns such as property crimes like car theft, motorcycle theft, and burglary in the KTMB parking lot (Azizan et al., 2016). In addition, KTMB has recurring problems with delays and train punctuality where several researchers have addressed these issues in their studies for years (Isai et al., 2020; Utusan Malaysia Online, 2008; Mat et al., 2019). Clearly, it has been proven that KTMB's service quality is an important research topic that needs to be further investigated.

More often than not, the service quality of public transport is a highly important issue for a better and comfortable environment (Mat et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, it is vital to highlight that some studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of public transport, but few studies on the dimensions of service quality and passenger satisfaction with KTMB services have been performed. Most of the studies conducted so far have dealt with service quality and passenger satisfaction with other public transport services such as buses, LRT, and commuter train (Noor and Foo, 2014; Ibrahim and Borhan, 2021; Wan et al., 2018). Furthermore, research that have been conducted on the quality of KTMB services have resulted in inconsistent findings. For instance, in a study by Bambale, Abd. Ghani and Ado (2020), it was shown that tangibility is one of attributes of service quality that influence customer satisfaction with the service quality of trains in Malaysia. In contrast, Thanaraju et al. (2019) viewed that the relationship between service quality dimension and passenger satisfaction is insignificant at KTMB stations in the central region of Malaysia. This invites further research to better

understand service quality and customer satisfaction with KTMB services. Other researchers have even argued that customer loyalty is an important determinant in the study of public transportation because customers have low switching costs and many other alternatives (Pantouvakis and Lymperopoulos, 2008). Frustrated KTMB customers will choose to use other public transportation modes such as bus, taxi, or commuter train. Moreover, there is an increasing threat to KTMB services since the introduction of e-hailing services in this era (Tirachini, 2020). It means that there is a consistent need to understand customers' loyalty in using KTMB services.

Taking all that concerns into consideration, this study has come up with a number of variables pertaining to the service quality associated with KTMB services, namely, assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, comfort, connection, convenience, corporate image, website usability, and service recovery. Accordingly, this study intends to examine the impact of variables pertaining to service quality associated with KTMB services on customer satisfaction. Subsequently, the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is also examined. The variables of this study have been identified based on an extensive review of the literature. This study is considered highly significant as its outcomes will benefit the KTMB management in providing practical guidelines for continuous service improvement for the customers.

II. Literature Review

Service Quality

The concept of service quality has been described as the gap that exists between service delivery and customers' expectations (Zeithaml et al., 1988). As a result, service quality is one of the concepts in marketing that has been largely recognised as an important strategy being adopted by many organisations. Parasuraman et al. (1985) used an approach to measure customers' feelings about service quality which originally included dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, competence, access courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding of the customer, and tangibles. Basically, SERVQUAL becomes the underpinning theory of the study. The SERVQUAL model was developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) to measure the customer's perception of firm service quality by forming five dimensions that included reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility.

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has gained much attention from both scholars and practitioners by reason of their relevancy (Roy and Ganguli, 2008). SERVQUAL 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, Nor and Rahim (2021) found that reliability, responsiveness, and tangibles are important factors influencing customer satisfaction among KTMB users in Penang. In addition, assurance and empathy are also integral factors in ensuring customer satisfaction with public transport services (Farooq et al., 2018). Many firms allocate substantial resources to measuring and monitoring quality in order to retain customers and improve performance. According to Mohd Kassim and Bojei (2002), service quality is considered an important tool for creating a competitive advantage in dealing with a new environment. Previous research has found that customers rate service better and are more likely to return when employees are customer-oriented, have a good rapport or connection with customers, and can listen attentively (Brown, Mowen, Donovan and Licata, 2002).

Furthermore, providing comfort elements to customers in the form of cleanliness and air conditioning helps increase customer satisfaction (Chou et al., 2013; De Oña et al., 2013; Nor and Rahim, 2021). This is in addition to the convenience of finding information through company websites (Morton et al., 2016). There is ample evidence that service quality is one of the most important factors in strengthening the relationship between customers and companies (Nguyen-Phuoc et al., 2020) and customer satisfaction (Haji Guliling and Abdul Aziz, 2018). Based on the previous empirical results, these are the following hypotheses:

H1: Assurance is associated with satisfaction
H2: Empathy is associated with satisfaction
H3: Reliability is associated with satisfaction
H4: Responsiveness is associated with satisfaction
H5: Tangible is associated with satisfaction
H6: Comfort is associated with satisfaction
H7: Connection is associated with satisfaction
H8: Convenience is associated with satisfaction
H9: Website usability is associated with satisfaction

