

Price and Physical Evidence on Consumer Decisions Regarding Damri Executive Class Bus Services

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines whether price perceptions and physical evidence are associated with consumer decisions among users of DAMRI Executive Class bus services on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor.

Research Method: A quantitative associative design used questionnaire data from 100 purposively selected users aged 17 years or older with direct experience of the service. Price, physical evidence, and consumer decisions were measured using five-point Likert scales and analyzed with instrument checks, descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression, partial tests, and a simultaneous model test.

Results and Discussion: More favorable evaluations of price and physical evidence were each positively associated with consumer decisions, and the two predictors were jointly related to the outcome.

Implications: The cross-sectional, single-corridor, purposive-sample design and two-predictor model limit generalization. The findings support managerial attention to fare-value alignment and consistent maintenance of cleanliness, comfort, vehicle condition, and supporting facilities.

Originality: The study provides route-specific evidence on how monetary and tangible service attributes jointly relate to executive intercity bus choice.

Keywords: price; physical evidence; consumer decisions; bus services; public transportation; DAMRI.

1. Introduction

Consumer decisions are central to transportation service management because passengers evaluate both monetary sacrifice and the tangible conditions attached to a journey. In service marketing, price communicates economic sacrifice and perceived value, while physical evidence provides observable cues about service quality (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2018). In public transportation, these evaluations are especially salient because users directly experience vehicle condition, cleanliness, seating, air conditioning, information, and supporting facilities during travel.

Recent transportation research shows that passenger judgments are shaped by combinations of service attributes rather than by a single factor. Studies of bus and public-transport services have identified comfort, cleanliness, vehicle condition, reliability, information, and cost as important elements of perceived quality and satisfaction (Deb & Ahmed, 2018; Nikel *et al.*, 2020; Obsie *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2016). More recent evidence likewise emphasizes reasonable travel expenses, comfort, in-vehicle conditions, and service environments in public-transport evaluations (Deb *et al.*, 2022; Girma *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2023; Sogbe *et al.*, 2025).



The study focuses on DAMRI Executive Class services on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor in West Kalimantan. Within an intercity executive service, price and physical evidence are managerially relevant because both are directly perceived by passengers and can be adjusted or maintained by the operator. Examining these attributes together provides evidence on how economic and tangible service evaluations relate to the decision to use the service.

Price is relevant to transportation choice because users compare fares with purchasing ability, available alternatives, and expected benefits. Evidence from public-transport choice and willingness-to-pay research confirms that users differ in the value they place on fares and service improvements (Alhassan *et al.*, 2022; Eldeeb & Mohamed, 2022; Ulahannan & Birrell, 2022). Physical evidence is similarly relevant because the passenger experience occurs within a tangible service environment. Studies of bus operations show that in-vehicle conditions, comfort, cleanliness, and the physical service atmosphere are associated with passenger evaluation and satisfaction (He *et al.*, 2021; Rong *et al.*, 2022; Weng *et al.*, 2023; Wong *et al.*, 2023).

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory describes post-consumption evaluation as a comparison between expectations and experienced performance (Oliver, 1980). Contemporary evidence supports its usefulness for understanding evaluations of public services while emphasizing the importance of context and measurement (Zhang *et al.*, 2022). In this study, the theory is used only as an interpretive lens: price reflects perceived monetary sacrifice and physical evidence reflects tangible service conditions. The study does not measure expectancy disconfirmation as a separate construct or test it as a causal mechanism.

The research gap is contextual and relational. Although price, comfort, service quality, and physical-environment attributes have been widely studied, their salience varies across service settings and passenger groups (Esmailpour *et al.*, 2022; Ganji *et al.*, 2021; Iannario & Monti, 2022; Sukhov *et al.*, 2022). The cited literature does not address the Pontianak-Sintang Executive Class context, and the joint relationship of price and physical evidence with consumer decisions on this corridor is not documented in the sources reviewed here.

