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Airline Quality Rating 2005

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2005

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Brent Bowen holds the University of Nebraska Foundation Distinguished Professorship in Aviation and serves as Director of the Aviation Institute, University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). Bowen also serves in the capacity of Director, Division of Aviation and Transportation Policy and Research, for the School of Public Administration at UNO. Bowen attained his Doctorate in Higher Education and Aviation from Oklahoma State University and a Master of Business Administration degree from Oklahoma City University. His Federal Aviation Administration certifications include Airline Transport Pilot, Certified Flight Instructor (Gold Seal), Advanced-Instrument Ground Instructor, Aviation Safety Counselor, and Aerospace Education Counselor. Dr. Bowen's research interests focus on aviation applications of public productivity enhancement and marketing in the areas of service quality evaluation, safety, and student recruitment and retention in collegiate aviation programs. He is also well published in areas related to effective teaching and gender issues in aviation education. Dr. Bowen is an active industry consultant, pilot, and former fixed-base operator and air carrier operator. His professional affiliations include the University Aviation Association (recent Board Member), Council on Aviation Accreditation (Committee Chair), World Aerospace Education Organization (Past-President), International Air Transportation Research Society (Proceedings Editor and Network Committee Member), Aerospace States Association (Governor's Delegate), Alpha Eta Rho International Aviation Fraternity, and the Nebraska Academy of Sciences. Additionally, Dr. Bowen has authored/co-authored numerous successful funding proposals totaling awards exceeding \$25 million. He also serves as program director and principal investigator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration funded Nebraska Space Grant Consortium and EPSCoR Program.

Dr. Dean E. Headley is Associate Professor of Marketing and Chair of the Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship in the W. Frank Barton School of Business and Faculty Associate of the National Institute for Aviation Research at Wichita State University. He holds a Doctorate in Marketing and Statistics from Oklahoma State University, a Master of Business Administration Degree from Wichita State University, and a Master of Public Health Degree from the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Headley's research interests include methodology development for measurement of service quality, the connection between service quality and consumer behavior, consumer choice processes in service settings, and the effects of marketing activities on consumers and providers of services.

Dr. Bowen's and Dr. Headley's research on the Airline Quality Rating (AQR) has met with national and international acceptance and acknowledgment. The Airline Quality Rating has been featured on *ABC's Good Morning America*, *The Cable News Network*, *The Today Show*, *C-Span*, network news, in *USA Today*, in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, and in numerous other national and international media. Bowen and Headley have served as invited expert witnesses before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Operations and have served as invited speakers and panelists for such groups as the National Academy of Sciences/Transportation Research Board. The work of Bowen and Headley has been recognized with awards from the American Marketing Association, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, the Travel and Transportation Research Association, and others. The AQR research has been published in the *Journal of Aviation/Aerospace Education and Research*, *Journal of Air Transportation*, as well as other journals, proceedings, textbooks, and research monographs.

AIRLINE QUALITY RATING 2004

**Brent D. Bowen, University of Nebraska at Omaha
Dean E. Headley, Wichita State University**

Abstract

The Airline Quality Rating (AQR) was developed and first announced in early 1991 as an objective method for assessing airline quality on combined multiple performance criteria. This current report, the Airline Quality Rating 2005, reflects monthly Airline Quality Rating scores for 2004. AQR scores for the calendar year 2004 are based on 15 elements in four major areas that focus on airline performance aspects important to air travel consumers.

The Airline Quality Rating 2005 is a summary of month-by-month quality ratings for U.S. airlines that have at least 1% of domestic passenger volume during 2004. Using the Airline Quality Rating system of weighted averages and monthly performance data in the areas of on-time arrivals, involuntary denied boardings, mishandled baggage, and a combination of 12 customer complaint categories, airlines' comparative performance for the calendar year of 2004 is reported. This research monograph contains a brief summary of the AQR methodology, detailed data and charts that track comparative quality for domestic airline operations for the 12-month period of 2004, and industry results. Also, comparative Airline Quality Rating data for 2003 are included, where available, to provide historical perspective regarding performance quality in the industry.

The Airline Quality Rating (AQR) System

The majority of quality ratings available in the past have relied on subjective surveys of consumer opinion that were infrequently collected. This subjective approach yields a quality rating that is essentially non-comparable from survey to survey for any specific airline. Timeliness of survey-based results can be a problem in the fast-paced airline industry as well. Before the Airline Quality Rating, there was effectively no consistent method for monitoring the quality of airlines on a timely, objective, and comparable basis. With the introduction of the AQR, a multi-factor, weighted average approach became available that had not been used before in the airline industry. The method relies on utilizing published, publicly available data that reports actual airline performance on critical quality criteria important to consumers and combines them into a rating system. The final result is a rating for individual airlines with interval scale properties that is comparable across airlines and across time periods.

The Airline Quality Rating (AQR) is a weighted average of multiple elements (see Table 1) important to consumers when judging the quality of airline services. Elements considered for inclusion in the rating scale were screened to meet two basic criteria; 1) an element must be obtainable from published data sources for each airline; and 2) an element must have relevance to consumer concerns regarding airline quality. Data for the elements used in calculating the ratings represent performance aspects (on-time arrival, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings, and 12 customer complaint

areas) of airlines that are important to consumers. All of the elements are reported in the *Air Travel Consumer Report* maintained by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Weights were originally established by surveying 65 airline industry experts regarding their opinion as to what consumers would rate as important (on a scale of 0 to 10) in judging airline quality. Each weight and element was assigned a plus or minus sign to reflect the nature of impact for that criterion on a consumer's perception of quality. For instance, the criteria of on-time arrival performance are included as a positive element because it is reported in terms of on-time successes, suggesting that a higher number is favorable to consumers. The weight for this criterion is high due to the importance most consumers place on this aspect of airline service. Conversely, the criteria that includes mishandled baggage is included as a negative element, and is reported in terms of mishandled bags per 1000 passengers served, suggesting that a higher number is unfavorable to consumers. Because having baggage arrive with passengers is important to consumers the weight for this criterion is also high. Weights and positive/negative signs are independent of each other.

Weights reflect importance of the criteria in consumer decision-making, while signs reflect the direction of impact that the criteria should have on the consumer's rating of airline quality. When all criteria, weights and impacts are combined for an airline over the year, a single interval scaled value is obtained. This value is comparable across airlines and across time periods. In the spring of 2002, a nationwide survey of frequent flyers was conducted that allowed a revisiting of the weighting for the AQR elements. Analysis of the sample of 766 opinions showed no appreciable difference in the relative weights for the AQR elements. To maintain comparability across the years, the weights have been held constant.

The Airline Quality Rating criteria and the weighted average methodology allow a focused comparison of airline domestic performance. Unlike other consumer opinion approaches that have relied on consumer surveys and subjective opinion, the AQR continues to use a mathematical formula that considers multiple weighted objective criteria to arrive at a single, fully comparable rating for airline industry performance. The Airline Quality Rating provides both consumers and industry watchers a means for monitoring comparative quality for each airline on a timely basis, using objective, performance-based data. Over the years, the Airline Quality Rating has often been cited as an industry standard for comparing airline performance. Currently the AQR stands as the only regularly published rating available for airline performance. With the continued global trend in airline operations alliances, the argument becomes even stronger for the Airline Quality Rating to be used as a standard method for comparing the quality of airline performance for international operations as well.

Table 1

AIRLINE QUALITY RATING CRITERIA, WEIGHTS AND IMPACT

	CRITERIA	WEIGHT	IMPACT (+/-)
OT	On-Time	8.63	+
DB	Denied Boardings	8.03	--
MB	Mishandled Baggage	7.92	--
CC	Customer Complaints	7.17	--
	Flight Problems		
	Oversales		
	Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding		
	Fares		
	Refunds		
	Baggage		
	Customer Service		
	Disability		
	Advertising		
	Discrimination		
	Animals		
	Other		

Data for all criteria is drawn from the U.S. Department of Transportation's monthly *Air Travel Consumer Report*. (<http://dot.gov/airconsumer/>)

The formula for calculating the AQR score is:

$$\text{AQR} = \frac{(+8.63 \times \text{OT}) + (-8.03 \times \text{DB}) + (-7.92 \times \text{MB}) + (-7.17 \times \text{CC})}{(8.63 + 8.03 + 7.92 + 7.17)}$$

What the Airline Quality Rating Tells Us About 2004

The Airline Quality Rating industry score shows an industry that has declined in quality relative to customer performance criteria over the course of 2004. Of the 14 carriers rated in both 2003 and 2004, only Air Tran, Atlantic Southeast, Jet Blue, and United show improvement in their overall AQR scores for 2004. The AQR score for Southwest Airlines in 2004 was virtually unchanged from their 2003 level. Atlantic Southeast Airlines registered the largest improvement in AQR score over the past year. US Airways had the largest decline in AQR score over the past year. Two new carriers are included in the AQR (a total of 16) for 2004.

The **overall industry** AQR score was lower in 2004 than in 2003, with decreased industry performance in all four areas tracked. As an industry, the AQR criteria shows that on-time arrival percentage was down (82.0% in 2003 compared to 78.3% in 2004), involuntary denied boardings per passenger served increased slightly (0.87 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 from 0.86 per 10,000 passengers in 2003), mishandled baggage rates increased (4.83 per 1,000 passengers in 2004 versus 4.00 per 1,000 passengers in 2003), and consumer complaint rates increased (0.76 per 100,000 passengers in 2004 up from 0.67 per 100,000 passengers in 2003). Taken together, the AQR score for the industry declined from a level of -1.14 in 2003 to -1.38 in 2004. With all four rating categories (On-Time, Denied Boardings, Mishandled Baggage, and Customer Complaints) having poorer performance in 2004 than in 2003, the decline can be viewed as multi-faceted. Also, with 10 of 14 airlines showing year to year AQR score declines, performance declines can be viewed as indicative of the overall industry trend for 2004.

AirTran Airlines (FL) was included in the AQR for the first time last year. On-time performance declined slightly in 2004 (77.7% in 2004 compared to 78.1% in 2003). AirTran's denied boardings performance (0.28 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 1.45 in 2003) was among the lowest of the airlines rated. A customer complaint rate of 0.83 complaints per 100,000 passengers in 2003 was slightly worse for 2004 at 0.89. The mishandled baggage rate of 2.82 per 1,000 passengers, an industry best for 2004, is virtually identical to their 2003 rate of 2.84 bags per 1,000 passengers.

Alaska Airlines (AS) had a drop in AQR score for 2004. Decline in performance in the areas of on-time (76.5% in 2004 compared to 81.0% in 2003), involuntary denied boardings (1.22 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 0.81 in 2003), customer complaints (0.58 per 100,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 0.52 in 2003), and baggage handling rate of 3.51 mishandled bags per 1,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 2.56 in 2003, reversed Alaska Airlines recent trend as an industry leader in overall performance.

America West Airlines (HP) showed a decline in their AQR score for 2004. On-time performance slipped in 2004 (75.7% in 2004 compared to 82.0% in 2003). The rate of mishandled baggage worsened from 3.30 in 2003 to 3.98 in 2004. Consumer complaint rate increased to 1.02 in 2004 from 0.84 in 2003, reversing a recent improvement trend. Denied boarding rates increased, moving from 0.40 per 10,000 passengers served in 2003 to 0.70 in 2004. All of these contributed to their overall decline in AQR score.

American Airlines' (AA) AQR score for 2004 dropped slightly (-1.24 in 2003 to -1.30 in 2004). Their drop in AQR score reflects a decline in performance for on-time arrivals (81.7% in 2003 compared to 76.8% in 2004) and mishandled baggage rates (4.45 in 2003 compared to 4.73 in 2004). An improvement in denied boarding rates (0.52 in 2004 compared to 0.59 in 2003) and an identical rate of customer complaints (0.88 in 2004 and 0.88 in 2003) were not enough to overcome the combined negative effect of the other elements considered in the AQR.

American Eagle Airlines (MQ) had a denied boarding rate of 0.41 for 2004, up from 0.38 per 10,000 passengers in 2003. The airline had a slight increase in the rate of customer complaints (0.54 in 2004 compared to 0.51 per 100,000 passengers in 2003). On-time performance was 78.6% in 2003 compared to only 73.2% for 2004. Their mishandled baggage rate was again nearly double the industry rate and did show an increase from the previous year (8.95 per 1,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 8.42 per 1,000 passengers in 2003). This combination of generally decreased performance produced a less favorable AQR score for American Eagle for 2004.

ATA Airlines (TZ) was included in the AQR for the first time last year. On-time performance for 2004, 79.8%, was nearly identical to their 80.0% level for 2003. ATA's denied boarding performance, 2.33 per 10,000 passengers in 2004, was more than double their rate of 0.89 in 2003. A customer complaint rate of 0.79 complaints per 100,000 passengers in 2004 was also higher than their 0.66 rate in 2003. Their mishandled baggage rate of 3.82 per 1,000 passengers in 2004 is better than their rate of 4.06 in 2003. Overall, ATA's performance combined to yield the third largest decline in AQR score of all airlines rated the past two years.

Atlantic Southeast Airlines (EV) was included in the AQR for the first time last year. On-time performance was 76.3% in 2004, compared to 75.4% in 2003. Atlantic Southeast's denied boarding performance was dramatically improved in 2004 (2.37 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 7.86 in 2003). Still, their denied boarding rate was highest of all airlines rated. Their mishandled baggage rate of 14.49 per 1,000 passengers is three times the industry average rate of 4.83 bags per 1,000 passengers, but is better than their 15.41 rate in 2003. Atlantic Southeast's customer complaint rate of 0.40 complaints per 100,000 passengers was better than their 2003 rate of 0.59. Atlantic Southeast shows the largest improvement in AQR score of any airline rated over the past two years. They still, however, have the worst AQR score of any airline rated in 2004.

Comair (OH) is included in the AQR for the first time in 2004. On-time performance (77.3%) was just below the industry average of 78.3% in 2004. Comair's denied boarding performance (2.28 per 10,000 passengers) was the second highest of the airlines rated and can be compared to the industry average of 0.87. A customer complaint rate of 1.10 complaints per 100,000 passengers was also the second highest (after Atlantic Southeast) of all airlines rated. Their mishandled baggage rate of 10.66 per 1,000 passengers is more than twice the industry rate of 4.83 bags per 1,000 passengers. Overall, Comair had the second worst AQR score (-3.27) of the sixteen airlines rated.

Continental Airlines (CO) posted improved performance in only one of the four AQR criteria. Better performance in customer complaint rates (0.82 in 2004 versus 0.95 in 2003) was the only bright spot for 2004. Mishandled baggage rate per 1,000 passengers (3.11 in 2003 compared to 3.58 in 2004) hurt Continental's AQR score. Increases in denied boarding rate (1.76 in 2004 compared to 1.06 in 2003) and poorer on-time performance (82.0% in 2003 compared to 78.9% in 2004) made their AQR score lower in 2004 (-1.31 in 2004 versus -1.04 in 2003).

Delta Airlines (DL) AQR score for 2004 reflects slippage in on-time arrival percentage (82.3% in 2003 compared to 76.2% in 2004) and mishandled baggage rate (3.84 in 2003 compared to 5.17 in 2004). The positives for Delta were a decrease in the rate of denied boardings (2004 rate of 1.12 compared to 2003 rate of 1.30) and only a slight increase in the rate of customer complaints (0.79 in 2004 from 0.78 in 2003). This combination of one area of improvement and three areas of decreases in performance combined to give Delta a drop in overall AQR score (-1.54 in 2004 from -1.24 in 2003).

Jet Blue Airlines (B6) was included in the AQR for the first time last year. On-time performance in 2004 slipped (81.8% in 2004 compared to 84.3% in 2003), but was second best among the 16 airlines rated. Jet Blue's denied boarding performance (0.01 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 and 0.00 in 2003) was clearly the lowest of the airlines rated. A customer complaint rate of 0.27 complaints per 100,000 passengers in 2004 (compared to 0.31 in 2003) was also the second best (to Southwest) of all airlines rated. Their mishandled baggage rate of 2.99 per 1,000 passengers in 2004 was below the rate (3.21) experienced in 2003.