Service Recovery

The term "service recovery paradox" was first defined by McCollough and Bharadwaj (1992) and refers to situations in which a customer's post-failure satisfaction exceeds their pre-failure satisfaction. Buttle and Burton Smith (2002) supported the "recovery paradox," which states that if there is a service failure and if the service recovery is highly effective, it offers an opportunity for the firm to achieve higher customer satisfaction ratings than if the failure had never occurred. A service provider's real test is their ability to recover a service (Gronroos, 2007). Effective service recovery increases customer satisfaction and helps spread positive word of mouth (Radu et al., 2019). Several past studies found that recovery satisfaction is strongly associated with positive behaviour such as satisfaction (Alzoubi et al., 2020), intention (Xie et al., 2020), positive WOM (Luong et al., 2021), and customer loyalty (Chang and Hung, 2018). Interestingly, satisfaction with service recovery was also found to be negatively connected to product boycott (Omar et al., 2017). According to the findings, the more satisfied a client is with the company's response to a service failure, the less likely they are to boycott the product. Hence, this study hypothesises that

H10: Service recovery is related to satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been a subject of great interest to organisations and researchers alike; customer satisfaction can bring about an increase in the number of transactions, positive word of mouth, and overall value of the firm (O'Sullivan and McCallig, 2009). In the retail environment, Macintosh and Lockshin (1997) defined satisfaction as "a customer's overall evaluation of the store experience" (p.488). Olsen and Johnson (2003) defined customer satisfaction as "a cumulative evaluation of a customer's purchase and consumption experience to date" (p.60). It is generally accepted that consumer satisfaction is the most efficient and least expensive source of market communication because consumers who are satisfied with a product/service will be more likely to disseminate their favourable experiences to others and be loyal (Omar et al., 2013; Slack and Singh, 2020). Previous tourism management research has discovered that visitors' satisfaction with products and services found at tourism destinations has an impact on the length of time they spend there (Mahdzar et al., 2020). Visitors who are pleased with a particular place, for example, are likely to return and recommend the destination to others. If customers are disappointed, on the other hand, they will switch and spread a negative perception of the product/service they encountered (Sánchez-Garca and Currás-Pérez, 2011). To further extend from a marketing perspective, one of the aspects leading to a sales increment is customer satisfaction, leading to customer loyalty and repeat purchase (Makanyeza and Mumiriki, 2016). Studies on different transportation modes explain the concept of loyalty, which focuses on the users' intentions to continue using the service, their willingness to recommend it to others, and their overall satisfaction (Van Lierop, Badami, and ElGeneidy, 2018). Thus, another hypothesis of the study is

H11: Satisfaction is positively related to loyalty

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a combination of the customer's likelihood of repurchasing from the same supplier in the future. Apparently, customer loyalty has been recognised as the dominant factor in determining a business organisation's success. In the study by Lam and Burton (2006), they found that loyal customers are more likely to engage in repeat purchases from a supplier or increase their "share" of purchases from a particular supplier. They may also provide recommendations or engage in word-of-mouth promotion (Srivastava and Rai, 2018; Woisetschläger et al., 2011). As suggested by many works in literature, the success of a public transportation service depends on the number of passengers that the transportation service is able to attract and retain (De Oña et al., 2013). Therefore, KTMB must assess the important factors that influence satisfaction and loyalty among KTMB users, particularly from the KTMB service quality and service recovery aspects. Figure 1 depicts how each of the variables discussed above is expected to relate to one another.

III. Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study is shown in Figure 1. The independent variables are KTMB service quality and service recovery, while loyalty is the dependent variable.
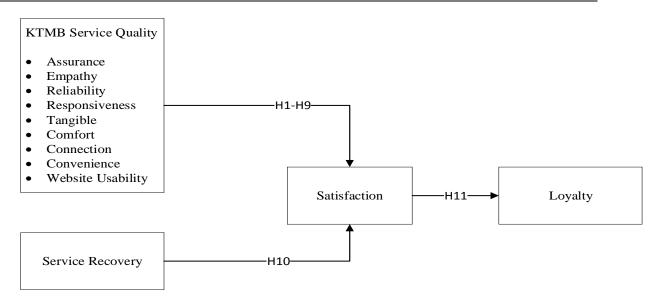
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

IV. Methodology

Data Collection and Sampling Design

Data collection is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can affect the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results. This study is a cross-sectional study in which data was gathered over a period of one month to discover the answer to the study's research questions: i. Are Do KTMB services (i.e. assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, comfort, connection, convenience, corporate image, website usability) and service recovery significantly related to satisfaction?; and ii. Does satisfaction significantly influence loyalty? Data was collected using a self-administered survey questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to obtain information from individuals with experience of KTMB services i.e. those who have used them for at least a year. Respondents were given a list of KTMB services. They were asked to choose a specific service of which they had experience and use that experience to answer the questions. Since one of the purposes of the study is to investigate the effect of KTMB service recovery, the target population must have at least experienced one KTMB service failure such as delay, poor functions of commuter, train breakdown, and limitation of trips. .