Accordingly, this study examines whether (1) price is associated with Consumer Decisions, (2) Physical Evidence is associated with Consumer Decisions, and (3) Price and Physical Evidence are jointly associated with Consumer Decisions among DAMRI Executive Class users on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor. The study contributes route-specific empirical evidence to the literature on intercity bus choice and provides managerial information concerning fare-value alignment and tangible service conditions. The remainder of the paper reviews the theoretical and empirical literature, explains the research methodology, presents and discusses the results, and concludes with implications, limitations, and future research directions.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory explains post-consumption evaluation as a comparison between expectations and experienced performance. Positive evaluation is more likely when performance meets or exceeds expectations, whereas performance below expectations can create unfavorable disconfirmation (Oliver, 1980). A meta-analytic assessment of the expectancy-disconfirmation model in public-service contexts supports the general logic of expectation-performance comparison while

emphasizing the importance of research design and context (Zhang *et al.*, 2022). For transportation services, this lens provides a basis for interpreting how fare expectations and tangible service conditions may enter passenger evaluations. Users can form expectations about price, comfort, cleanliness, vehicle condition, and facilities before travel and compare those expectations with experience. Because expectancy disconfirmation itself is not measured here, the theory supports interpretation rather than constituting a separately tested construct.

2.2 Price

Price is the monetary sacrifice required to obtain a service and is commonly evaluated relative to expected benefits and available alternatives. In transportation, price can influence choice because fares are directly comparable across modes and service classes. Public-transport evidence indicates that fare levels and willingness to pay interact with service attributes and user heterogeneity (Alhassan *et al.*, 2022; Eldeeb & Mohamed, 2022; Ulahannan & Birrell, 2022). In the present setting, consumers may assess whether the fare is appropriate relative to comfort, facilities, and the overall travel experience. From an expectancy-disconfirmation perspective, a price perceived as commensurate with received benefits may be associated with a more favorable consumer evaluation.

2.3 Physical Evidence

Physical Evidence refers to tangible cues that make an otherwise intangible service observable and assessable. In bus transportation, such cues include vehicle cleanliness, seat condition, seating comfort, air conditioning, interior appearance, luggage space, and other supporting facilities. Research on public transport consistently identifies physical and environmental attributes as relevant to passenger assessments of service quality and satisfaction (Deb & Ahmed, 2018; Deb *et al.*, 2022; He *et al.*, 2021; Wu *et al.*, 2016). The importance of tangible conditions is heightened in intercity bus services because passengers remain in the service environment for an extended period. Empirical studies show that actual onboard performance and the in-vehicle environment can influence passenger perceptions, satisfaction, and improvement priorities (Rong *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2023; Weng *et al.*, 2023; Wong *et al.*, 2023).

2.4 Consumer Decisions

Consumer Decisions in this study refer to the decision to use DAMRI Executive Class bus services on the Pontianak-Sintang route. Consumer choice theory recognizes that decisions are formed by evaluating multiple attributes rather than a single isolated cue (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). In public transport, overall evaluation reflects combinations of fare, comfort, reliability, information, safety, and physical service conditions (Girma *et al.*, 2022; Iannario & Monti, 2022; Nikel *et al.*, 2020; Obsie *et al.*, 2020). Because user preferences are heterogeneous, the contribution of individual attributes may differ across contexts and passenger groups. Studies of intercity and urban bus services demonstrate meaningful heterogeneity in how passengers prioritize comfort, cost, reliability, and other service characteristics (Ganji *et al.*, 2021; Sukhov *et al.*, 2022).

2.5 Price and Consumer Decisions

Price may be associated with consumer decisions because users compare the financial sacrifice required for a journey with expected service benefits. Eldeeb and Mohamed (2022) show that transit users display heterogeneous preferences and willingness to pay for service improvements, while Alhassan *et al.*,

(2022) similarly demonstrate that the value placed on transport pricing arrangements differs across user groups. These findings support the proposition that price perceptions are relevant to transportation choice. Based on this reasoning and prior evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. More favorable Price evaluations are positively associated with Consumer Decisions among DAMRI Executive Class bus users on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor.

2.6 Physical Evidence and Consumer Decisions

Physical Evidence provides direct information about the service environment that passengers experience. Evidence from bus-service research shows that onboard cleanliness, comfort, facilities, and physical conditions contribute to passenger assessments and satisfaction (Deb *et al.*, 2022; He *et al.*, 2021; Rong *et al.*, 2022; Wu *et al.*, 2016). These tangible cues can therefore become part of the decision process when consumers select an intercity bus service. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. More favorable Physical Evidence evaluations are positively associated with Consumer Decisions among DAMRI Executive Class bus users on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor.