Northwest Airlines' (NW) AQR score decreased from -1.02 in 2003 to -1.24 in 2004. Northwest posted an improvement in only one of the four areas of the AQR for 2004. The rate of customer complaints decreased from 0.95 per 100,000 passengers in 2003 to 0.89 per 100,000 passengers in 2004. On-time arrival performance moved from 82.9% in 2003 to 79.1% in 2004, and the mishandled baggage rate increased from 3.42 per 1,000 passengers in 2003 to 4.22 in 2004. Northwest's denied boarding rate increased from 0.70 per 10,000 passengers in 2003 to 0.78 in 2004.

SkyWest (OO) is included in the AQR for the first time in 2004. On-time performance (82.7%) was the industry best and compares well to industry average of 78.3% in 2004. SkyWest's denied boarding performance (0.27 per 10,000 passengers) was the second best of the airlines rated and can be compared to the industry average of 0.87. A customer complaint rate of 0.56 complaints per 100,000 passengers also compares well to the industry average of 0.76 in 2004. Their mishandled baggage rate of 10.00 per 1,000 passengers is twice the industry rate of 4.83 bags per 1,000 passengers. Overall, SkyWest had the third worst AQR score (-2.46) of the sixteen airlines rated.

Southwest Airlines (WN) recorded a decline in on-time arrival percentage (86.3% in 2003 down to 80.1% in 2004) and an increase in customer complaint rates (0.14 per 100,000 passengers in 2003 compared to 0.18 per 100,000 passengers in 2004). Southwest Airlines is consistently the airline with the lowest customer complaint rate in the industry. Involuntary denied boarding rates of 1.02 per 10,000 passengers in 2003, improved to 0.95 per 10,000 passengers in 2004. Their mishandled baggage rate of 3.35 per 1,000 passengers in 2003 was unchanged for 2004 (3.35 per 1,000 passengers in 2004). Southwest's overall AQR score was virtually unchanged for 2004 (-0.89 in 2003 compared to -0.90 in 2004).

United Airlines (UA) slipped in on-time arrival performance (from 83.3% in 2003 to 79.7% in 2004) and in customer complaint rate (0.83 per 100,000 passengers in 2003 compared to 0.89 in 2004). Performance regarding denied boarding rate (0.65 per 10,000 passengers in 2003 and 0.49 in 2004) was the only area that registered improvement. Mishandled baggage rate (3.93 in 2003 and 3.93 per 1,000 passengers in 2004) was unchanged from year to year. Overall, United was one of only three airlines to improve (-1.11 in 2003 to -1.09 in 2004) their AQR score for 2004.

US Airways (US) showed declines in all of the four criteria tracked for 2004. A closer look reveals that US Airways performed worse in on-time performance (79.2% in 2004 compared to 79.7% in 2003), mishandled baggage (5.33 per 1,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 3.55 in 2003), denied boarding rate (0.65 per 10,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 0.34 in 2003), and customer complaint rate (1.21 per 100,000 passengers in 2004 compared to 0.90 in 2003). Their overall AQR score change (-0.96 in 2003 compared to -1.55 in 2004) was the largest drop among the 10 airlines showing a decline for 2004.

Previous Airline Quality Reports

Bowen, Brent D., Dean E. Headley and Jacqueline R. Luedtke (1991), Airline Quality Rating, National Institute for Aviation Research Report 91-11, Wichita, Kansas.

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Detail of Airline Performance

Since the Airline Quality Rating is comparable across airlines and across time, monthly rating results can be examined both individually and collectively. The following pages outline the AQR scores for the industry and for each airline by month for 2004. For comparison purposes, results are also displayed for 2003 where available. A composite industry chart that combines the airlines tracked is shown at first, with individual airline performance charts following in alphabetical order.

Airline Quality Rating Scores

	2004 AQR		2003 AQR		2002 AQR		2001 AQR		2000 AQR	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
Air Tran	-0.76	2	-1.05	8	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Alaska	-1.11	5	-0.74	2	-0.95	2	-1.19	1	-1.54	2
America West	-1.19	6	-0.89	4	-1.08	4	-1.75	7	-3.43	10
American	-1.30	8	-1.24	11	-1.21	6	-1.58	6	-2.08	6
American Eagle	-2.26	13	-2.10	13	-2.42	10	-2.14	10	N/A	-
ATA	-1.50	10	-1.17	10	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Atlantic Southeast	-4.10	16	-5.76	14	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
COMAIR	-3.27	15	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Continental	-1.31	9	-1.04	7	-1.10	5	-1.77	8	-2.11	7
Delta	-1.54	11	-1.24	12	-1.26	7	-1.48	5	-1.47	1
Jet Blue	-0.59	1	-0.64	1	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Northwest	-1.24	7	-1.02	6	-1.39	9	-1.38	3	-1.83	5
SkyWest	-2.46	14	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-	N/A	-
Southwest	-0.90	3	-0.89	3	-1.00	3	-1.42	4	-1.64	3
United	-1.09	4	-1.11	9	-1.27	8	-1.97	9	-3.01	9
U.S. Airways	-1.55	12	-0.96	5	-0.85	1	-1.24	2	-1.74	4
Industry	-1.38		-1.14		-1.19		-1.60		-2.05	

NOTE:

Scores and Rankings for 2004 reflect the addition of COMAIR and SkyWest to the group of airlines tracked.

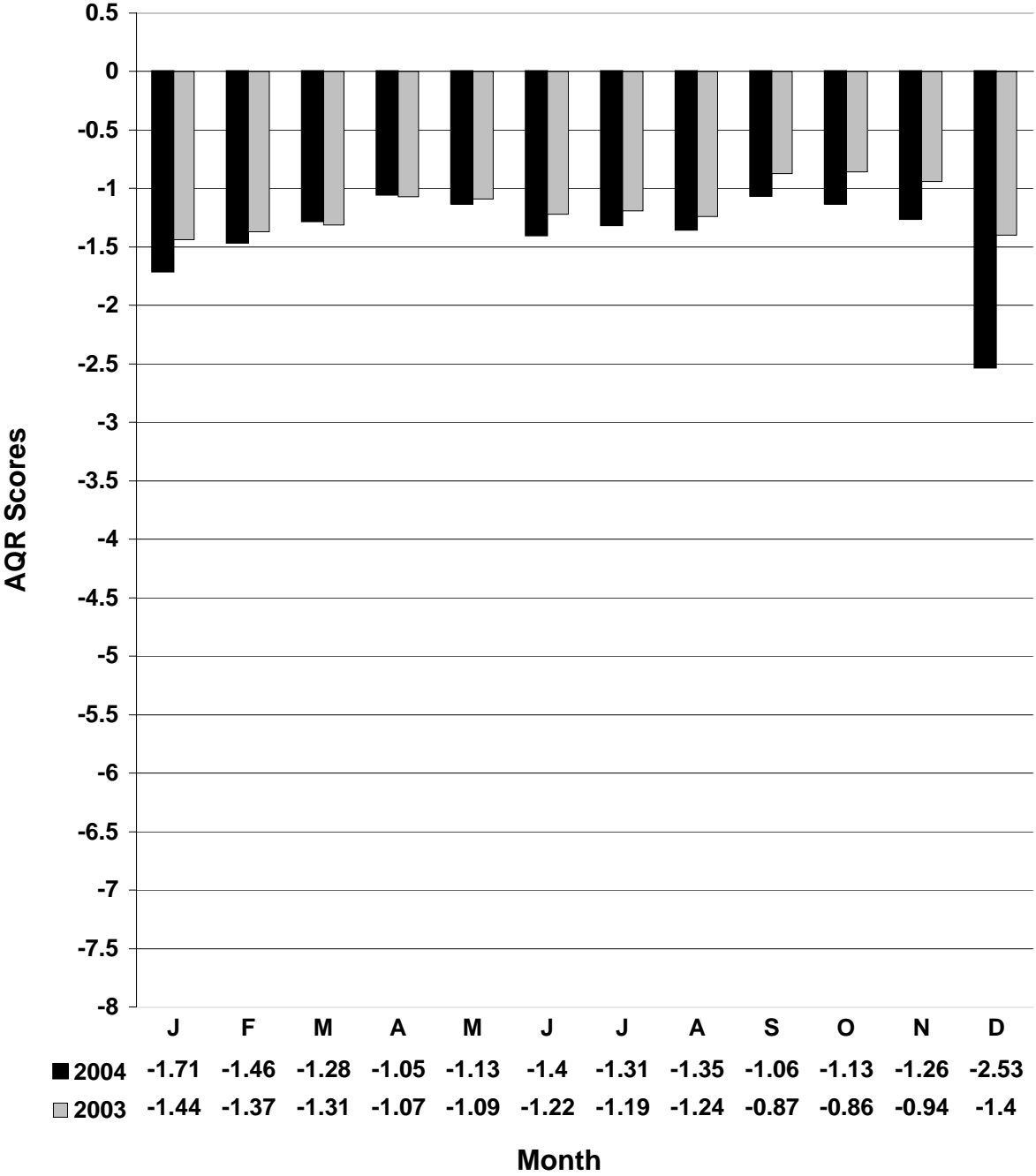
Scores and Rankings for 2003 reflect the addition of Air Tran, ATA, Atlantic Southeast, and Jet Blue to the group of airlines tracked.

Scores and Rankings for 2001 reflect the addition of American Eagle to the group of airlines tracked.

Rankings for 2002, 2001, and 2000 reflect the removal of TWA from the group of airlines tracked.