The information that has been given will help KTMB Services serve current and future users with a higher standard of service. To reach the respondents, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique where KTMB users were approached near KTMB stations in Klang Valley; these respondents were proficient and well-informed about a phenomenon of interest (Etikan et al., 2016). According to Rai and Thapa (2015), judgemental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the individuals involved in the research are taken by the researcher based on specific criteria that may consist of particular knowledge in the research issue or willingness and capacity of respondents to participate in the study. The main criterion of this study is individuals who have experience of using KTMB services for at least 1 year and living in Klang Valley. There are several reasons Klang Valley was chosen as the research location. First, its geographical location is between Selangor state and the Federal Territory, which includes the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, and other large cities in central peninsula Malaysia; these are places where most of the passengers from various states tend to congregate (Razi and Harun, 2013). Furthermore, most studies pertaining to user behaviour towards KTMB have chosen Klang Valley as the sampling area (Isai et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2019).

Purposive sampling was employed in terms of sampling design since the researchers knew something about the individual cases and chose them deliberately because they were most likely to yield the best results (Rowley, 2014). This method generates a wide range of ideas in a short amount of time, allowing each person to submit information based on their personal experiences with KTMB services.

In determining that the sample size is adequate and fulfil the acceptable range, some researchers have suggested as many as 50 respondents per variable (Padhazur and Schmelkin, 2013). However, Ferguson and Cox (1993) suggested the acceptable minimum subject to item ratio for reaching a stable factor structure as 5:1.

Based on the rule of thumb suggested by Ferguson and Cox (1993), the sample size for this research is 410 (5 x 82 items). With the help of three research assistants, 500 copies of the questionnaire were delivered around the stations. The research assistants would explain the aim and objectives of the study to potential respondents before handing out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was only completed by individuals who agreed to participate. The nominal and interval scales are used in this study's survey questionnaire, allowing specific KTMB functions to be performed on the data collected from the respondents. Furthermore, the Likert scale is used to determine how strongly respondents agree or disagree with the statements that support the independent and dependent variables. It is based on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Based on the data collection and sample methods used, 406 questionnaires were found to be suitable for further research, representing an 81.2 percent response rate which is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2014).

Measurement

The questionnaire contained three parts. The first part was intended to get information about customers' KTM usage. The second part had the measurements of the variables involved in this study. The third part was used for purpose of collecting the respondent's demographic information. The questionnaire was designed using items from past research. All variables used the five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree and were measured as a unidimensional construct. The measurement items for five dimensions of service quality, namely assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and tangible, were adapted from Zeithaml et al. (1988) and Parasuraman et al. (1994). Meanwhile, measurement items for comfort and connection were adapted from Ribbink et al. (2004). The construct convenience was adapted from Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and Page and Spreng (2002). For website usability, the measurement items were adapted from Robledo (2001), while for service recovery, the measurement items were adapted from Brown et al. (1996). For the endogenous variables, customer satisfaction was measured using the items from Taylor and Baker (1994) and customer loyalty from Yang and Peterson (2004).

V. Finding and Results

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. The table shows that in this study, most of the respondents are female (60.1% of respondents), and the rest are male. Most respondents, about 51%, are from the age group of less than 25 years old, followed by 22.4% in the age group of 26–35, making up a total of 82.5% of all respondents. In terms of ethnicity, 312 respondents are Malay, which account for 76.7% of respondents, followed by Chinese (58), Indian (23), and 13 from other ethnic groups. Slightly more than half of the respondents are earning less than RM 2000 per month, at 50.9%. In addition, in terms of occupation, the respondents mostly are students at 45.8 followed by professionals (13.3%) and subsequently technical and support staff (10.8%). Other types of occupations constitute the remaining 30%.