2.7 Price and Physical Evidence on Consumer Decisions

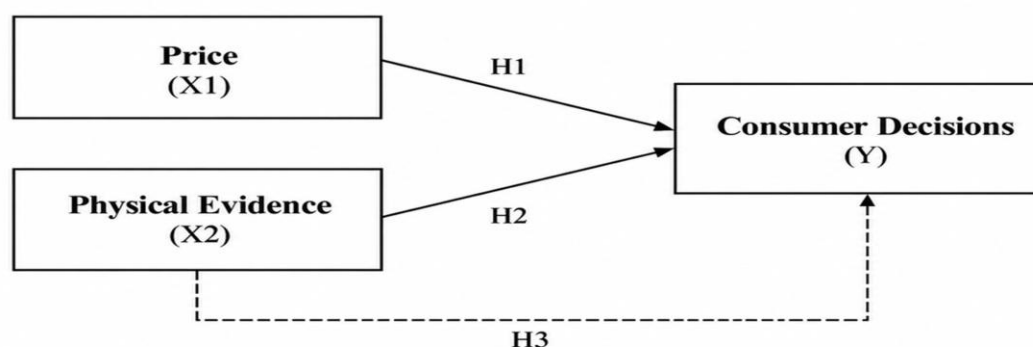
Transportation decisions can involve simultaneous evaluation of monetary and tangible service attributes. Research shows that public-transport attractiveness is shaped by combinations of cost, comfort, reliability, and other quality dimensions rather than one attribute in isolation (Saleem *et al.*, 2023; Sogbe *et al.*, 2025; Sukhov *et al.*, 2022). In the present context, consumers may evaluate whether the fare corresponds to the physical conditions and facilities received. The following joint hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H3. Price and Physical Evidence are jointly associated with Consumer Decisions among DAMRI Executive Class bus users on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor.

2.8 Research Framework

The research framework positions Price (X1) and Physical Evidence (X2) as predictors and Consumer Decisions (Y) as the outcome variable. H1 and H2 represent the two predictor-outcome relationships, while H3 represents their joint relationship within the regression model. The arrows indicate hypothesized directional statistical relationships and do not by themselves establish causality.

Figure 1. Research Framework



3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design, Population, and Sample

This study employed a quantitative associative research design to examine the relationships of Price and Physical Evidence with Consumer Decisions among DAMRI Executive Class bus users on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor. The population comprised consumers who had used the Executive Class service. The exact population size was not available in the manuscript's research records.

The study involved 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Eligibility criteria were: (1) aged 17 years or older; (2) having used DAMRI Executive Class services on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor; and (3) having made the decision to use the service based on their own consideration. These criteria were intended to ensure that respondents had direct service experience and could evaluate the focal constructs.

3.2 Data Collection and Measurement

Primary data were collected through questionnaires. Price (X1), Physical Evidence (X2), and Consumer Decisions (Y) were each represented by five questionnaire items and measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Secondary information was used to support the contextual and literature discussion. The instrument was evaluated through item validity testing and Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis.

3.3 Analytical Procedure

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the variables. Multiple linear regression was then applied using the model $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$, where Y is Consumer Decisions, X1 is Price, X2 is Physical Evidence, a is the constant, b1 and b2 are regression coefficients, and e is the error term. Partial t-tests were used to evaluate H1 and H2, while the simultaneous F-test was used to evaluate H3. Statistical decisions were made at the 5% significance level. Adjusted R-squared was used to assess the proportion of variance in Consumer Decisions accounted for by the model. Given the cross-sectional, purposive-sample design, regression coefficients are interpreted as conditional associations rather than causal effects. Methodological interpretation follows standard multiple-regression reporting principles (Ghozali, 2018).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis Results

4.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 100 respondents. By age, 42 respondents were 20-25 years old, 22 were 26-30, 11 were 31-35, 7 were 36-40, 8 were 41-45, 4 were 46-50, and 6 were older than 51. The largest age group was therefore 20-25 years (42%). By gender, 67 respondents were male and 33 were female. The largest occupational groups were entrepreneurs and teachers, with 18 respondents each; the remaining respondents included fishermen, drivers, students, farmers, nurses, civil servants, and other occupations. By education, 1 respondent had elementary education, 8 junior-high education, 44 senior-high or equivalent education, 7 Diploma 3 qualifications, and 40 bachelor's degrees.