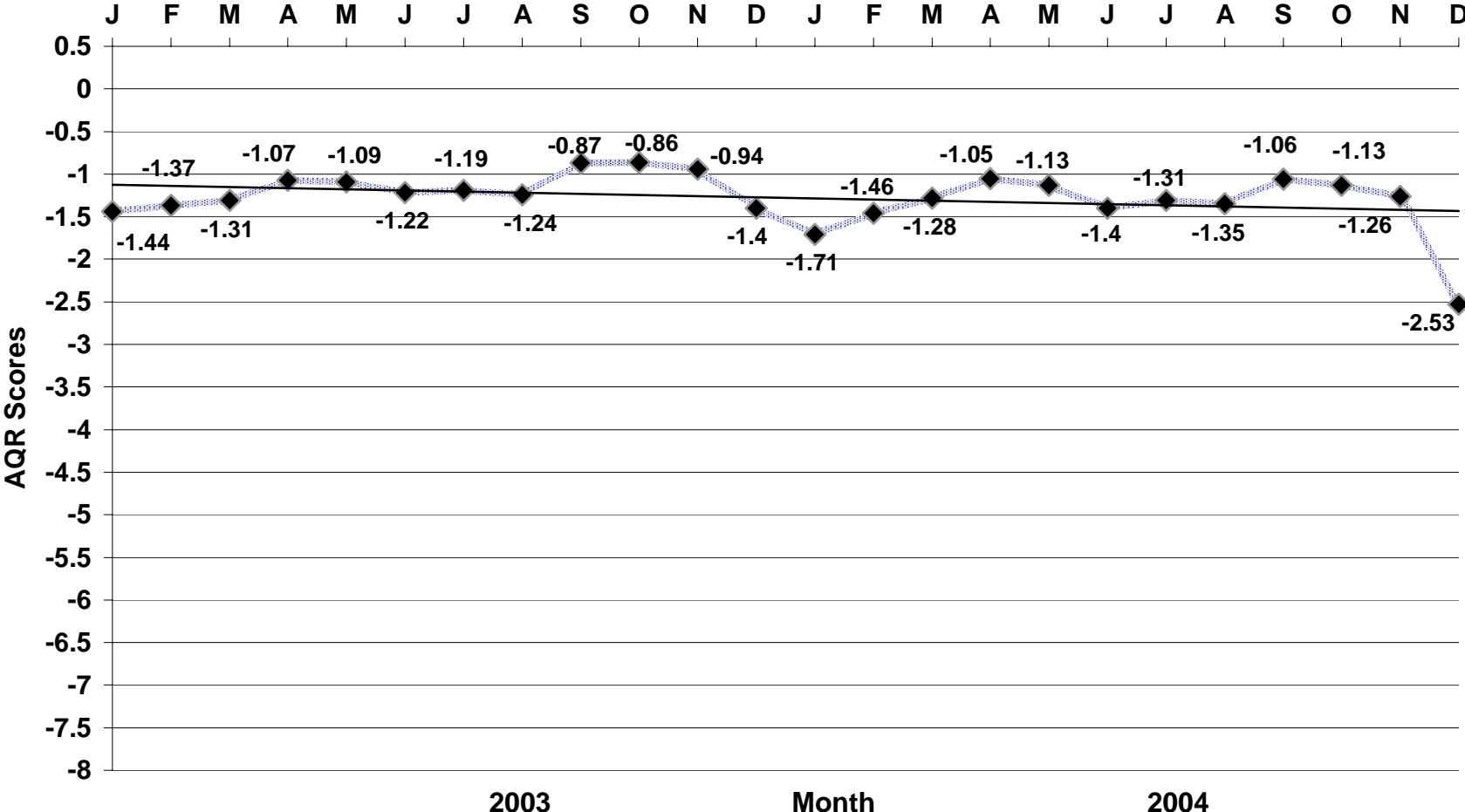
Airline Quality Rating

U.S. Airline Industry by Month



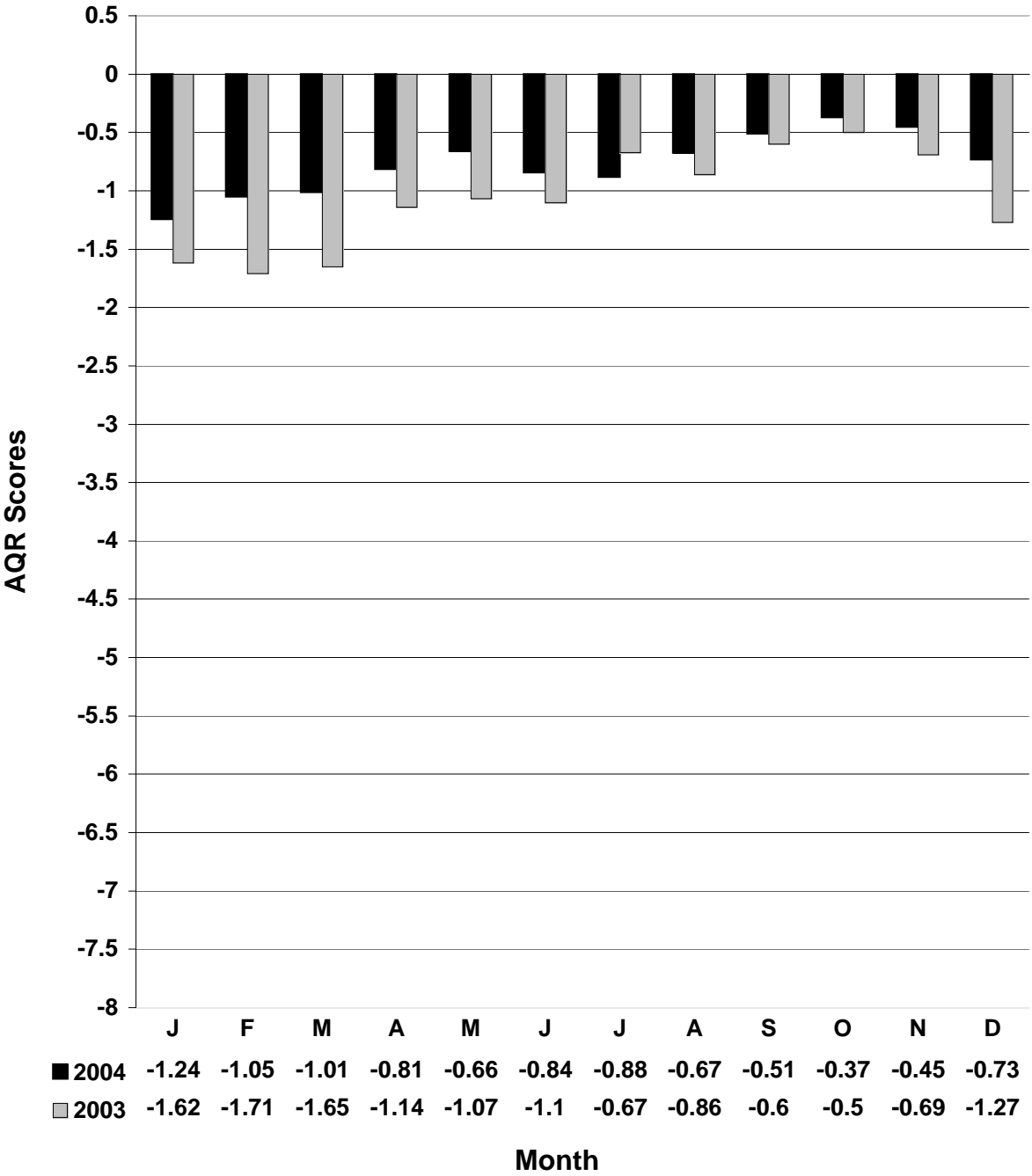
Airline Quality Rating

U.S. Airline Industry 2003 - 2004



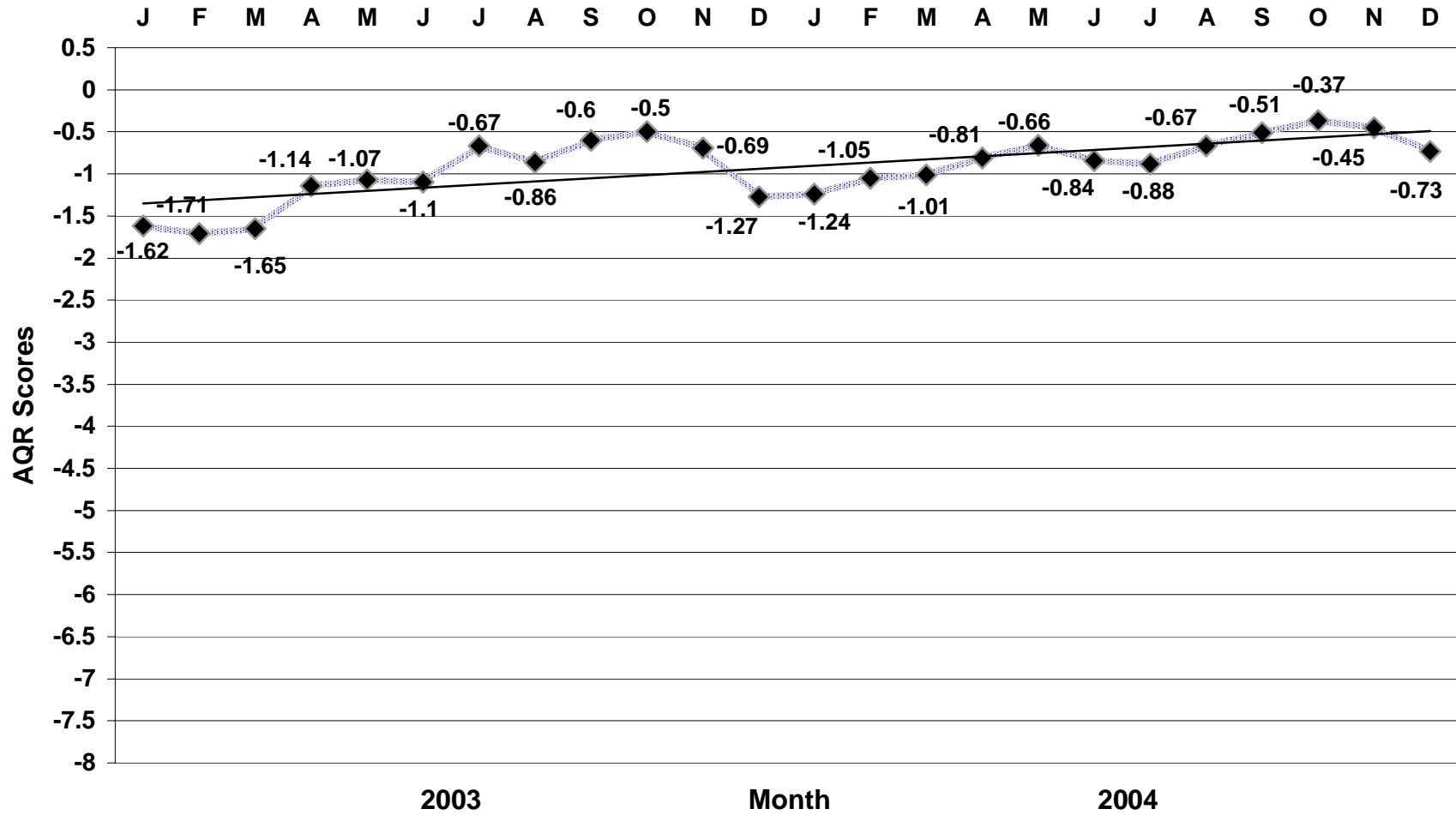
Airline Quality Rating

AirTran Airlines by Month



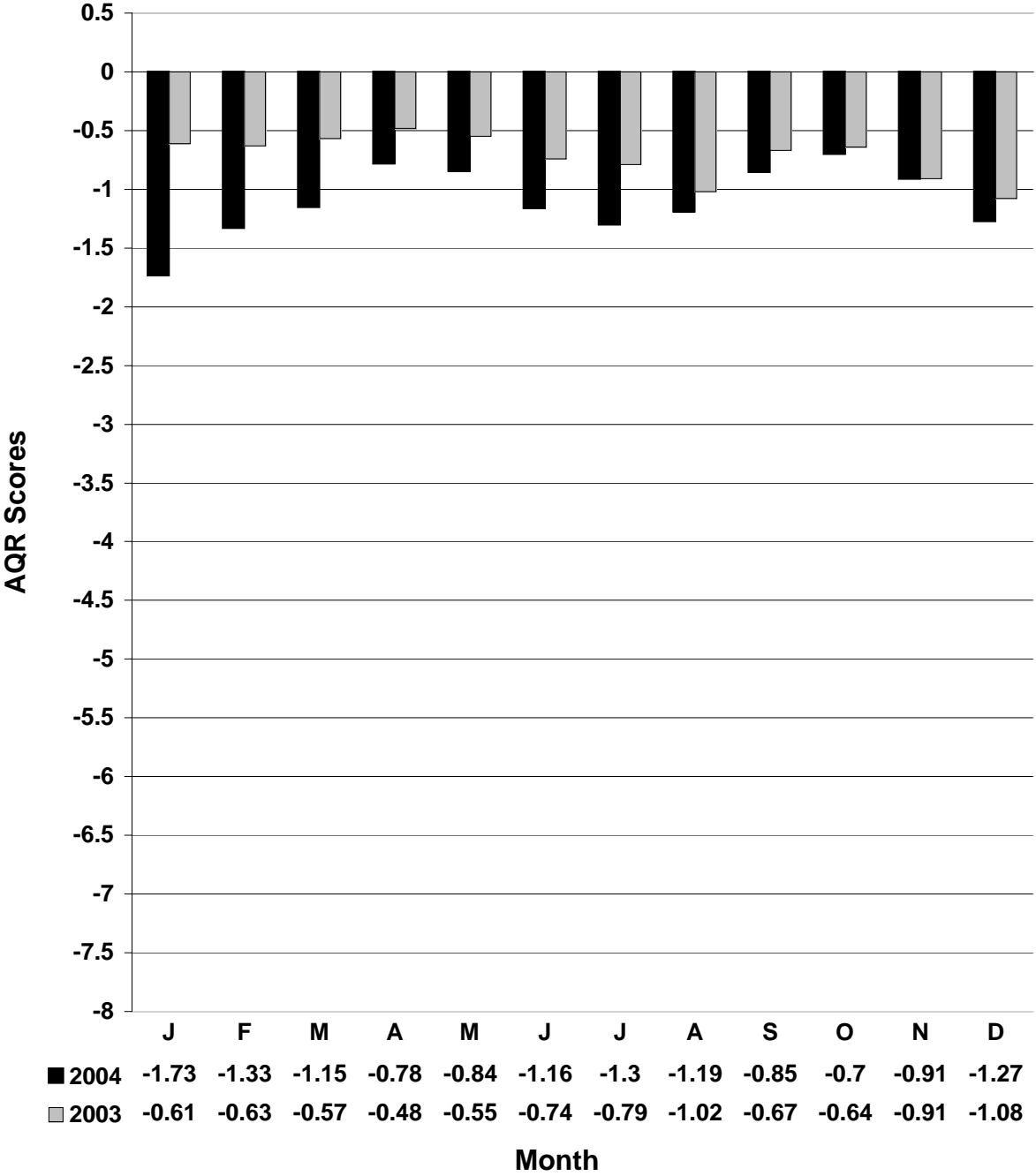
Airline Quality Rating

AirTran Airlines 2003 - 2004



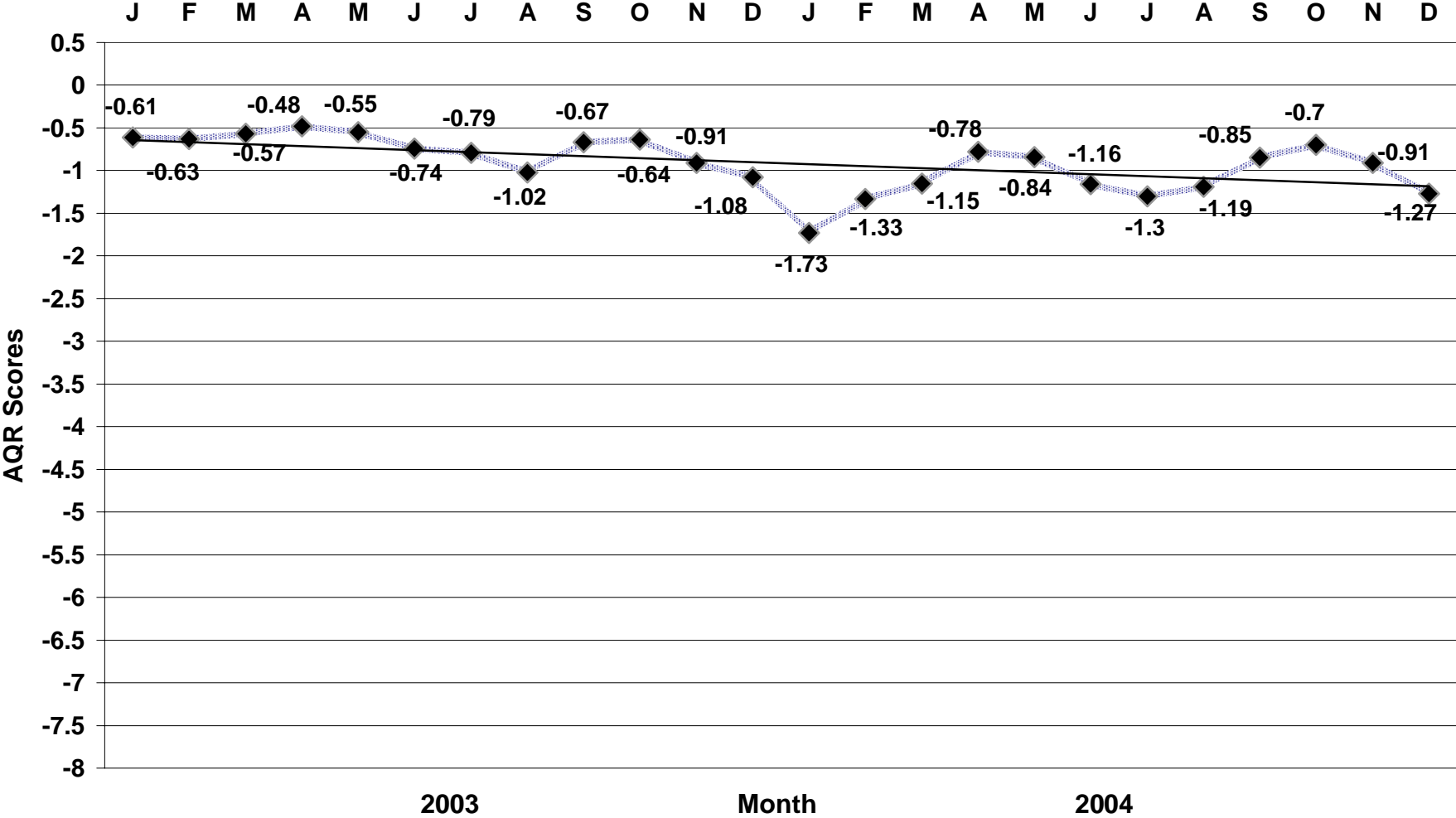
