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Analysis of the Influence of Service Innova-Tion Aspects, Rates, With the Mediation of Trust Level on Inter-City Inter-Province Bus Ticket Purchase Retention (Case Study of PO Sinar Jaya)

Eko Yulianto[1], Zaenal Abidin[2], Djamal Subastian[3], Devi Marlita[4], Yana Tatiana[5]
[1]Institute of Transportation and Logistics Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia, bus.eko@gmail.com
[2]Institute of Transportation and Logistics Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia, abidin.zaenal103@gmail.com
[3]Institute of Transportation and Logistics Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia, djamalsubastian@gmail.com
[4]Institute of Transportation and Logistics Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia, dev.marlita@gmail.com
[5]Institute of Transportation and Logistics Trisakti, Jakarta, Indonesia, yana23011972@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: bus.eko@gmail.com[1]

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the impact of service innovation, pricing, and trust on ticket purchase retention for intercity and interprovincial (AKAP) buses at PO Sinar Jaya. Despite the increasing number of passengers, ticket purchase retention remains suboptimal, and the load factor is only 50%, far below the ideal standard of 70%. This phenomenon suggests that factors beyond passenger volume, such as service innovation and pricing policies, play a crucial role in influencing customer loyalty. The research employs a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. The study population consists of all PO Sinar Jaya passengers in 2023, totaling 5,635,602 passengers. The sampling technique used is Random Purposive Sam-pling. The sample size is determined using Hair's (2020) formula, based on the number of research indicators. Data was collected through questionnaires, and analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with SmartPLS software. The results indicate that service innovation positively influences trust and ticket purchase retention, whereas pricing does not significantly impact trust but positively affects ticket purchase retention. Additionally, trust plays a crucial role in enhancing purchase retention. The findings highlight the importance of service innovation and competitive pricing strategies in improving customer loyalty at PO Sinar Jaya.

Keywords: Service Innovation, Pricing, Trust, Purchase Retention, AKAP Bus.

INTRODUCTION

The development of transportation in Indonesia has experienced a significant increase in line with the rising interregional mobility of the population. This condition has stimulated the growth of public transportation companies, particularly Intercity and Interprovincial Bus Services (Angkutan Antar Kota Antar Provinsi – AKAP), which has ultimately led to increasingly intense business competition. In this context, innovation is regarded as a strategic mechanism that enables companies to adapt to dynamic environments and maintain competitiveness by creating value-added services oriented toward customer satisfaction (Sen, 2016).

The growing number of AKAP bus operators requires each company to continuously innovate in terms of service quality, pricing strategies, and customer trust development. Several key factors considered by the public when selecting public transportation include safety, comfort, travel time, accessibility, and travel cost (Valeria Roellyanti et al., 2023). Nevertheless, bus services in Indonesia continue to face several challenges, such as relatively long travel times, suboptimal safety levels, and low departure frequency. These conditions indicate that innovation in operational management, driver quality, and the provision of supporting facilities has not yet been fully optimized (Sen, 2016).

In addition to service-related aspects, pricing determination is also a crucial factor influencing customer satisfaction and retention. A mismatch between the fares paid and the quality of facilities received by passengers may reduce the perceived value of the service. In Indonesia, the dynamics of AKAP fare setting and its impact on customer retention remain areas that require more in-depth investigation (Ma et al., 2022). Fares perceived as disproportionate to service quality may diminish customer trust and negatively affect the sustainability of long-term customer relationships.