Regarding service-use frequency, 32 respondents had used DAMRI twice, 15 had used it three times, and 53 had used it more than three times. The respondent profile therefore indicates direct experience with the service under investigation.

4.1.2 Validity and Reliability

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	Correlation (r)	r-table (5%)	Decision
Price (X1)	X1.1	0.783	0.195	Valid
Price (X1)	X1.2	0.835	0.195	Valid
Price (X1)	X1.3	0.801	0.195	Valid
Price (X1)	X1.4	0.747	0.195	Valid
Price (X1)	X1.5	0.869	0.195	Valid
Physical Evidence (X2)	X2.1	0.790	0.195	Valid
Physical Evidence (X2)	X2.2	0.873	0.195	Valid
Physical Evidence (X2)	X2.3	0.864	0.195	Valid
Physical Evidence (X2)	X2.4	0.812	0.195	Valid
Physical Evidence (X2)	X2.5	0.748	0.195	Valid
Consumer Decisions (Y)	Y1	0.861	0.195	Valid
Consumer Decisions (Y)	Y2	0.790	0.195	Valid
Consumer Decisions (Y)	Y3	0.844	0.195	Valid
Consumer Decisions (Y)	Y4	0.858	0.195	Valid
Consumer Decisions (Y)	Y5	0.846	0.195	Valid

Source: Processed data, 2026

All item correlations exceeded the r-table value of 0.195; therefore, the fifteen questionnaire items were retained as valid indicators for the subsequent analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Price (X1)	0.863	5
Physical Evidence (X2)	0.876	5
Consumer Decisions (Y)	0.895	5

Source: Processed data, 2026

Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.863 to 0.895, exceeding the 0.60 criterion used in the study. The three scales therefore demonstrated acceptable internal consistency under that criterion.

4.1.3 Descriptive Statistics

All variables had 100 valid observations and no missing data. Mean scores were 21.28 for Price, 21.20 for Physical Evidence, and 21.55 for Consumer Decisions, with relatively similar dispersion across the three constructs.



Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	Price (X1)	Physical Evidence (X2)	Consumer Decisions (Y)
Valid N	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	21.28	21.20	21.55
Std. Deviation	2.574	2.331	2.500
Variance	6.628	5.434	6.250
Range	10	10	10
Minimum	15	15	15
Maximum	25	25	25

Source: Processed data, 2026**4.1.4 Multiple Linear Regression and Hypothesis Testing****Table 4.** Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	6.521	1.797	-	3.628	<0.001
Price (X1)	0.327	0.119	0.337	2.748	0.007
Physical Evidence (X2)	0.381	0.131	0.355	2.896	0.005

Source: Processed data, 2026

Price had a positive coefficient of 0.327 and was statistically significant ($t = 2.748$, $p = 0.007$), supporting H1 as a positive conditional association. Physical Evidence had a positive coefficient of 0.381 and was also statistically significant ($t = 2.896$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H2 as a positive conditional association. The estimated regression equation is $Y = 6.521 + 0.327X_1 + 0.381X_2 + e$.

Table 5. Simultaneous F-Test (ANOVA)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	263.247	2	131.624	35.914	<0.001
Residual	355.503	97	3.665		
Total	618.750	99			

Source: Processed data, 2026

The simultaneous model was statistically significant, $F(2, 97) = 35.914$, $p < 0.001$, supporting H3. The adjusted R-squared value was 0.414, indicating that the two predictors accounted for approximately 41.4% of the variance in Consumer Decisions under the adjusted model estimate. The remaining variation is not explained by the specified two-predictor model.