Airline Quality Rating

Alaska Airlines by Month



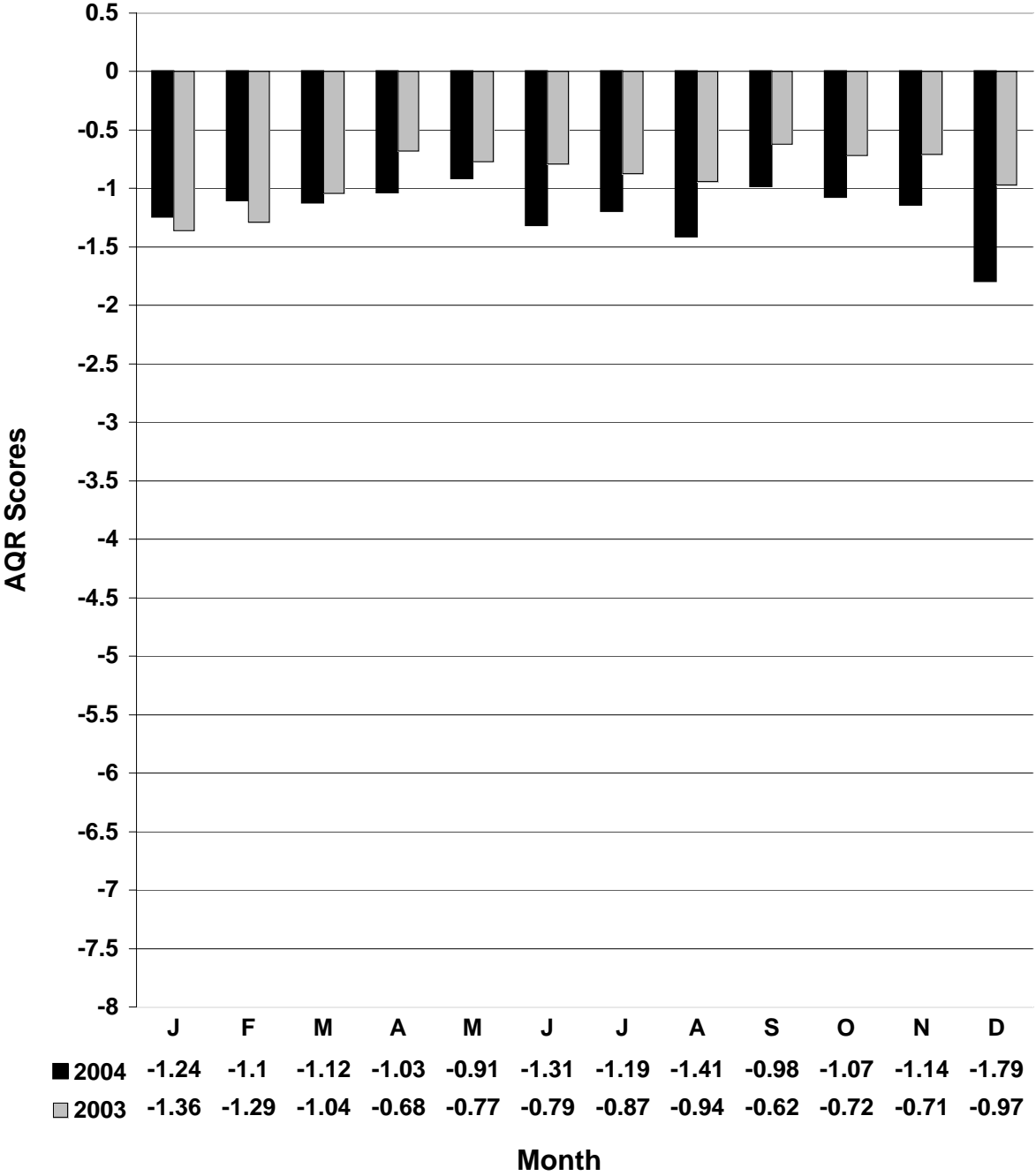
Airline Quality Rating

Alaska Airlines 2003 - 2004



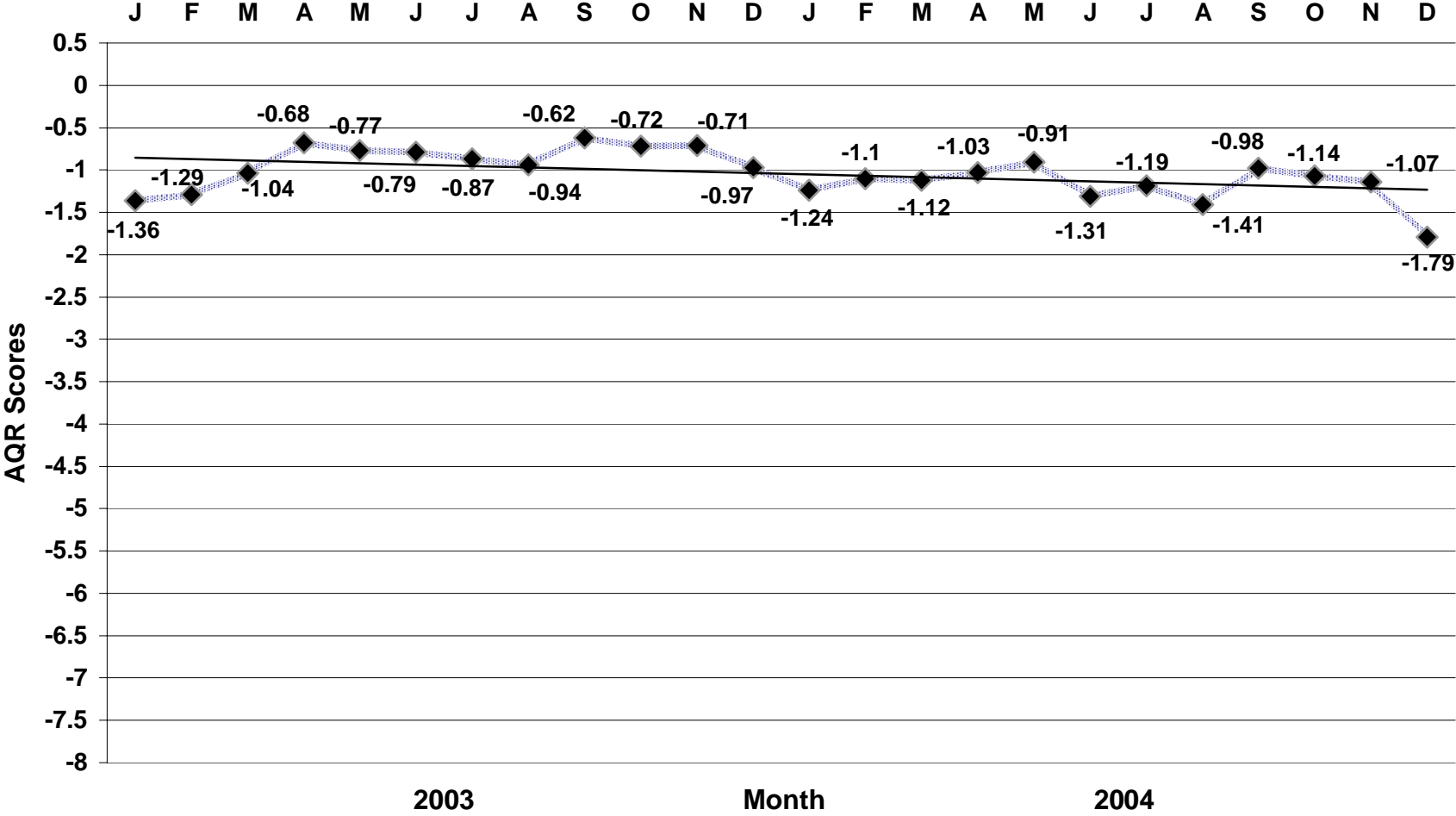
Airline Quality Rating

America West Airlines by Month



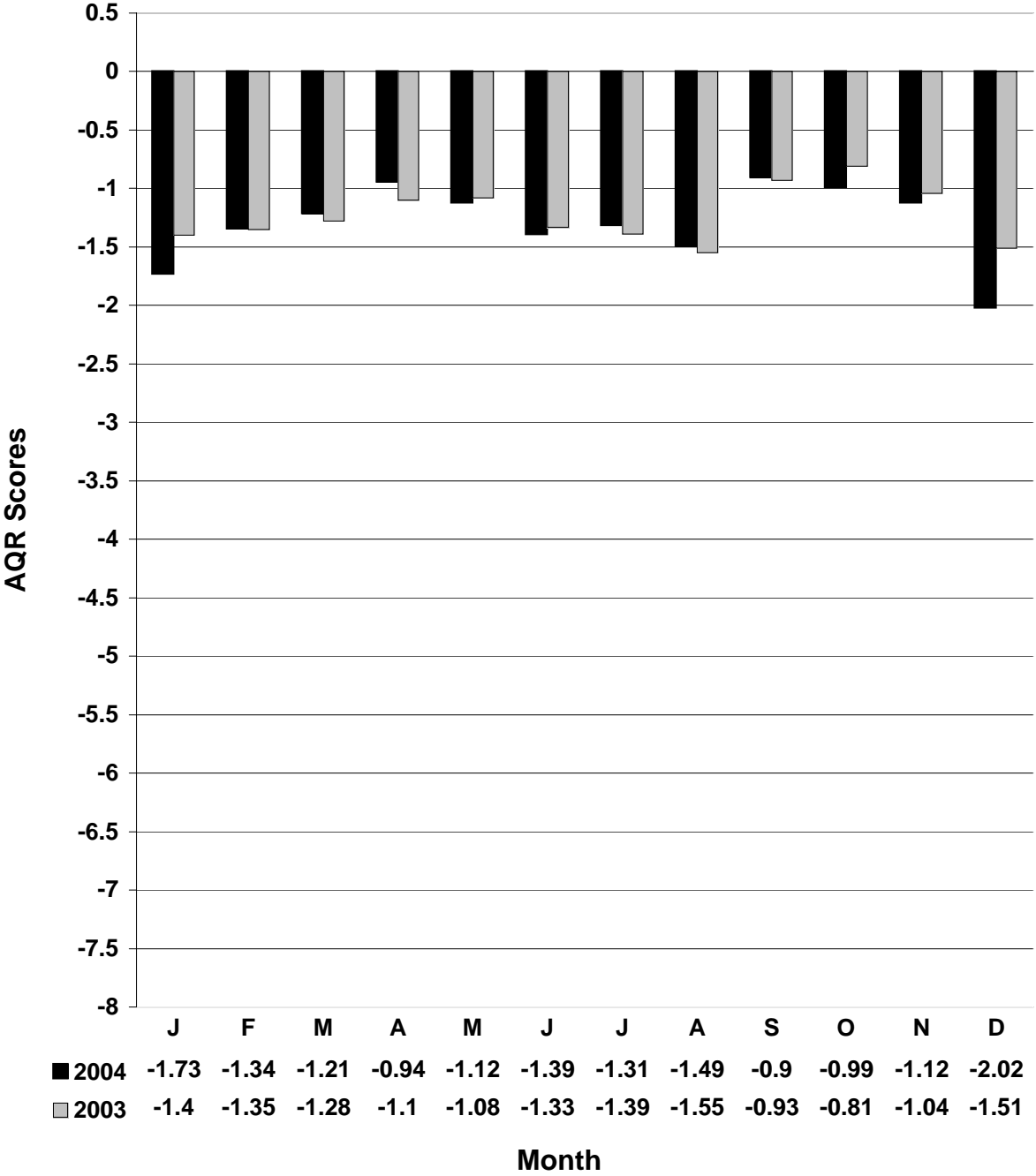
Airline Quality Rating

America West Airlines 2003 - 2004



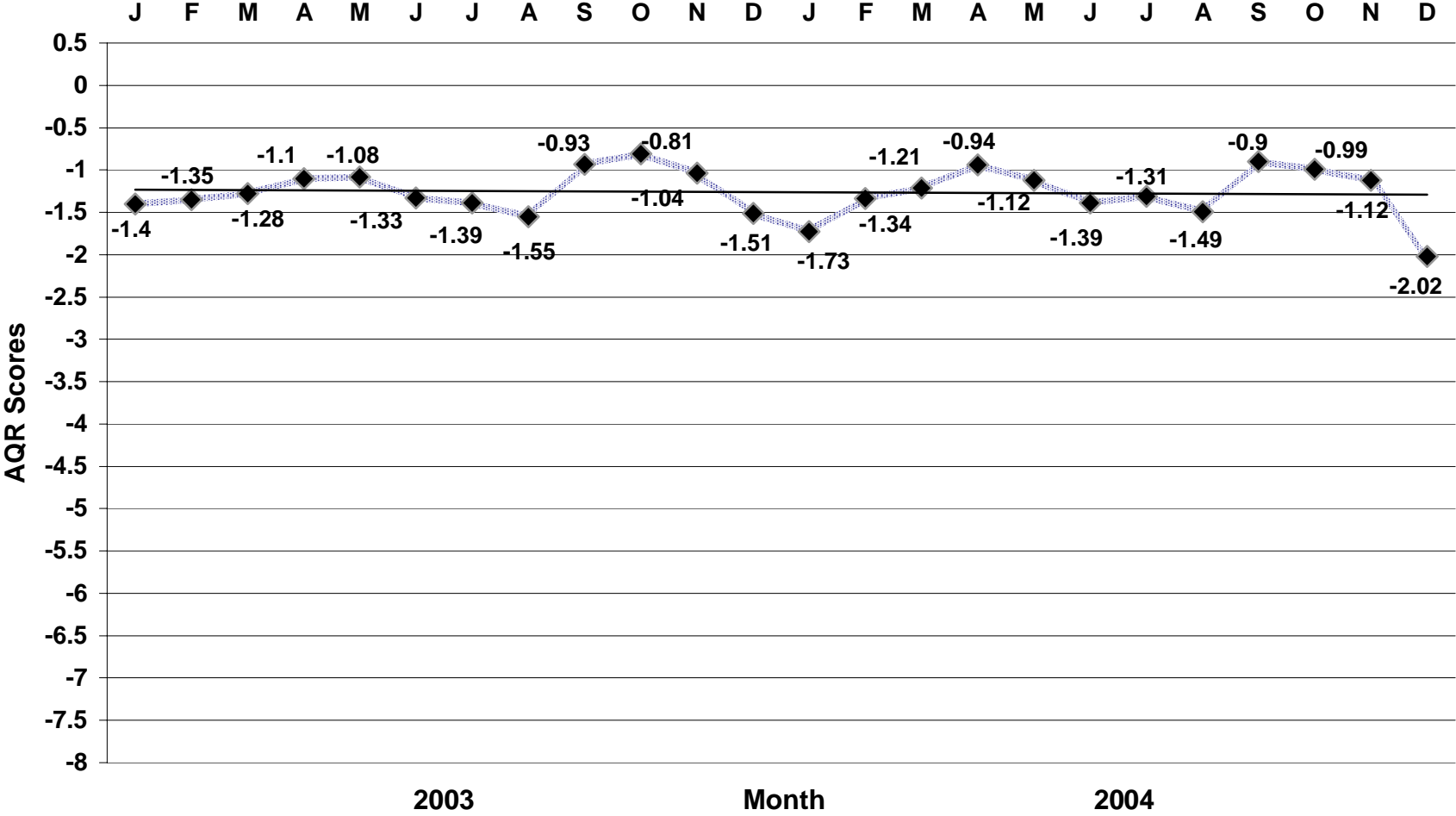
Airline Quality Rating

American Airlines by Month