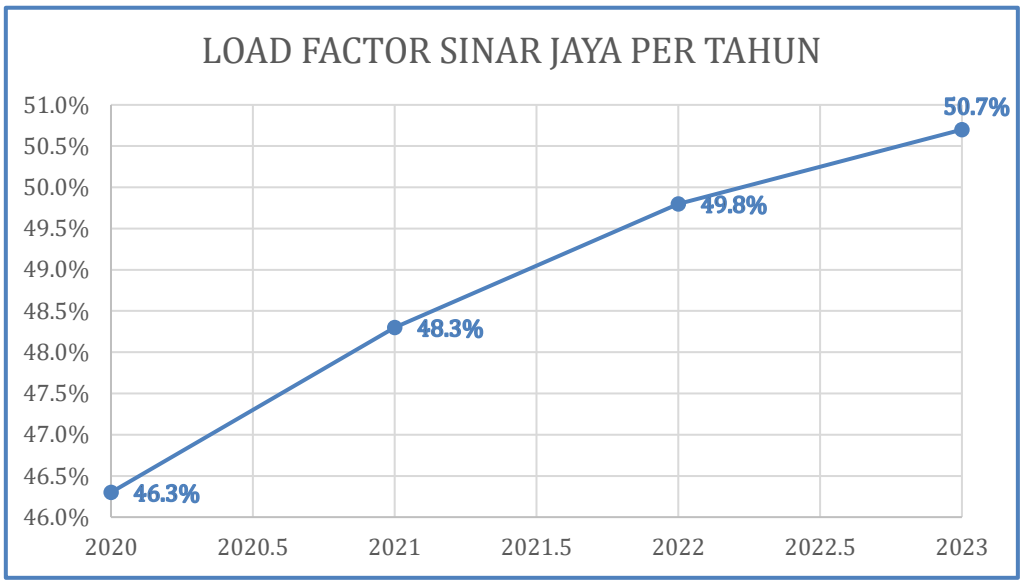
Customer trust is a critical element in promoting retention; however, its formation requires consistent service quality and transparency of information. Once trust declines, recovery efforts become more challenging, even when service improvements are implemented. Failure to deliver continuous service innovation and competitive pricing may lead to a decrease in customer trust and loyalty (Briliana & Sari, 2020). Moreover, external factors such as competitive intensity, negative customer experiences, and overall service quality may also hinder long-term customer retention (Odunlami Ibojo Bolanle, 2014) ; (Artha et al., 2022).

PT Sinar Jaya Megah Langgeng (PO Sinar Jaya) is one of the largest AKAP bus companies in Indonesia, operating an extensive route network, particularly from the Greater Jakarta area to various cities across Java, Sumatra, and Bali. The company is recognized for its relatively superior facilities and service quality compared to its competitors, reflecting a strong commitment to service innovation as a strategy to maintain customer trust and loyalty (Yudha, 2022).Therefore, an examination of service innovation, pricing, and customer trust is highly relevant for further analysis to understand the factors influencing customer retention in AKAP bus services in Indonesia.

Table 1. Summary of Passenger Data of PO Sinar Jaya, 2020–2023

Year	Trips	Passengers	Load Factor
2023	261,465	5,635,602	50.7%
2022	242,362	5,607,217	49.8%
2021	202,309	4,390,227	48.3%
2020	169,653	3,904,782	46.3%

Source: Research data



Source: Research data

Figure 1. Load Factor

Purchase retention has shown a declining trend despite the continuous increase in the number of AKAP passengers of PT Sinar Jaya Megah Langgeng over the observed period. In addition, the load factor remains significantly below the ideal level, which is generally expected to be around 70%, whereas the current average is only approximately 50%. This condition indicates that although passenger volume has increased, seat occupancy per trip has not yet reached an optimal level. Such inefficiency may negatively affect overall ticket purchase retention.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze fare innovation, service quality, and the level of customer trust in relation to ticket purchase retention for AKAP bus services operated by PT Sinar Jaya Megah Langgeng.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach that relies on statistical data to objectively and This study adopts a quantitative research approach, which relies on statistical data to objectively and measurably answer the research questions. The quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it enables empirical testing of the relationships between variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis, thereby producing conclusions that are generalizable across different contexts, times, and conditions. According to Lubis (2021), a population refers to the entire group of research subjects that possess specific characteristics determined by the researcher. In this study, the population consists of all passengers of PO Sinar Jaya in 2023, totaling 5,635,602 passengers, based on official data obtained from the company. This large population reflects the extensive operational scale of PO Sinar Jaya as one of the major intercity and interprovincial (AKAP) bus operators in Indonesia.

The sampling technique employed in this research is Random Purposive Sampling, which combines elements of random sampling and purposive sampling. This approach was selected to ensure that respondents meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives—such as having experience using PO Sinar Jaya services—while still providing each qualified respondent an equal opportunity to be selected. Given the large population size, the sample size was determined using the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2020), which suggests a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators used in the research model.