Therefore, the major employment categories are students with 44.5% and the private sector (25.3%). The percentages of people who have utilised KTMB services once a month, once a week, and once a day are 29.7%, 24.3%, and 27%, respectively. The majority of respondents (37.3%) (n = 163) say they utilise it for work. Studying follows at 35.9 % (n = 146) and leisure at 20.6% (n = 84). Finally, 41.5 % (n = 169), 36.1 % (n = 147), and 14 % (n = 57) of respondents utilise one-way, return, and monthly travel tickets, respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable			Research Sample (n = 406)	
			Number of Respondents	**%**
Sex	Valid	Male	162	39.8
		Female	244	60.0
	Missing	System	1	0.2
Ethnic	Valid	Malay	312	76.7
		Chinese	58	14.3
		Indian	23	5.7
		Others	13	3.2
	Missing	System	1	0.2

Sex	Valid			
	Missing			
Ethnic	Valid			
	Missing			
Marital	Valid	Single	268	65.8
		Married	132	32.4
		Others	6	1.5
	Missing	System	1	0.2
Age	Valid	Less than 25 years	207	50.9
		26-35	91	22.4
		36-45	53	13.0
		46-55	25	6.1
		56-65	17	4.2
		More than 65 years	13	3.2
	Missing	System	1	0.2
Income	Valid	Less than RM2000	231	56.8
		RM2,001 - RM4,000	70	17.2
		RM4,001 - RM6,000	38	9.3
		RM6,001 - RM8,000	13	3.2
		RM8,001 - RM10,000	15	3.7
		More than RM10,001	14	3.4
	Missing	System	26	6.4
Occupation Level	Valid	Top Management	20	4.9
		Middle Management	41	10.1
		Professional	54	13.3
		Technical and support	44	10.8
		Business Owner	34	8.4
		Students	186	45.7
		Others	26	6.4
	Missing	System	2	0.5
Employment	Valid	Government	50	12.3
		Private	103	25.3
		Self-Employment	31	7.6
		Business Owner	27	6.6
		Students	181	44.5
		Others	13	3.2
	Missing	System	2	0.5
Travel Frequency	Valid	Daily	110	27.0
		Once a week	99	24.3
		Once a month	121	29.7
		Once every 3 months	37	9.1
		Once every 6 months	29	7.1
		Once a year	1	0.2
	Missing	System	10	2.5
Purpose of Travel	Valid	Work	163	37.3
		Studying	146	35.9
		Leisure	84	20.6
		Others	14	3.4
	Missing	System	11	2.7
Type of Ticket	Valid	One way	169	41.5
		Return ticket	147	36.1
		Weekly travel	16	3.9
		Monthly travel	57	14.0
		Not Applicable	12	2.9
	Missing	System	6	1.5

Data Analysis and Results

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 25.0 was used to analyse the data. Reliability and the survey instrument were checked first. Hair et al. (2010) used the Cronbach's alpha reliability test to judge the internal consistency reliability where 0.70 is considered a benchmark value and results below it led to lower acceptability (Hair et al., 2010). For the present research work, the Cronbach's alpha value for all the variables was more than 0.700. This result indicates that all the constructs in this study possess a high level of internal consistency reliability. Standard multiple regression was used to assess the ability of assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangible, comfort, connection, convenience, website usability, and service recovery (H1–H10) to obtain customer satisfaction. A similar test was also applied to H11, explaining the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

According to the ANOVA model, the ten factors explained 62.6% of the variation in customer satisfaction (R square = .626, F = 66.206, p = .000). The results of the analyses indicate that service recovery (t = 5.59, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.291), connection (t = 3.69, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.197), comfort (t = 3.72, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.168) and empathy (t = 2.79, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.142) make a statistically significant contribution to customer satisfaction. The findings show that service recovery (t = 5.59, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.291), connection (t = 3.69, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.197), comfort (t = 3.72, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.168), and empathy (t = 2.79, p = 0.0001, beta = 0.142) all contribute statistically to customer satisfaction.

The most significant contribution of independent variables to customer satisfaction is found to be by service recovery, followed by connection, comfort, and empathy. However, tangible (t = -0.227, p = 0.780, beta = -.015), web usability (t = -0.354, p = 0.720, beta = -0.015), convenience (t = -0.660, p = 0.510, beta = -0.026), assurance (t = -0.563, p = 0.570, beta = -0.028), reliability (t = -1.570, p = 0.110, beta =-0.076) and responsiveness (t = -1.820, p = 0.070, beta = -0.093) are not significantly related to customer satisfaction. Therefore, H2, H6, H7, and H10 are accepted while H1, H3, H4, H5, H8, and H9 are rejected. Table 2 represents the result of multiple regression analysis pertaining to customer satisfaction as the endogenous variable.