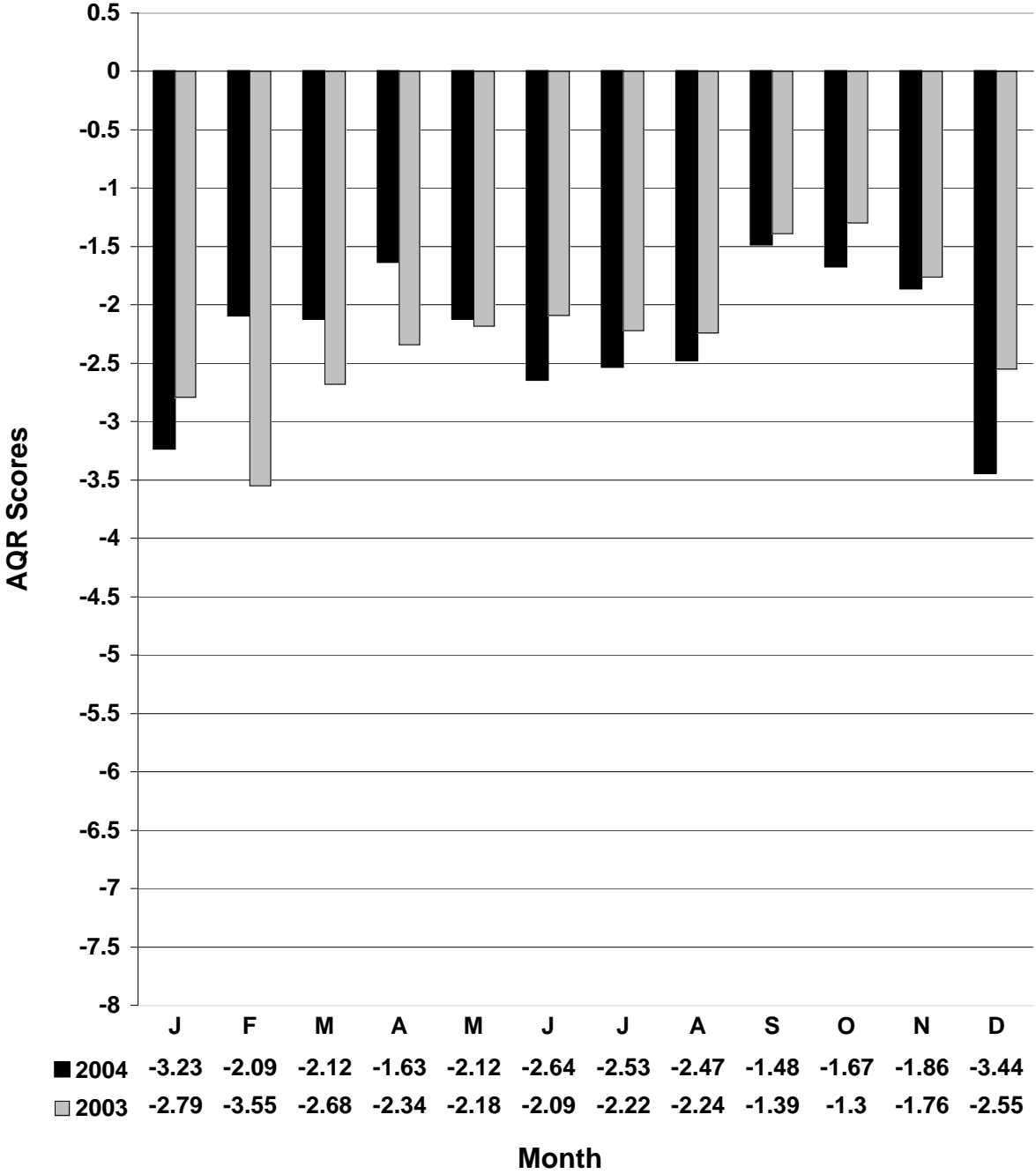
Airline Quality Rating

American Airlines 2003 - 2004



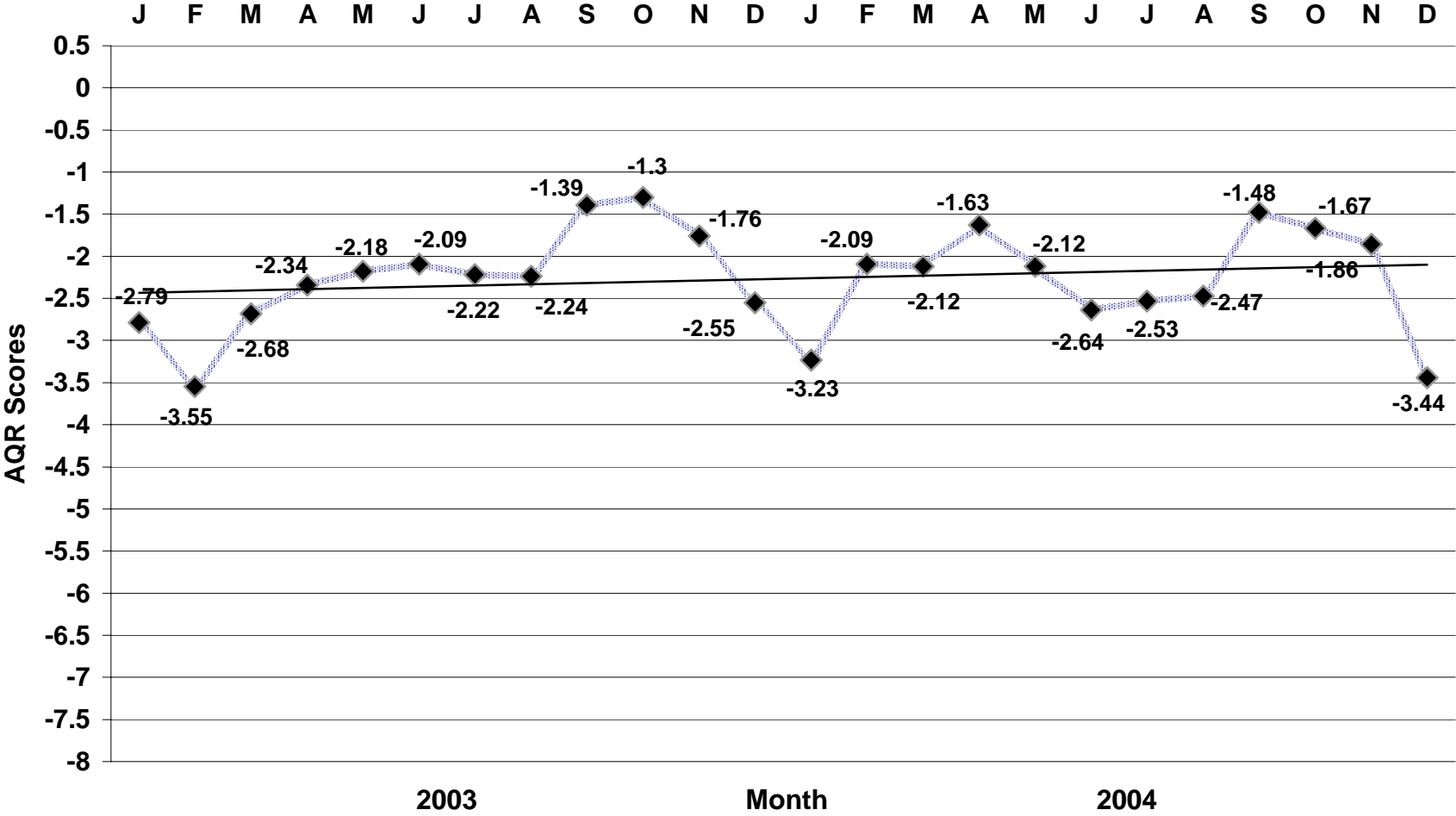
Airline Quality Rating

American Eagle Airlines by Month



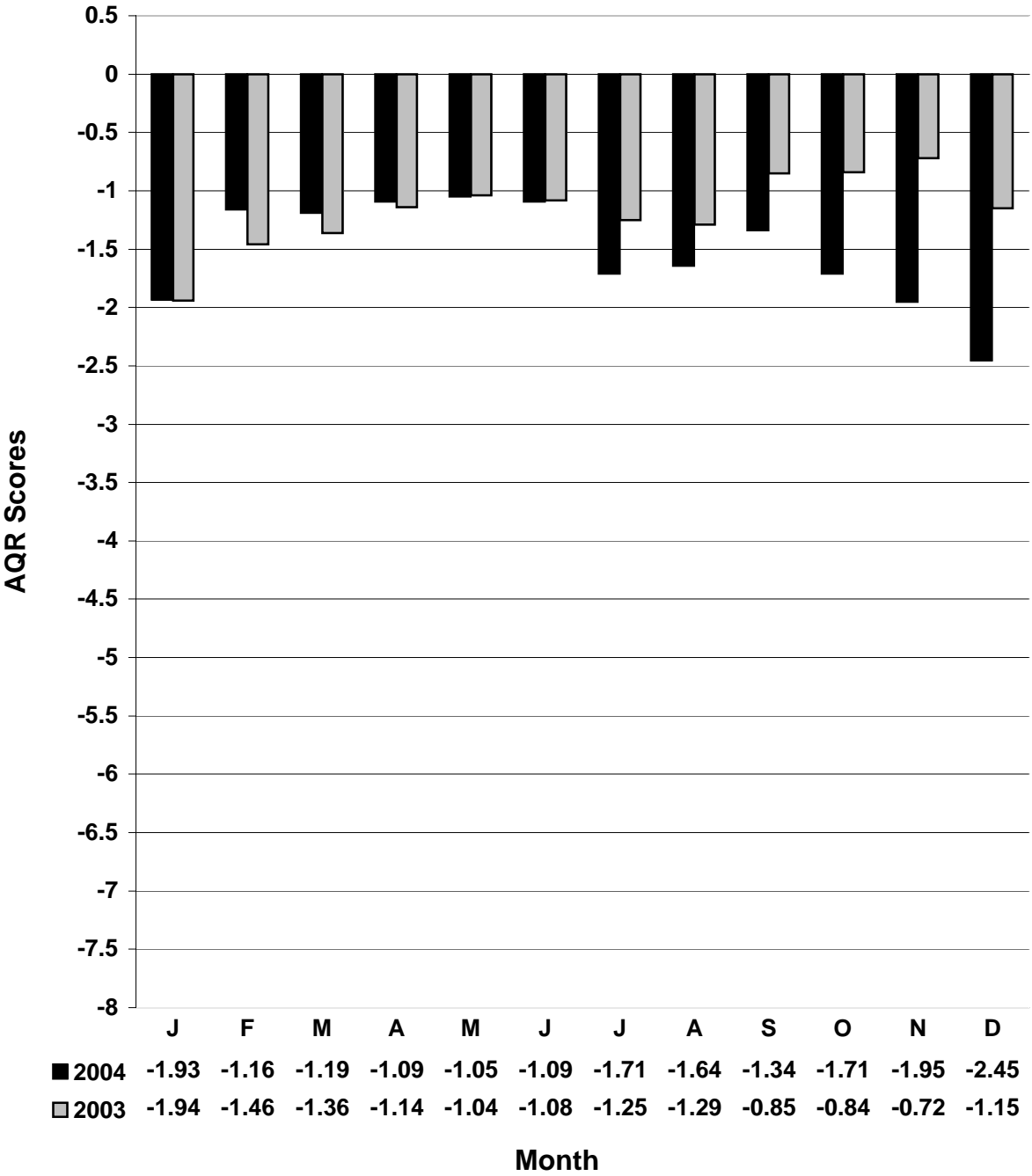
Airline Quality Rating

American Eagle Airlines 2003 - 2004



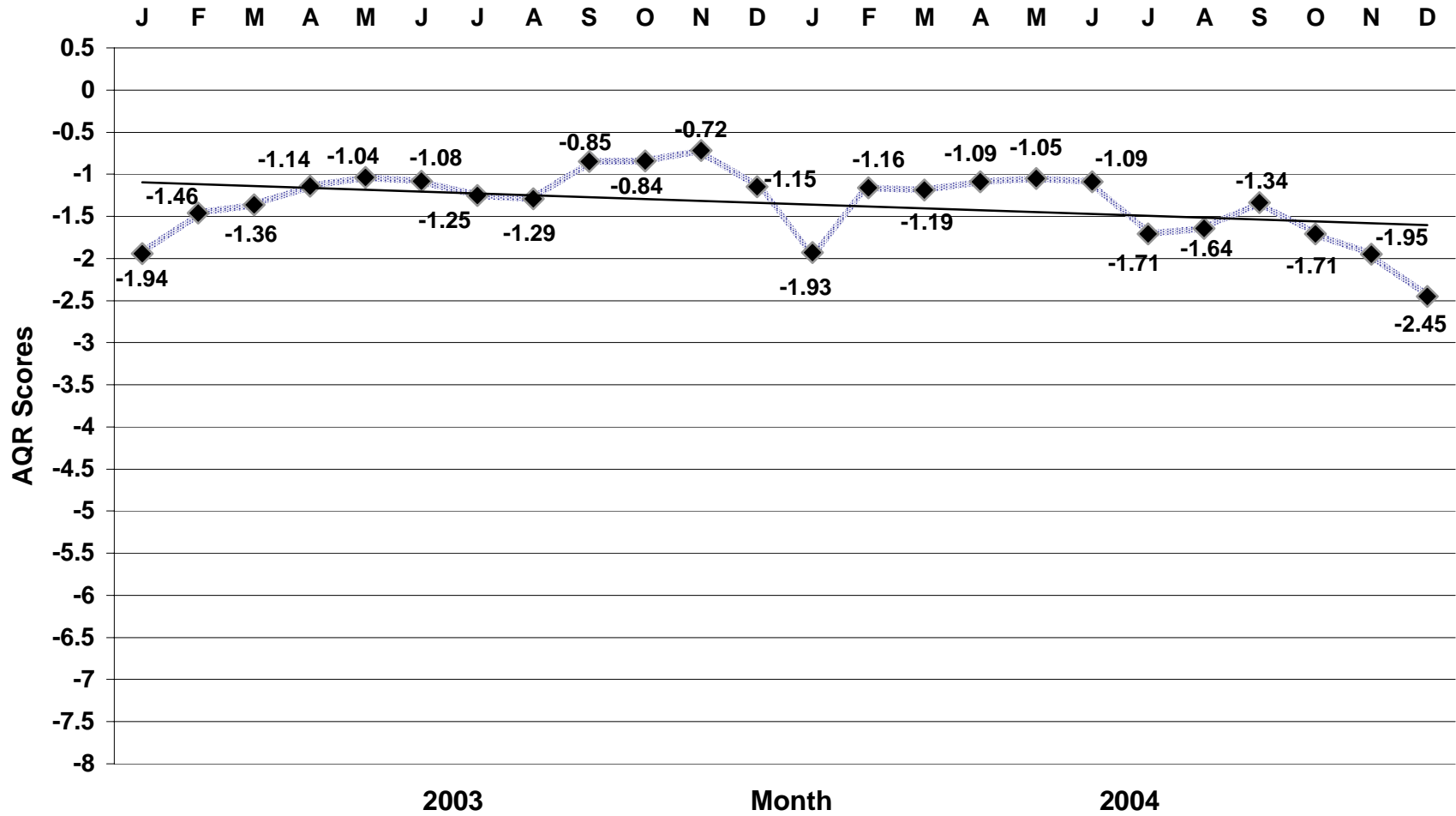
Airline Quality Rating

ATA Airlines by Month



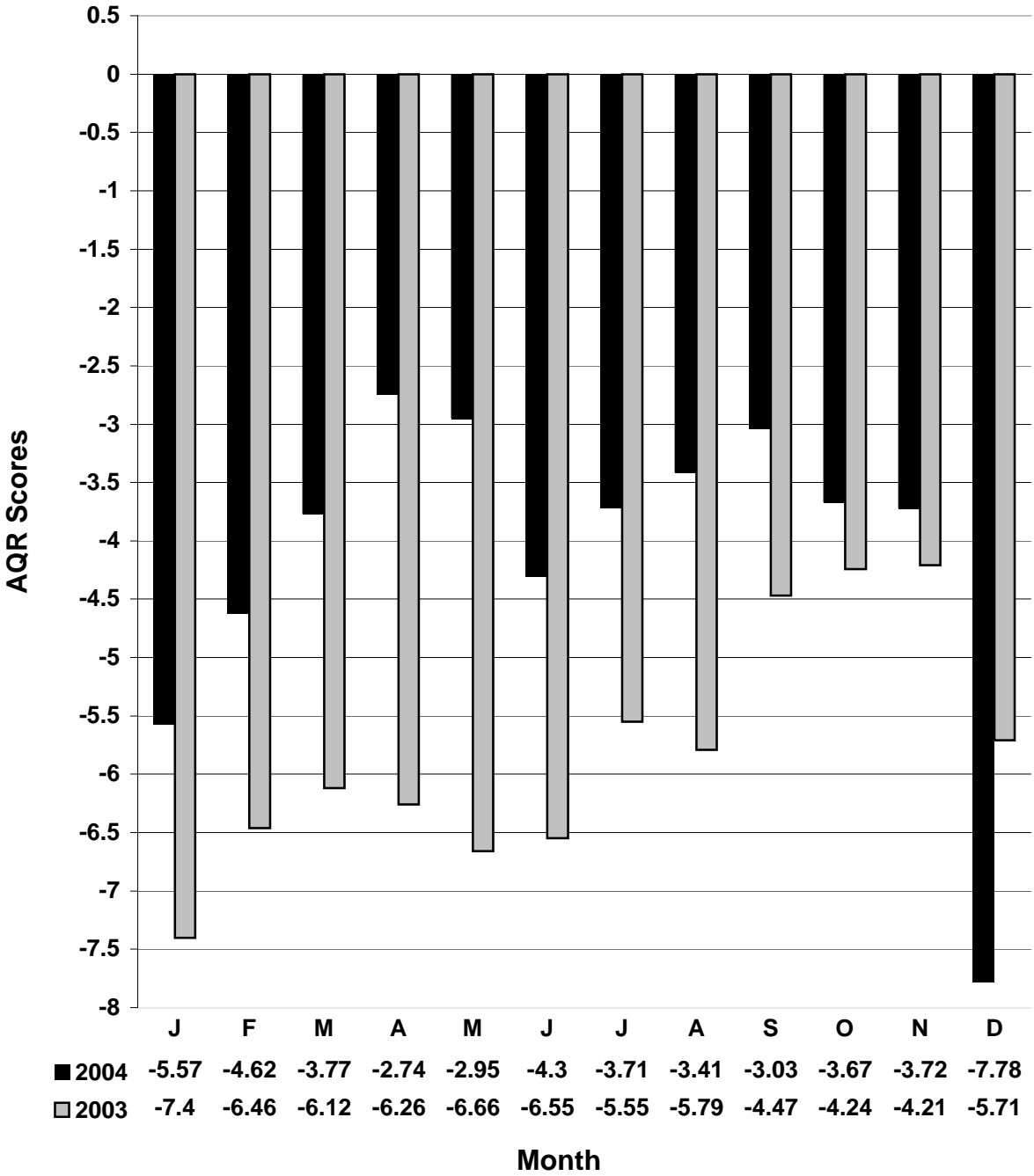