This study utilizes 41 measurement indicators; therefore, the minimum required sample size ranges from 205 to 410 respondents. Based on this calculation, a total of 205 respondents

were deemed sufficient to represent the population and to support robust statistical analysis. The data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through the distribution of structured, closed-ended questionnaires to respondents, designed to capture perceptions related to the research variables. Secondary data were obtained from academic literature, scientific journals, official company documents, and other relevant sources that support the theoretical framework and data analysis of the study.

This research applies Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, supported by SmartPLS software as the analytical tool. The SEM-PLS technique was chosen due to its ability to simultaneously assess complex causal relationships among latent constructs while remaining robust when applied to relatively limited sample sizes. The analytical procedure is conducted in two primary phases. The first phase focuses on evaluating the measurement model (outer model) to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The second phase involves assessing the structural model (inner model) to analyze the relationships among the proposed constructs. Model assessment includes the evaluation of coefficient of determination (R^2), Goodness of Fit (GoF), and hypothesis testing using T-statistics and P-values, with a significance threshold set at 5%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measurement model evaluation in this study was conducted to ensure that the constructs of Service Innovation (X1), Pricing (X2), Trust (Z), and Purchase Intention (Y) were measured with adequate validity and reliability. Construct validity was assessed through convergent validity, which is indicated by an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of at least 0.50, demonstrating that each construct sufficiently explains the variance of its indicators. In addition, discriminant validity was examined by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the correlations between constructs, ensuring that each variable represents a concept that is empirically distinct from the others. Reliability testing was performed using composite reliability (CR), with a minimum acceptable value of 0.70, to confirm the internal consistency of the indicators within each construct. The results of the measurement model evaluation serve as a fundamental requirement before proceeding to the structural model analysis, particularly in examining both direct and indirect relationships among Service Innovation, Pricing, Trust, and Purchase Intention as specified in the proposed research framework.

Validity Test Result

Convergent validity testing was conducted using SmartPLS 4 with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm approach. An indicator is considered valid if it has a loading factor value of ≥ 0.70, indicating that the indicator strongly represents the measured construct.

Table 2. Results of Validity Testing

Variable	Indicators	Loading Factors	Description
Service Innovation (X1)	X1.1	0,850	Valid
	X1.2	0,920	
	X1.3	0,866	
	X1.4	0,862	
	X1.5	0,891	
	X1.6	0,836	
	X1.7	0,834	
	X1.8	0,861	
	X1.9	0,846	

	X1.10	0,853	
	X1.11	0,868	
	X1.12	0,801	
	X1.13	0,860	
	X1.14	0,863	
	X1.15	0,894	
Pricing (X2)	X1.1	0,898	Valid
	X2.2	0,904	
	X2.3	0,878	
	X2.4	0,910	
	X2.5	0,903	
	X2.6	0,897	
	X2.7	0,864	
Trust (Z)	Z1	0,959	Valid
	Z2	0,965	
	Z3	0,966	
	Z4	0,969	
	Z5	0,968	
	Z6	0,966	
	Z7	0,965	
Employee Performance (Y)	Y1	0,932	Valid
	Y2	0,928	
	Y3	0,924	
	Y4	0,915	
	Y5	0,899	
	Y6	0,887	
	Y7	0,889	
	Y8	0,896	
	Y9	0,910	
	Y10	0,921	
	Y11	0,928	
	Y12	0,932	

Source: Research data

Based on the validity test results presented in the table, the loading factor values for each indicator of the studied variables demonstrate a strong association with their respective latent constructs, thereby confirming convergent validity. The detailed interpretation of each variable is presented as follows.

The Service Innovation (X1) variable is measured using fifteen indicators with loading factor values ranging from 0.801 to 0.920. All indicators exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that each indicator has a strong and significant contribution to the Service Innovation construct. Although the lowest loading factor (0.801) is relatively smaller compared to the others, it remains within the acceptable range, confirming its validity. Overall, the indicators for Service Innovation exhibit strong internal consistency and adequately represent the construct.

The Pricing (X2) variable consists of seven indicators, with loading factor values ranging from 0.864 to 0.910. These results indicate that all pricing indicators are strongly correlated with the latent variable. The consistently high loading values demonstrate that each indicator

effectively captures the pricing perception of customers. As all indicators exceed the threshold value, the Pricing construct satisfies the criteria for convergent validity.