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	t / F	p	Decision
H1	Price -> Consumer Decisions	0.327	2.748	0.007	Supported
H2	Physical Evidence -> Consumer Decisions	0.381	2.896	0.005	Supported
H3	Price + Physical Evidence -> Consumer Decisions	-	35.914	<0.001	Supported

Source: Processed data, 2026

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Association of Price with Consumer Decisions

The results indicate a positive association between more favorable Price evaluations and Consumer Decisions. Within the cross-sectional regression model, respondents who evaluated price more favorably also tended to report stronger decisions to use DAMRI Executive Class services. This pattern is consistent with the view that transport users compare monetary sacrifice with expected and received benefits; it does not establish that changing fares would causally change consumer decisions. The finding aligns with public-transport research showing that fare and value-for-money considerations are related to user preferences and willingness to pay (Alhassan *et al.*, 2022; Eldeeb & Mohamed, 2022; Ulahannan & Birrell, 2022). From an expectancy-disconfirmation perspective, the pattern is compatible with price-benefit comparison as part of passenger evaluation. The contribution is contextual: Price remains statistically relevant within an Executive Class service even when tangible service conditions are included in the same model.

4.2.2 Association of Physical Evidence with Consumer Decisions

Physical Evidence was also positively associated with Consumer Decisions. Its standardized coefficient was descriptively slightly larger than that of Price, but the study did not test whether the difference between the two coefficients was statistically significant. The result therefore supports the relevance of tangible service conditions without establishing a formal ranking between the predictors. This finding is consistent with evidence that bus passengers respond to vehicle condition, hygiene, comfort, and other in-vehicle service attributes (Deb *et al.*, 2022; He *et al.*, 2021; Rong *et al.*, 2022; Wong *et al.*, 2023). In managerial terms, Physical Evidence is actionable because cleanliness, seating condition, air conditioning, interior appearance, luggage space, and supporting facilities can be inspected and maintained directly by the operator.

4.2.3 Joint Association of Price and Physical Evidence with Consumer Decisions

The overall regression model was statistically significant, indicating that Price and Physical Evidence jointly contribute to explaining variation in Consumer Decisions within the observed sample. This supports the interpretation that passenger decisions may reflect the combined evaluation of economic and tangible service attributes. Because the design is cross-sectional and uses purposive sampling, the joint result should be interpreted as a model-level association rather than evidence of a causal mechanism. The result is compatible with broader public-transport research showing that service attractiveness is multidimensional and that combinations of cost, comfort, reliability, and service-

environment attributes matter for passenger evaluation (Girma *et al.*, 2022; Saleem *et al.*, 2023; Sogbe *et al.*, 2025; Sukhov *et al.*, 2022). A substantial share of variation remains outside the model, indicating that additional factors such as service quality, satisfaction, perceived value, brand image, trust, promotion, reliability, safety, and customer experience may also be relevant.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the associations of Price and Physical Evidence with Consumer Decisions among users of DAMRI Executive Class bus services on the Pontianak-Sintang corridor. All three hypotheses were supported within the specified regression model. More favorable evaluations of Price and Physical Evidence were each positively associated with Consumer Decisions, and the two predictors were jointly related to the outcome. These findings indicate that passenger decision-making in this setting reflects both economic and tangible service evaluations. The findings are compatible with, but do not directly test, an expectancy-disconfirmation interpretation in which passengers compare expected monetary sacrifice and tangible service conditions with the service experience received. The study's contribution lies in applying this interpretive lens to a specific intercity Executive Class corridor and showing that monetary and physical service cues remain relevant within the same decision model.

Managerially, the findings support attention to fare-value alignment, clear communication of ticket prices and service-class information, and consistent maintenance of tangible service conditions. Operational priorities include bus cleanliness, seat condition, air conditioning, interior appearance, luggage space, and supporting facilities. These actions are consistent with the broader public-transport literature emphasizing value for money, comfort, and service environment as important elements of passenger evaluation.

The study is limited to one intercity corridor, a purposive sample of 100 respondents, a cross-sectional design, and two predictors. The manuscript reports construct-level measurement and validity/reliability results but does not provide the full questionnaire item wording or instrument provenance, which limits independent replication from the article alone. Future research should examine larger and more diverse samples, additional DAMRI routes or other transport providers, and theoretically relevant predictors such as service quality, satisfaction, perceived value, brand image, trust, promotion, reliability, safety, and customer experience. Future models may also test defensible mediating or moderating mechanisms where supported by theory and data.

Statement of Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used generative artificial intelligence tools to support the scientific writing process. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.

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