Airline Quality Rating

ATA Airlines 2003 - 2004



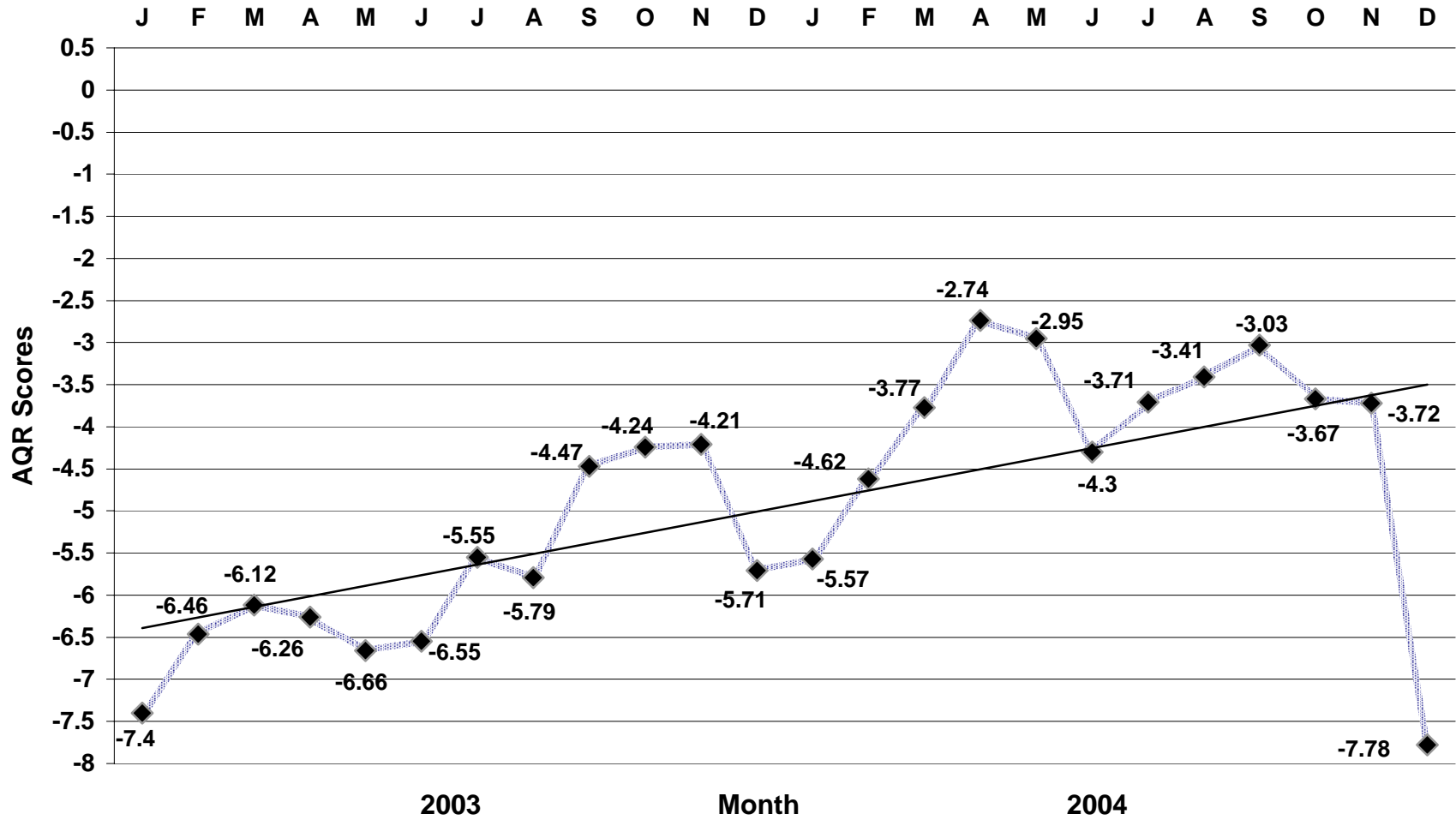
Airline Quality Rating

Atlantic Southeast Airlines by Month



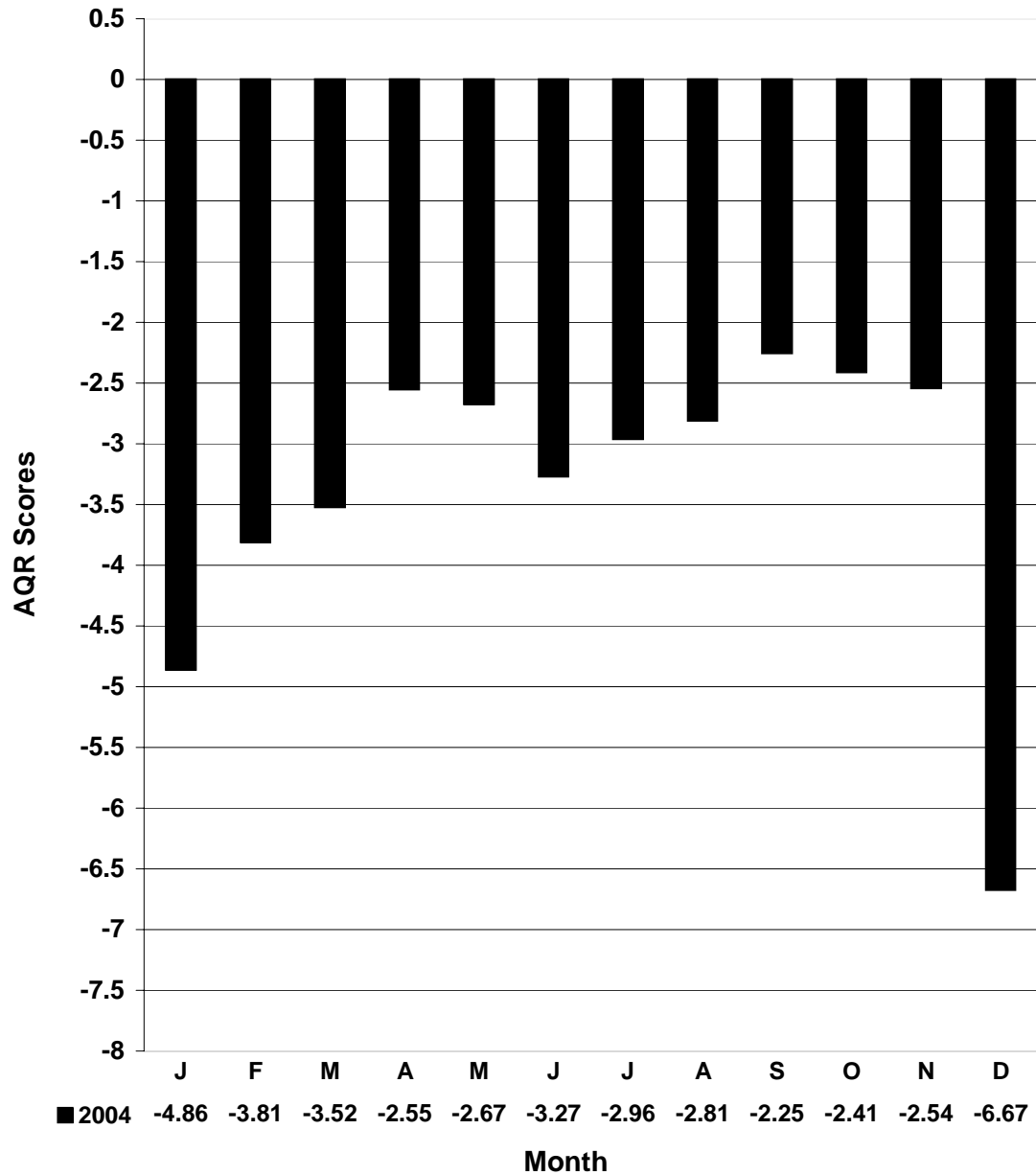
Airline Quality Rating

Atlantic Southeast Airlines 2003 - 2004



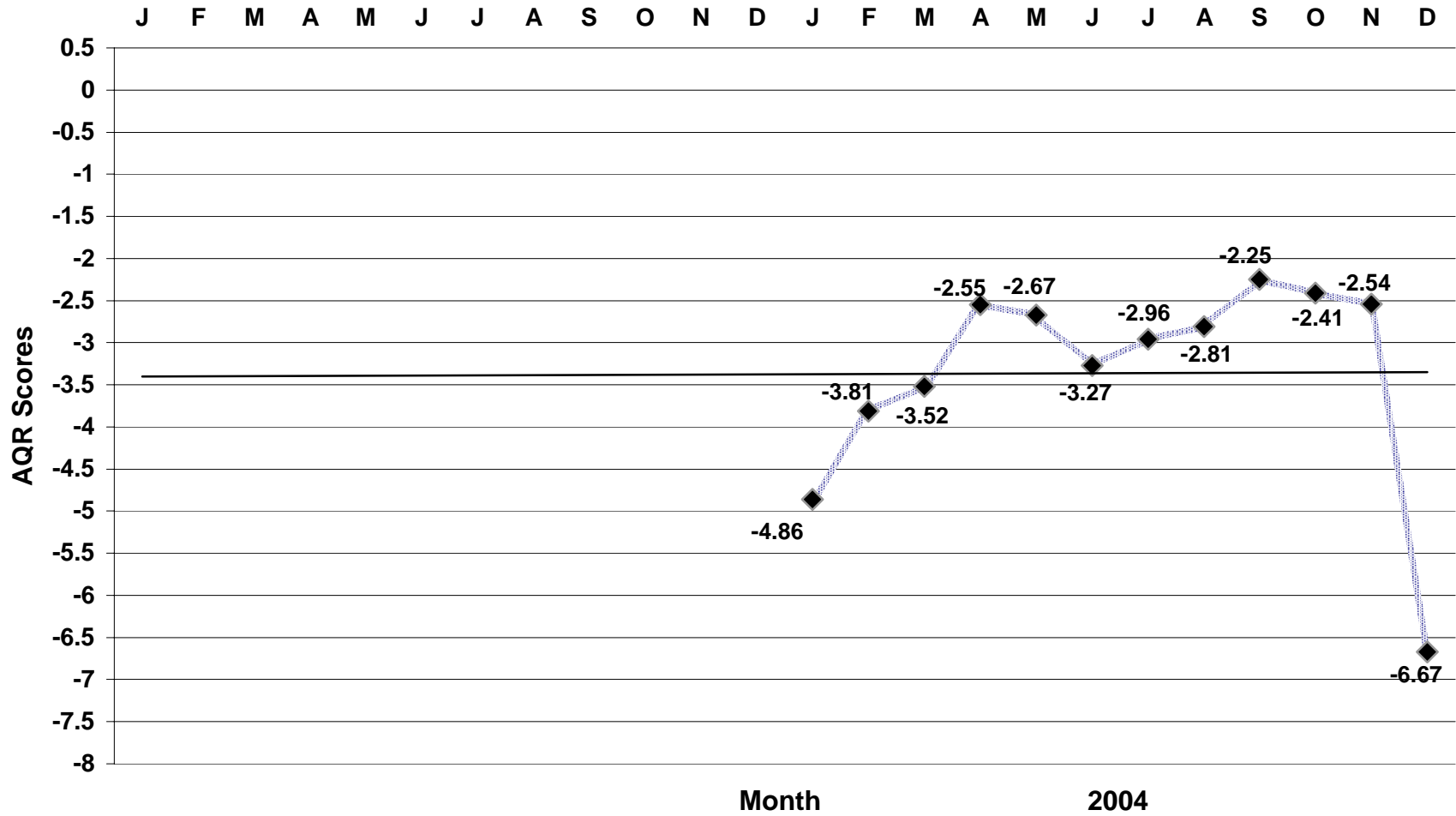
Airline Quality Rating

COMAIR by Month



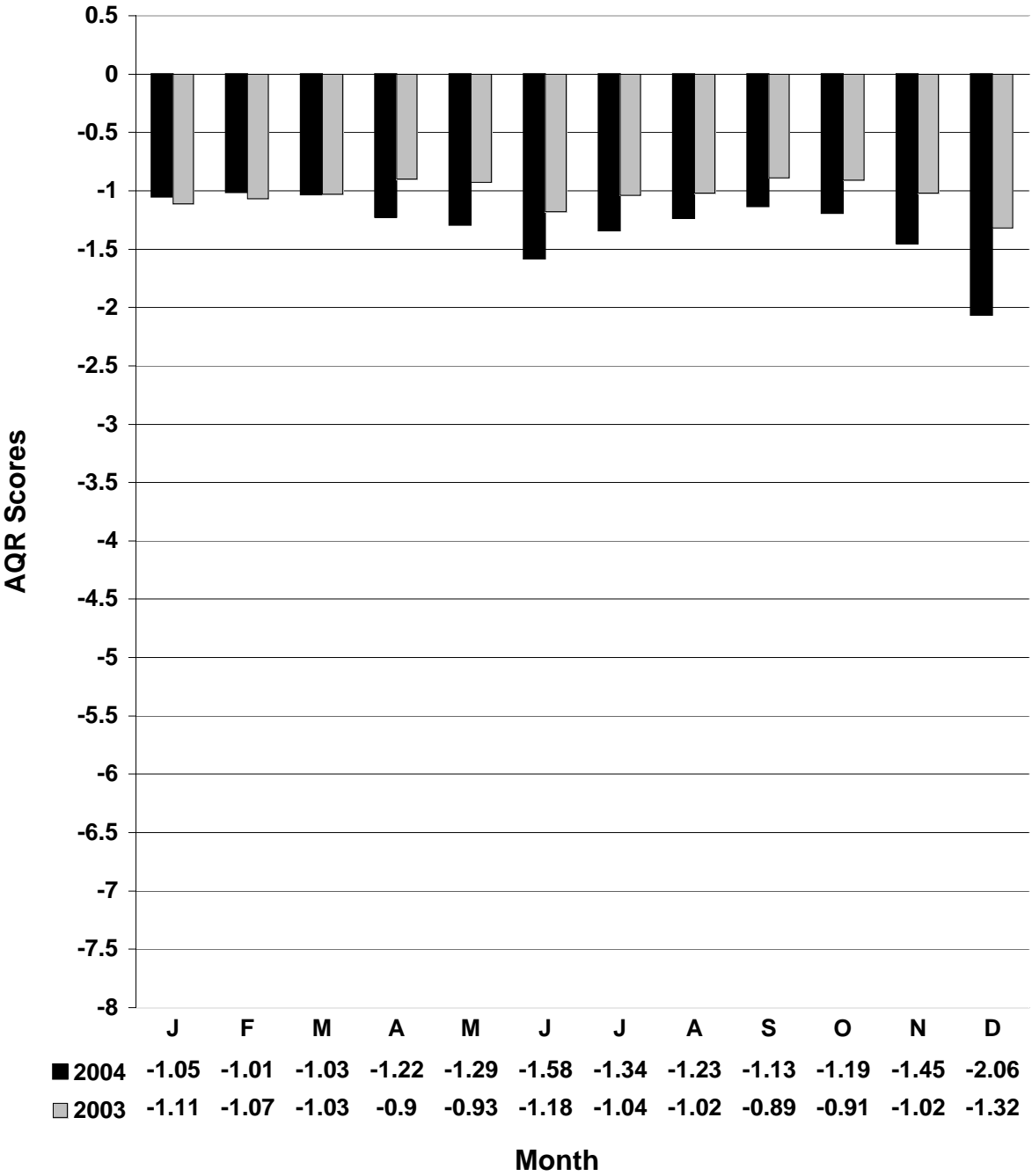
Airline Quality Rating

COMAIR Airlines 2004