The Trust (Z) variable is measured using seven indicators, all of which show exceptionally high loading factor values ranging from 0.959 to 0.969. These results reflect a very strong relationship between each indicator and the Trust construct, indicating that customer trust is measured with a high degree of accuracy and reliability. Consequently, the Trust variable fully meets the convergent validity requirement.

The Purchase Intention (Y) variable is assessed using twelve indicators, with loading factor values ranging from 0.887 to 0.932. These values indicate a strong correlation between the indicators and the latent construct, confirming that the measurement of Purchase Intention is both valid and consistent. All indicators surpass the minimum acceptable loading factor, demonstrating their effectiveness in representing customers' purchase intention.

In conclusion, all variables in this study demonstrate strong evidence of convergent validity, as each indicator exhibits a loading factor well above the threshold of 0.70. These findings confirm that all indicators are valid measures of their respective latent constructs, and the measurement model is appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Reliability Test Result

Reliability testing evaluates the internal consistency of the research instrument to ensure stability and trustworthiness in repeated measurements. This study employs Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability as the main indicators. A construct is considered reliable if Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6 (exploratory) or > 0.7 (confirmatory), and Composite Reliability > 0.7 (Ghozali, 2016). The results of both indicators are presented as follows.

Table 3. Results of Reability Testing

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Service Innovation (X1)	0,982	0,977
Pricing (X2)	0,958	0,965
Trust (Z)	0,988	0,990
Purchase Retention (Y)	0,982	0,984

Source: Research data

Based on the reliability test results in Table 4.2, all constructs in this study Service Innovation (X1), Pricing (X2), Trust (Z), and Purchase Intention (Y) have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7. This indicates that all indicators within each construct exhibit high internal consistency and meet the reliability criteria. Therefore, the instruments used in this study are considered reliable and suitable for further analysis.

R^2 Test Result

The coefficient of determination (R^2) represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables within the model. According to Hair et al. (Hair et al., 2014), R^2 is derived by squaring the correlation coefficient. To assess the explanatory power of the model, the R^2 value can be interpreted as follows: a value above 0.67 indicates a strong level of explanatory power, a value between 0.33 and 0.67 reflects a moderate level, while a value between 0.19 and 0.33 suggests a weak level of influence. The following model summary table presents the R^2 values for each dependent construct in the study.

Table 3. Results of Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Result
Purchase Retention (Y)	0,814	0,813	Strong
Trust (Z)	0,890	0,840	Strong