Table 2: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis (Predicting Customer Satisfaction)

	Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficients	t-value	p-value	Decision
		Beta	Std. Error	Beta			
	Model (constant)	.128	.191		.669	.504	
H1	Assurance	-.041	.073	-.028	-.563	.574	Rejected
H2	Empathy	.171	.061	.142	2.790	.006	Supported
H3	Reliability	.094	.060	.076	1.570	.117	Rejected
H4	Responsiveness	.096	.054	.093	1.820	.070	Rejected
H5	Tangible	.0.20	.072	.015	.277	.782	Rejected
H6	Comfort	.188	.060	.168	3.729	.000	Supported
H7	Connection	.213	.058	.197	3.696	.000	Supported
H8	Convenience	-.030	.046	-.026	-.660	.510	Rejected
H9	Web Usability	.018	.050	.015	.352	.724	Rejected
H10	Service Recovery	.292	.052	.291	5.597	.000	Supported

H11 involves the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. According to the ANOVA model, customer satisfaction accounts for 58.7% of the variance in customer loyalty (R square =.587, F = 575.954, p = .000). The results of the analyses indicate that service recovery (t = 23.999, p = 0.000, beta = 0.766) makes a statistically significant contribution to customer loyalty. With the support of H11, this study has

established that a higher level of customer satisfaction is related to a higher level of customer loyalty. Table 3 represents the result of multiple regression analysis pertaining to customer loyalty as the dependent variable.

Table 3: Result of Multiple Regression Analysis (Predicting Customer Loyalty)

	Variable	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficients	t-value	p-value	Decision
		Beta	Std. Error	Beta			
	Model (constant)	.903	.110		8.187	.000	
H11	Customer Satisfaction	.728	.030	-.766	23.999	.000	Supported

I.

VI. Discussion

This study highlighted some factors under service quality, such as empathy, comfort, and connection, which are crucial in driving customer satisfaction. Empathy has been found in past research as one of the crucial aspects to understanding the nature of customer satisfaction in business studies (Markovic et al., 2018). In addition, passengers on public transport care about their comfort when using the service (Noor and Foo, 2014). Thus, a deeper understanding of passenger needs and expectations towards the transport services will lead to their satisfaction (Heng and Hamid, 2021). Other than that, the connections between the service provider and customers, such as providing favourable assistance when in need, are important in ensuring customer satisfaction (Vencataya et al., 2019). Interestingly, the findings in this study support the link between service recovery and satisfaction. The findings from this study are in line with prior research, which suggested that service recovery increases customer satisfaction (Radu et al., 2019). Among all the independent variables, service recovery has the strongest influence on satisfaction, followed by comfort, connection, and empathy. Finally, the results show that an increase in consumer satisfaction will lead to increased customer loyalty. The finding supports previous studies, which found that consumers who are satisfied with a product/service are more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth and be loyal (Slack and Singh, 2020).

VII. Conclusion

This research has answered the research objectives by conducting a multiple regression analysis that describes the relationship between customer satisfaction and service recovery, convenience, empathy, comfort, website usability, assurance, reliability, responsiveness, connection, and tangibles. Also, the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty has been analysed. Among the 11 hypotheses, five hypotheses are accepted while six hypotheses are rejected. In this research, customers value empathy, convenience, connection, and service recovery by KTMB services. And if customers are satisfied with the service quality of KTMB, they will be a frequent user of the train services. The concerns and problems that travellers experience was the focus of this research. A total of 406 people who use public transportation were selected to fill out a questionnaire about KTMB's service quality. This questionnaire was distributed in various locations. The findings of the study offer KTMB a number of implications such as the importance of managing service quality for the passengers to obtain loyal customers towards the company service. In addition, service recovery can be a strong retention strategy for KTMB. Although this study has offered significant contributions in service quality research, it still has a few limitations that should be addressed in the future. This study has employed the quantitative method using cross sectional data focusing only on Klang Valley, even though most of the research on KTMB services have focused on other areas such as northern or eastern Malaysia.

Therefore, future researchers are recommended to adopt the qualitative method, employ a longitudinal study, and expand the research location to acquire a greater perspective in understanding customer satisfaction and service quality. Moreover, concerning the independent and dependent variables in this study, the focus was to examine the ten factors associated with KTMB services with satisfaction, and satisfaction with loyalty. Although the study managed to produce valuable findings pertaining to consumer satisfaction and loyalty towards KTMB, future studies are suggested to examine the factors that could influence consumer emotion and satisfaction such as physical environment, service failure and recovery. Apart from that, future studies could investigate the mediating role of satisfaction and customer experience.

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