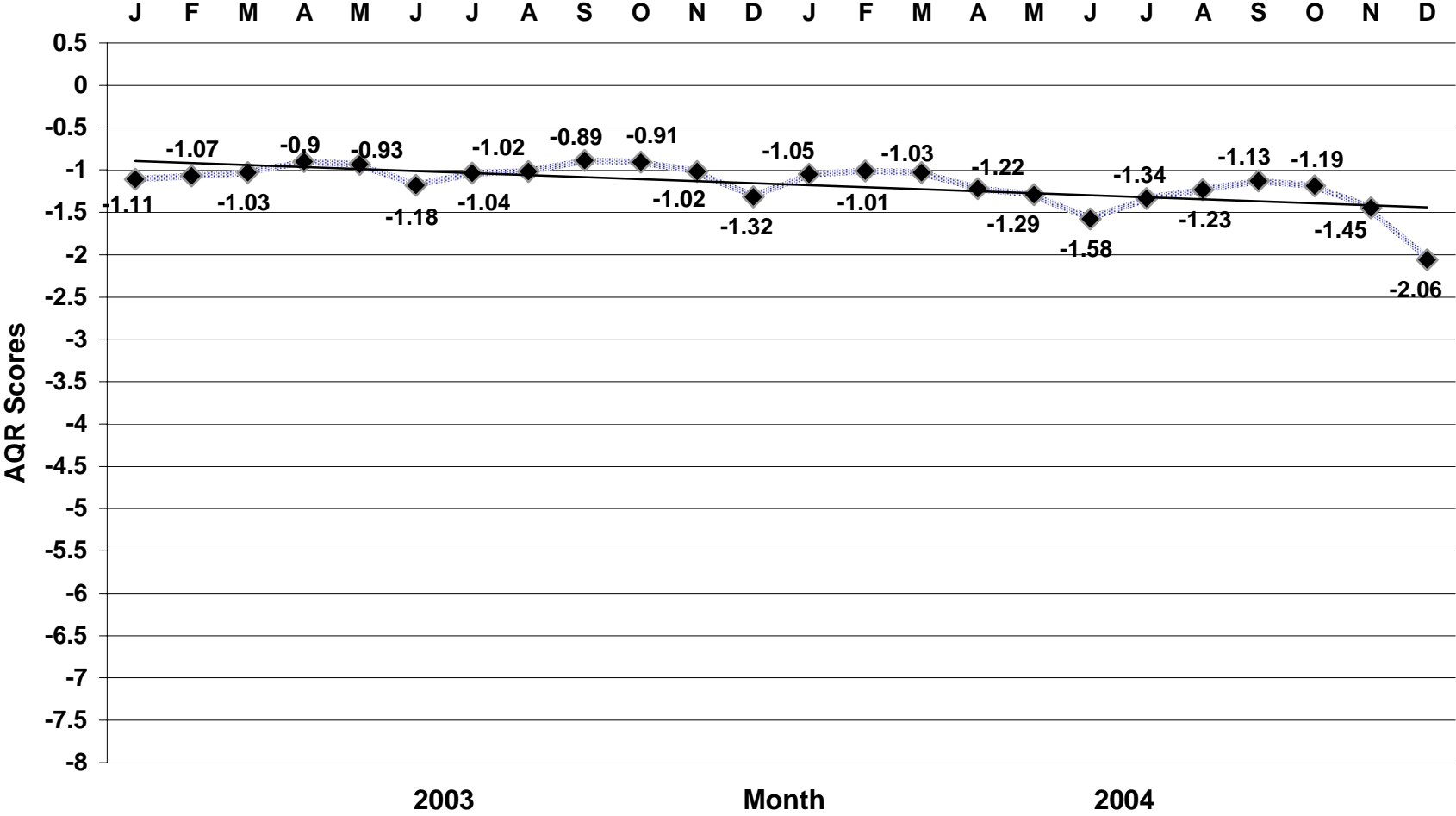
Airline Quality Rating

Continental Airlines by Month



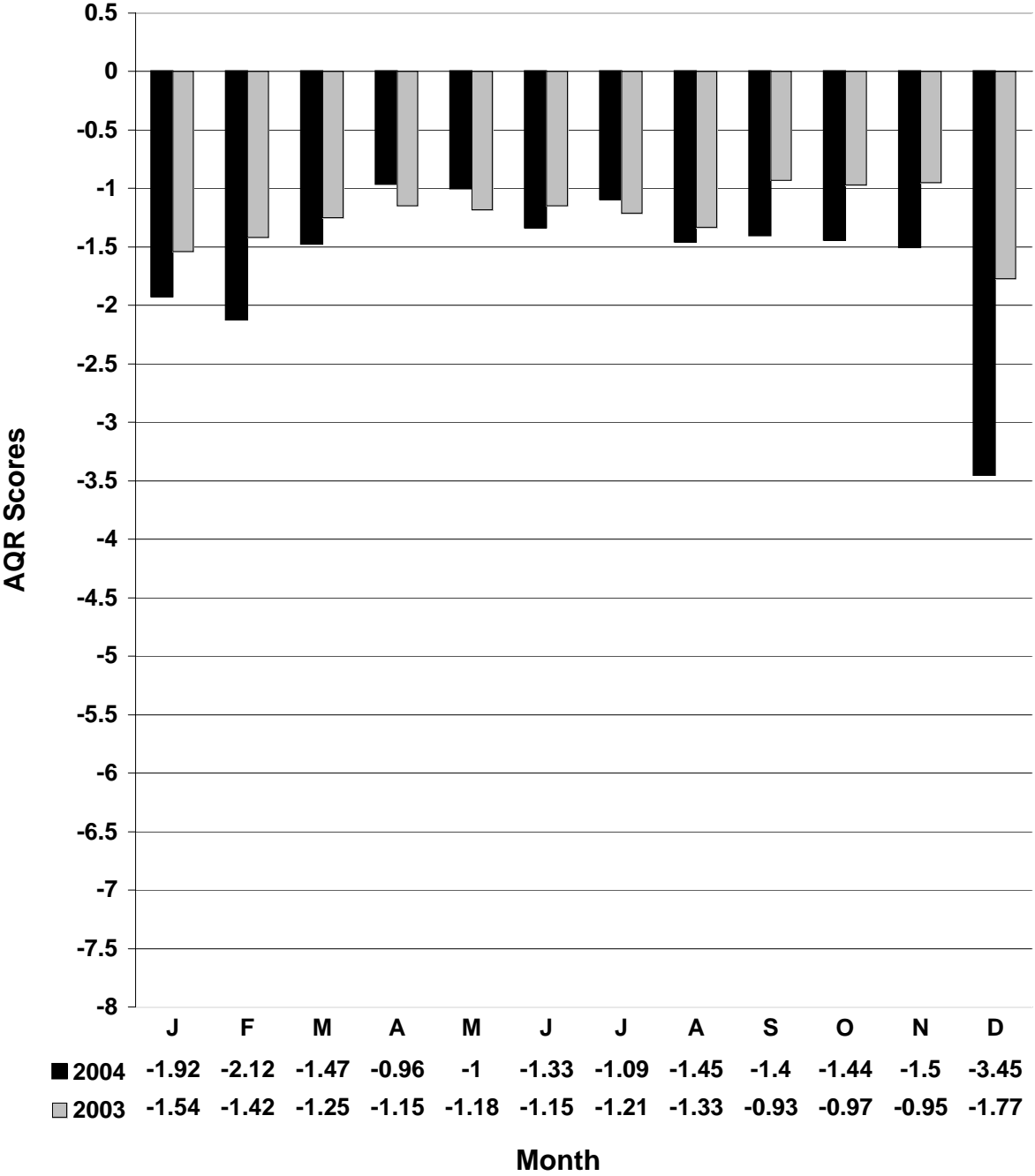
Airline Quality Rating

Continental Airlines 2003 - 2004



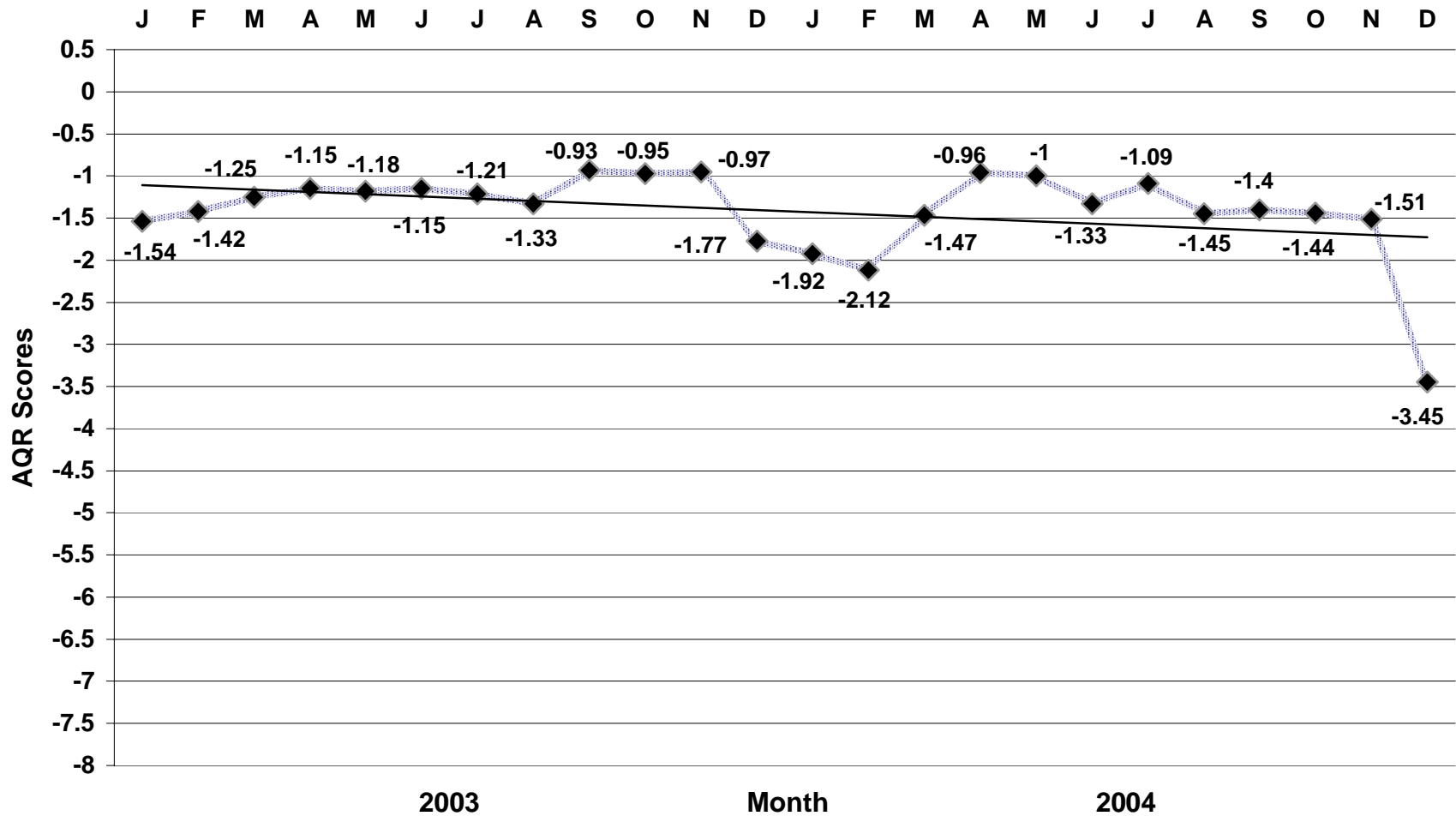
Airline Quality Rating

Delta Airlines by Month



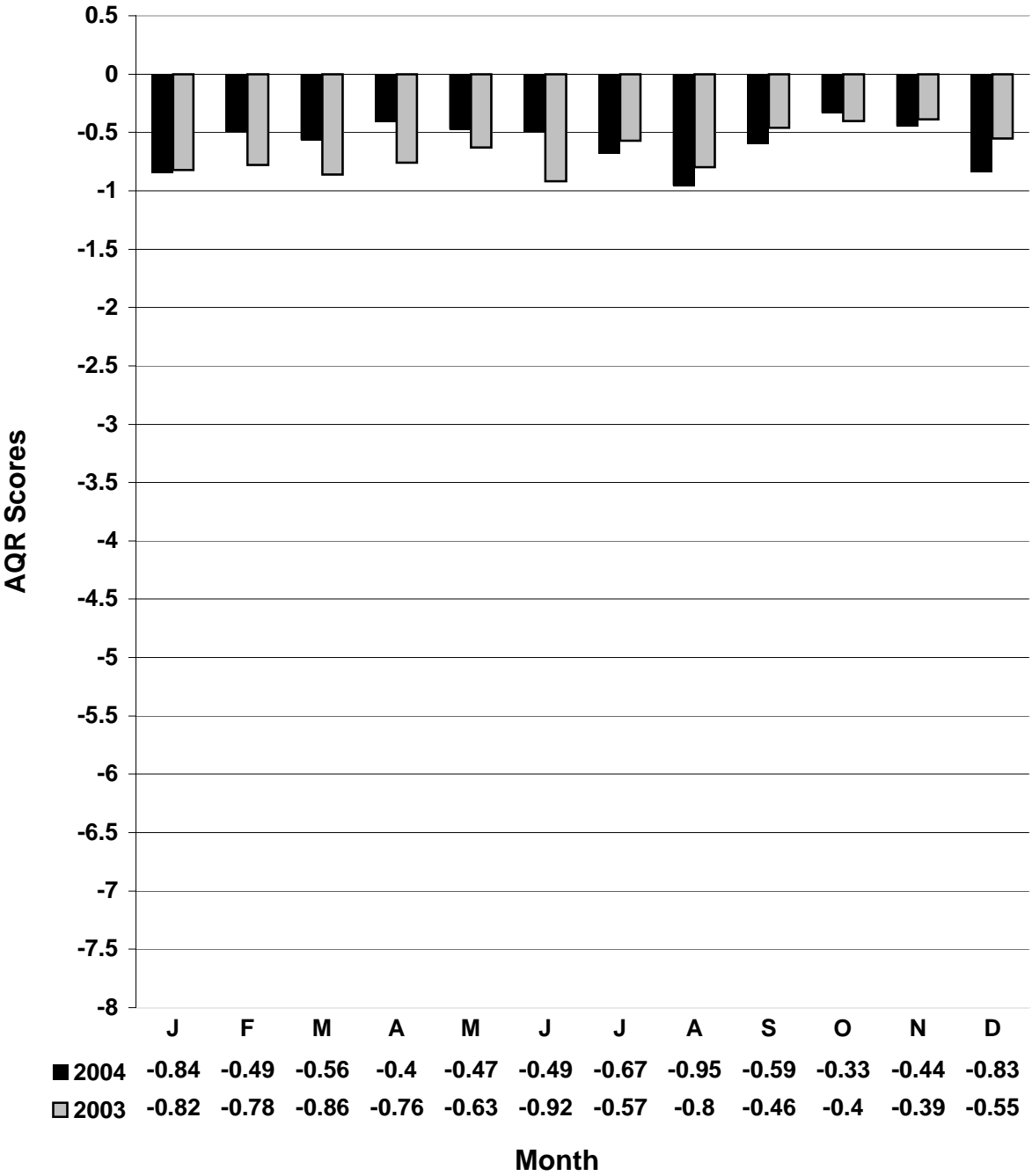
Airline Quality Rating

Delta Airlines 2003 - 2004



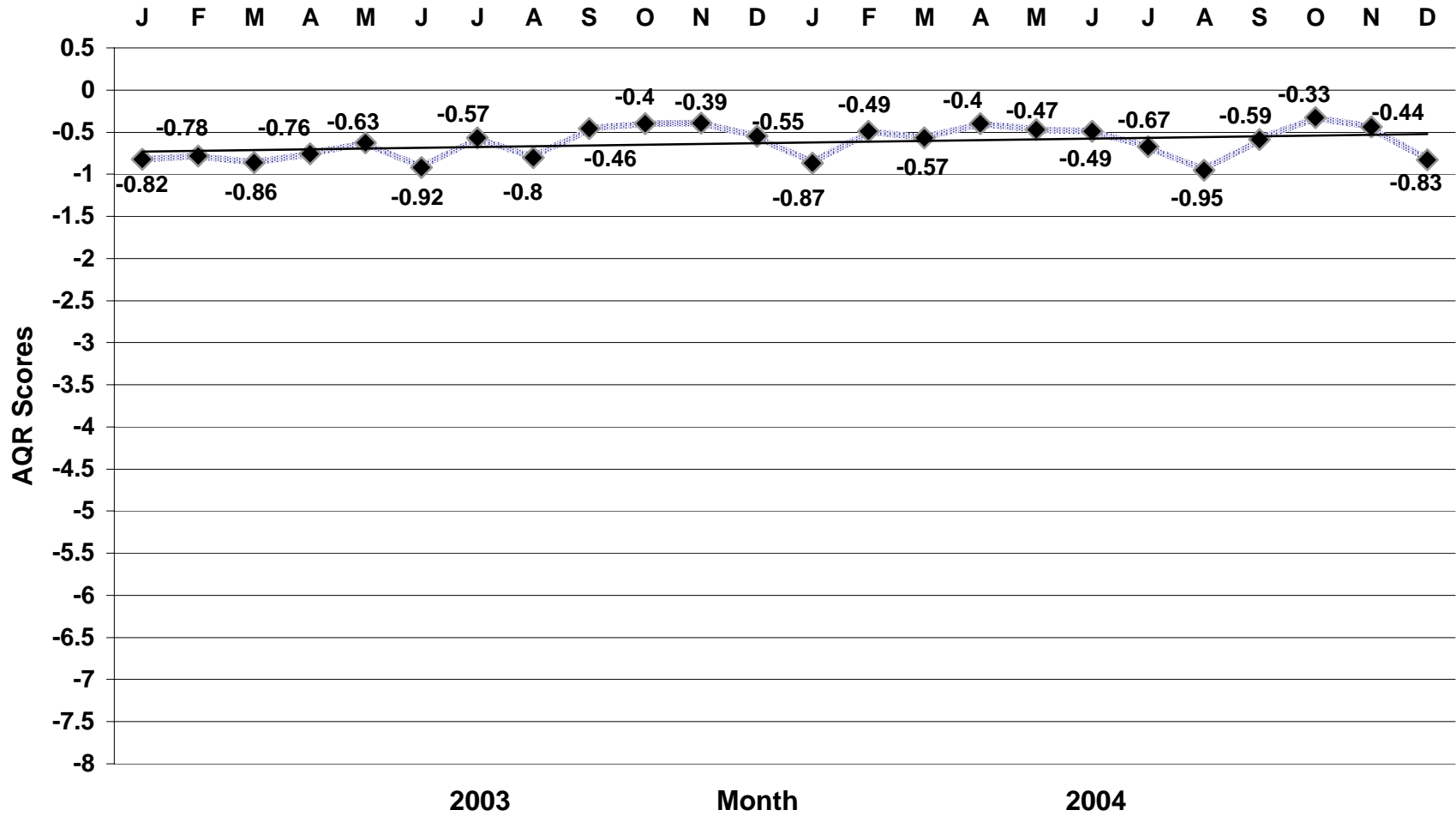