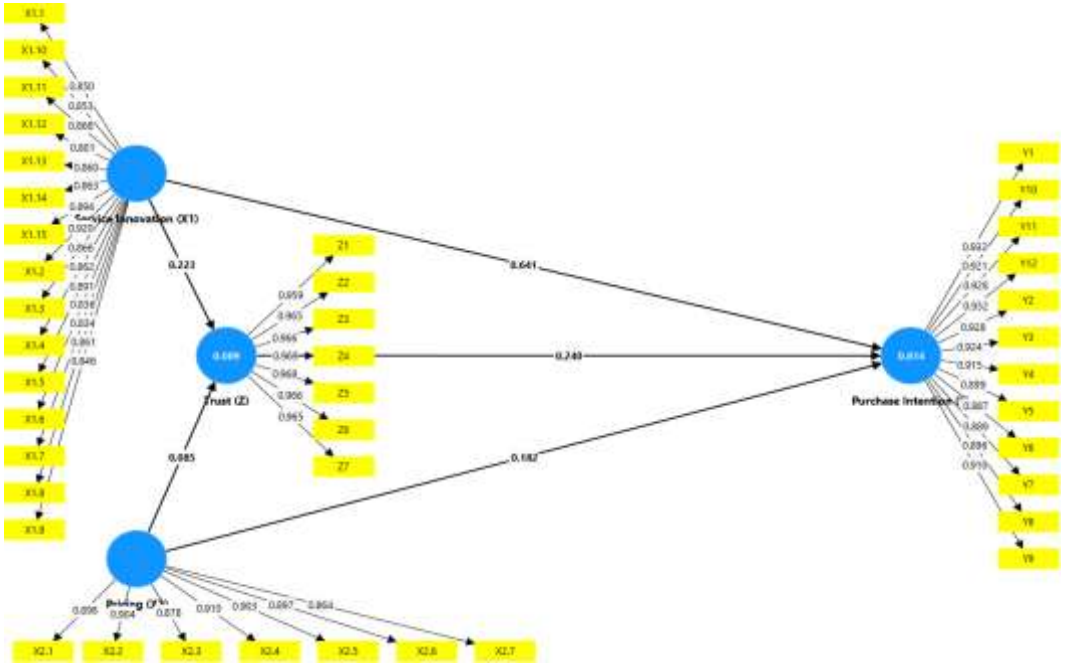
Source: Research data

Based on Table 3 above, the model for Purchase Retention shows an R-Square value of 0.814 or 81.4%, which falls into strong category. Meanwhile, R-Square value for Trust variable is 0.890 or 89%, which is categorized as strong. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model is good, indicating a reasonably accurate level of prediction.

Hypothesis Testing Result

This section outlines the final stage of analysis, which involves evaluating the regression coefficients to examine the significance of relationships between variables. Hypothesis testing is conducted at a 5% significance level, where a hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic exceeds 1.980 and the p-value is below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). A significant regression coefficient indicates a meaningful relationship between the tested variables, thereby supporting the proposed hypothesis.

The hypothesis testing results were obtained through data analysis using Partial Least Squares (PLS) with SmartPLS version 4.1.0.0. The output of this analysis is visualized in the path diagram shown in Figure 4.2, which illustrates the relationships among variables as evaluated through the PLS approach.



Source: Research data

Figure 2. Path Diagram

The table below presents the regression coefficient values for each independent variable in relation to the respective dependent variable being tested.

Table 4. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Result
H1	Effect of Service Innovation on Trust	0,182	3,268	0,001	H1 accepted
H2	Effect of Pricing on Trust	0,085	0,816	0,415	H2 rejected
H3	Effect of Service Innovation on Purchase Retention	0,641	12,382	0,000	H3 accepted
H4	Effect of Pricing on Purchase Retention	0,223	2,209	0,027	H4 accepted
H5	Effect of Trust on Purchase Retention	0,24	9,549	0,000	H5 accepted

Source: Research data

Hypothesis 1

The path coefficient for the effect of service innovation on trust is 0.182, indicating a positive but relatively modest effect. With a T-statistic of 3.268 and a P-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), this relationship is statistically significant. This finding suggests that improvements in service innovation significantly enhance customer trust. Therefore, H1 is supported. The result implies that continuous innovation in service delivery, facilities, and operational systems plays an important role in building customer trust, as customers tend to perceive innovative services as more reliable and responsive to their needs. These results are consistent with the findings of Nguyen et al., (2024), who emphasize that technology-based service innovations such as service digitalization, service personalization, and proactive communication can enhance customers' perceptions of brand trust.

Hypothesis 2

The path coefficient for the effect of pricing on trust is 0.085, indicating a weak positive relationship. However, the T-statistic of 0.816 and P-value of 0.415 (> 0.05) indicate that this effect is not statistically significant. This result suggests that pricing does not have a significant influence on customer trust. Therefore, H2 is not supported. This finding implies that customers do not primarily base their trust on pricing considerations alone, but rather on other factors such as service quality, consistency, and overall service experience. Similar findings were also reported by (Savitha & Padmaja, 2017), who argue that within the transportation service context, trust is more strongly influenced by safety and responsiveness factors, while pricing tends to have only a marginal and sometimes temporary effect.

Hypothesis 3

The path coefficient for the effect of service innovation on purchase retention is 0.641, indicating a strong and positive effect. The T-statistic of 12.382 and P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05) confirm that this relationship is highly statistically significant. Thus, H3 is supported. This finding demonstrates that service innovation is a critical determinant of purchase retention, as innovative services enhance customer satisfaction, perceived value, and long-term engagement, ultimately encouraging customers to continue using the service. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Nugroho & Suprapti, (2022), which indicates that innovation in transportation service systems including ease of ticket booking processes, flexibility in schedule changes, and the integration of digital technologies can increase customers' interest and repurchase decisions.

Hypothesis 4

The path coefficient for the effect of pricing on purchase retention is 0.223, showing a positive and moderate influence. With a T-statistic of 2.209 and a P-value of 0.027 (< 0.05), the result is statistically significant. Therefore, H4 is supported. This result indicates that competitive and fair pricing contributes positively to customer retention, as customers are more likely to continue using services that offer value aligned with the costs incurred. This study also aligns with the findings of Ferguson & Ellen, (2013), who suggest that competitive pricing models and transparent fare information can enhance purchase intention and foster perceptions of price fairness among customers.

Hypothesis 5

The path coefficient for the effect of trust on purchase retention is 0.240, indicating a positive and meaningful effect. The relationship is statistically significant, as evidenced by a T-statistic of 9.549 and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Consequently, H5 is supported. This finding highlights the crucial role of trust in fostering long-term customer relationships. Higher levels of trust reduce perceived risk and increase customer confidence, thereby strengthening purchase retention. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the study by Chiu et al., (2014), which highlights trust as a crucial mediating variable between customer experience and purchase decision-making. In the transportation service industry, trust may be developed through various aspects, such as service consistency, corporate reputation, travel safety, and the professional handling of customer complaints.

Table 5. Results of Indirect Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Result
H6	Effect of Service Innovation on Purchase Retention through Trust	0,054	2,17	0,030	Accepted
H7	Effect of Pricing on Purchase Retention through Trust	0,02	0,822	0,411	Rejected

Source: Research data

Hypothesis 6

The indirect path coefficient for the effect of service innovation on purchase retention through trust is 0.054, indicating a positive but relatively weak mediating effect. With a T-statistic of 2.17 and a P-value of 0.030 (< 0.05), this indirect relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, H6 is supported. This finding suggests that trust partially mediates the relationship between service innovation and purchase retention. In other words, service innovation not only directly influences purchase retention but also enhances customer trust, which in turn contributes to strengthening long-term purchase retention. This result underscores the importance of service innovation in building trust as an intervening mechanism that reinforces customer loyalty. These findings are consistent with the study by Kurumbatu, (2024) which asserts that trust functions as a strong mediating variable in the relationship between innovation and purchase intention. Customers do not immediately respond to innovation with purchasing behavior; rather, they first evaluate whether the innovation enhances their perceptions of the firm's reliability, transparency, and integrity.

Hypothesis 7

The indirect path coefficient for the effect of pricing on purchase retention through trust is 0.020, indicating a very weak positive effect. However, the T-statistic of 0.822 and P-value of 0.411 (> 0.05) indicate that this indirect effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, H7

is not supported. This result implies that trust does not mediate the relationship between pricing and purchase retention. Although pricing may directly influence purchase retention, it does not significantly contribute to building customer trust that leads to long-term retention. This finding suggests that customers perceive pricing as a transactional factor rather than a trust-building mechanism. Studies such as (Assegaff & Pranoto, 2020) indicate that among highly price-sensitive customers, pricing can shape initial trust, particularly when compared with higher-priced competitors. However, this effect tends to be short-lived and diminishes when service quality fails to meet customer expectations.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on the determinants of purchase retention in intercity and interprovincial (AKAP) bus services in Indonesia by examining the roles of service innovation, pricing, and customer trust. The findings demonstrate that service innovation plays a pivotal role in shaping both customer trust and purchase retention. Innovative service attributes particularly those related to digitalization, service flexibility, and operational improvements significantly enhance customers' willingness to continue using bus transportation services. The results further indicate that pricing does not have a significant direct effect on customer trust, suggesting that trust formation in the transportation service context is not primarily driven by price considerations. Instead, customers tend to evaluate trust based on service reliability, safety, and responsiveness. Nevertheless, pricing was found to have a direct and significant influence on purchase retention, highlighting that competitive and transparent fare structures remain important in sustaining repeat purchase behavior.

Customer trust was confirmed as a critical determinant of purchase retention and also served as an effective mediating variable between service innovation and purchase retention. This finding underscores that service innovation contributes more strongly to long-term customer retention when it is accompanied by enhanced trust. Conversely, trust did not significantly mediate the relationship between pricing and purchase retention, indicating that price-related strategies may influence repeat purchases more directly rather than through trust-based mechanisms. Overall, the study highlights that strengthening service innovation and maintaining consistent service quality are more effective strategies for building customer trust and sustaining purchase retention than relying solely on pricing strategies. These findings contribute to the literature on transportation service management by clarifying the distinct roles of innovation, pricing, and trust in influencing customer retention, particularly within the AKAP bus industry in emerging markets such as Indonesia.

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