Airline Quality Rating

Jet Blue Airlines by Month



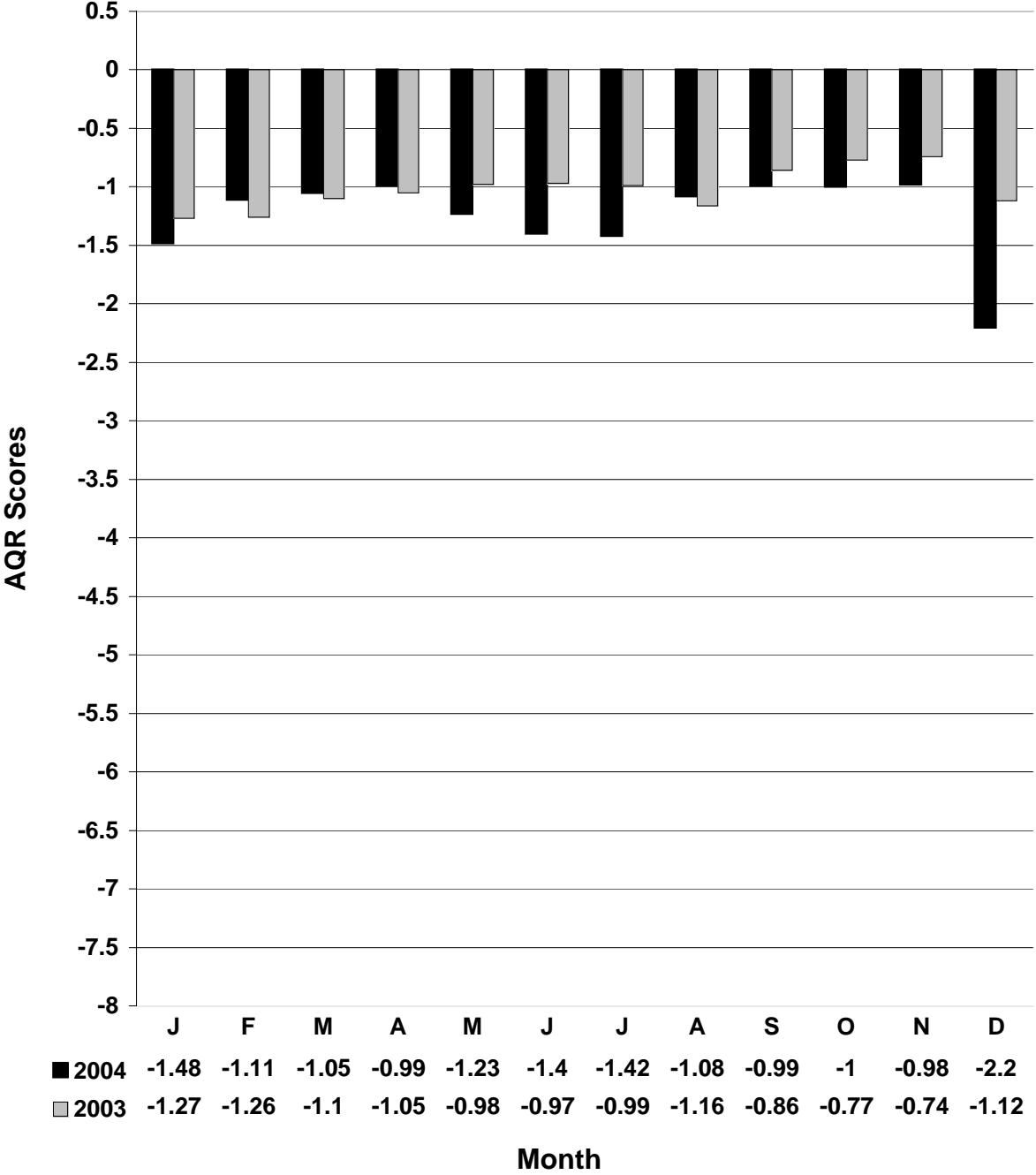
Airline Quality Rating

Jet Blue Airlines 2003 - 2004



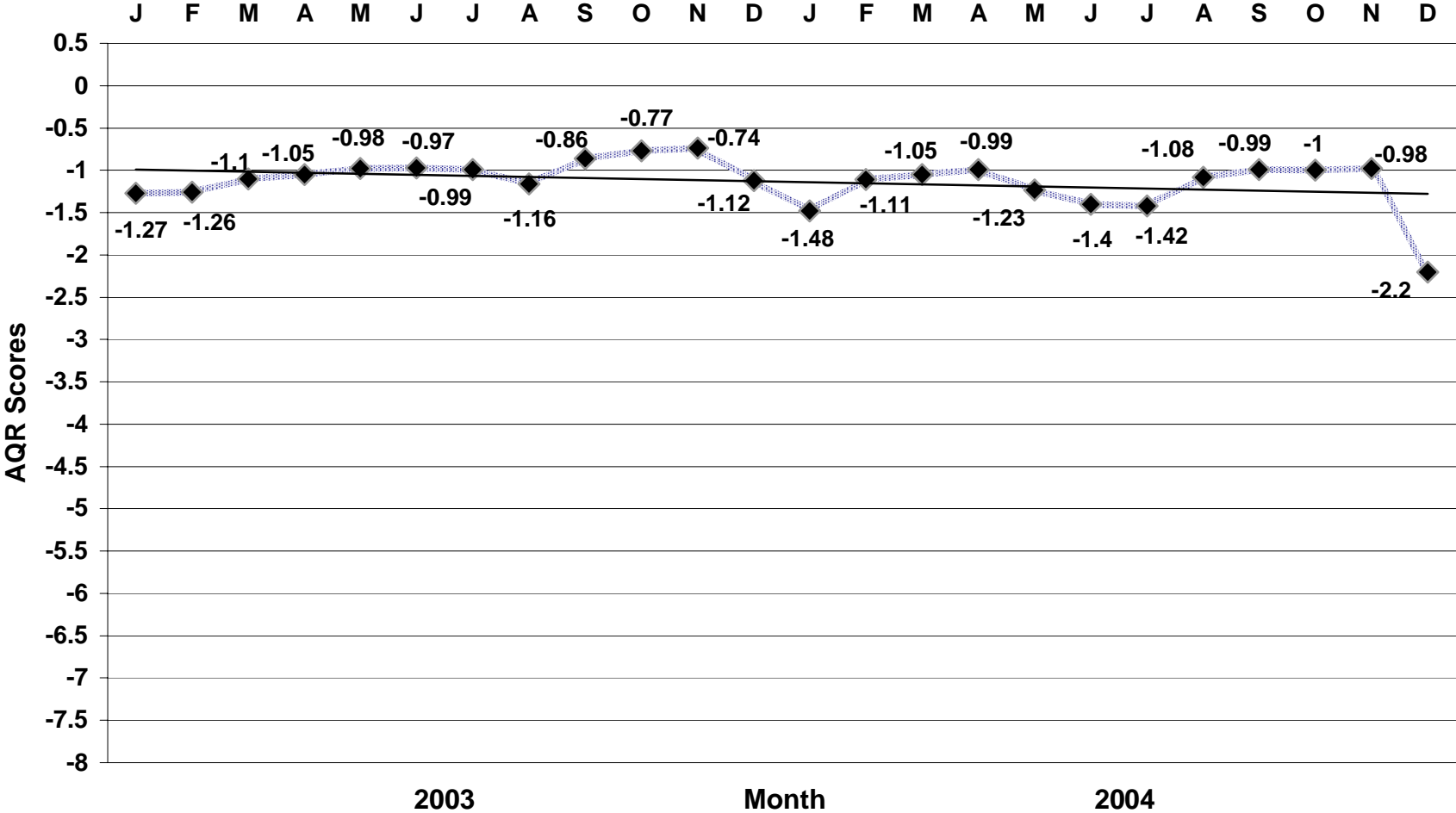
Airline Quality Rating

Northwest Airlines by Month



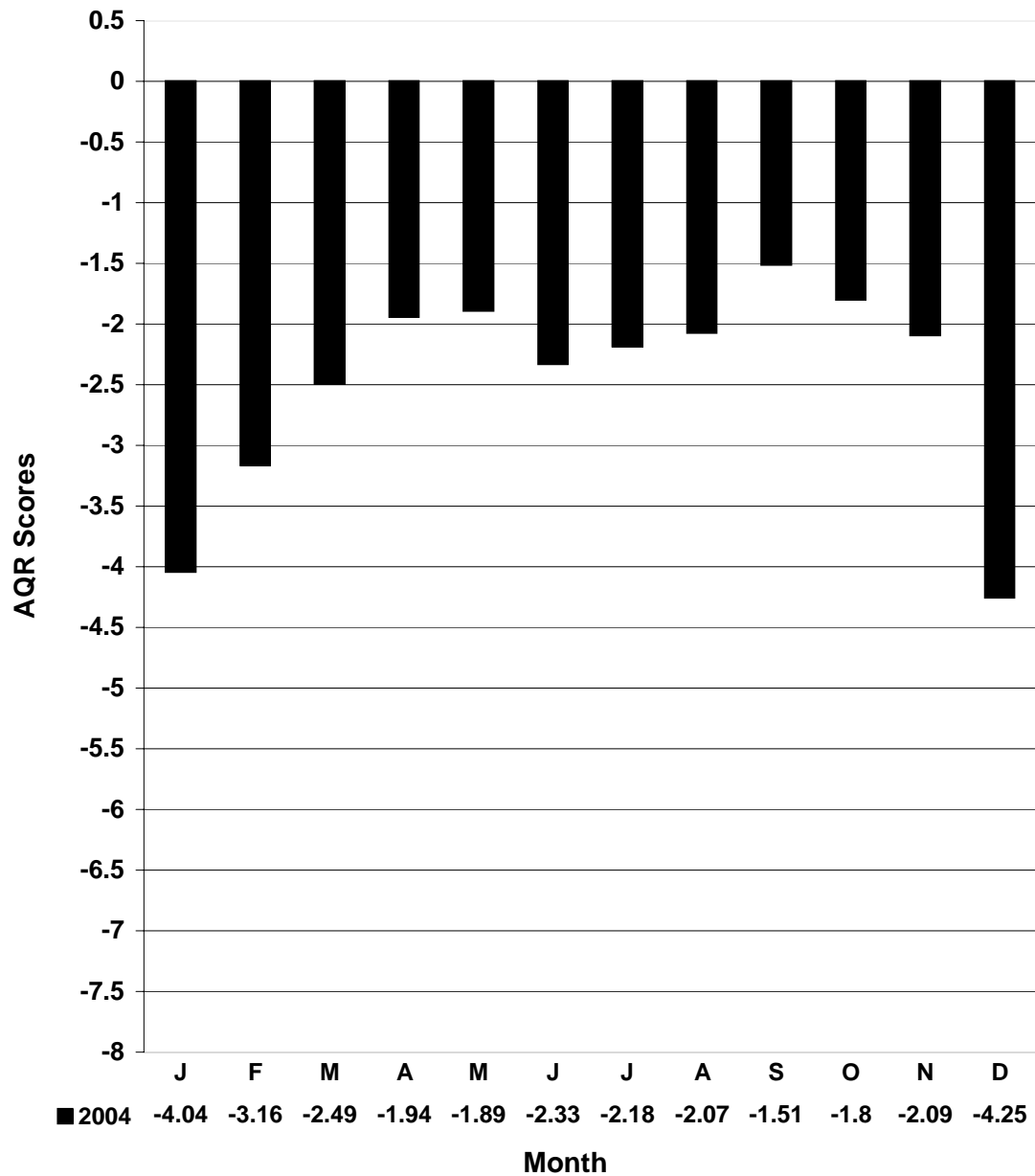
Airline Quality Rating

Northwest Airlines 2003 - 2004



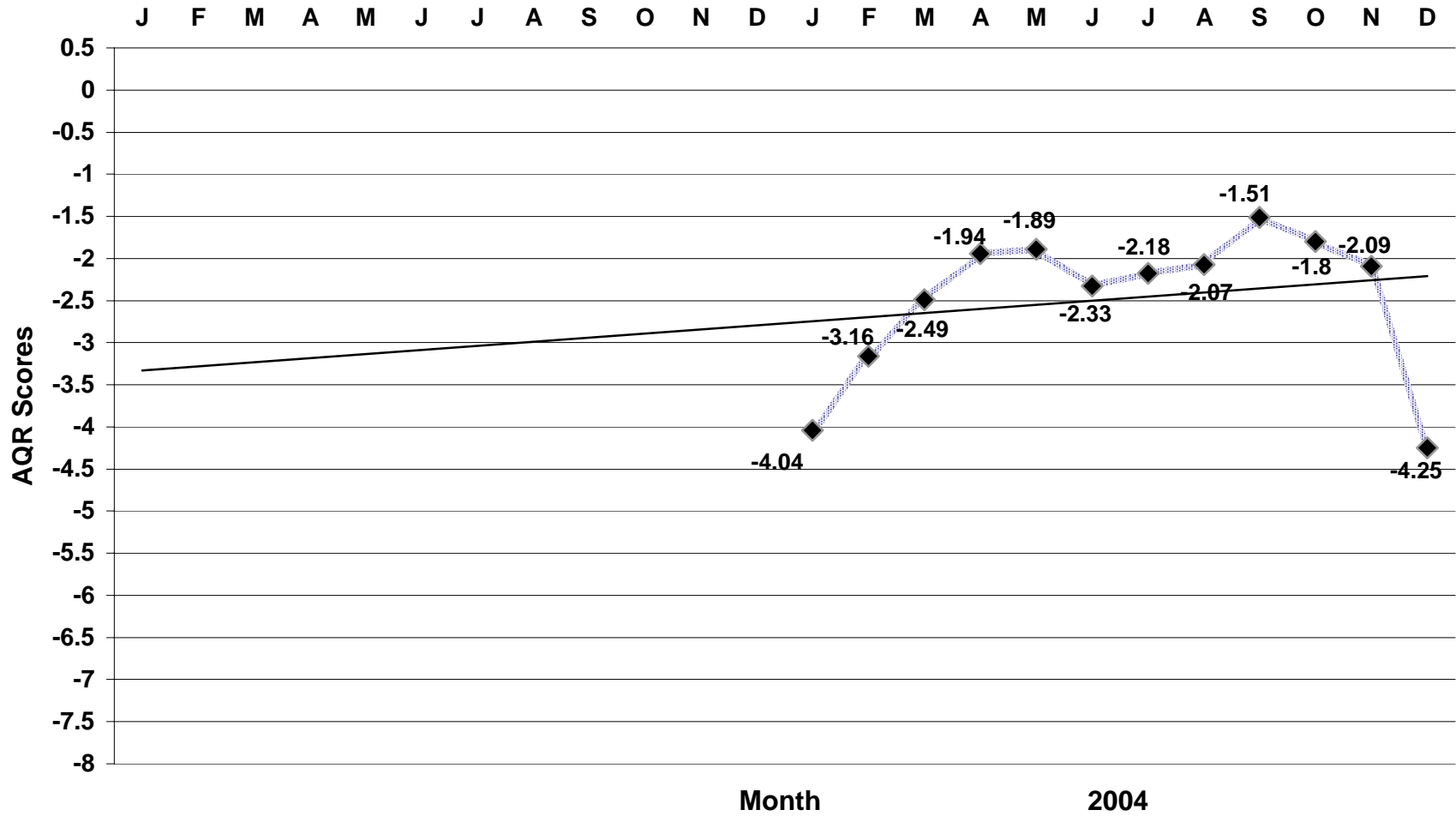
Airline Quality Rating

SkyWest Airlines by Month



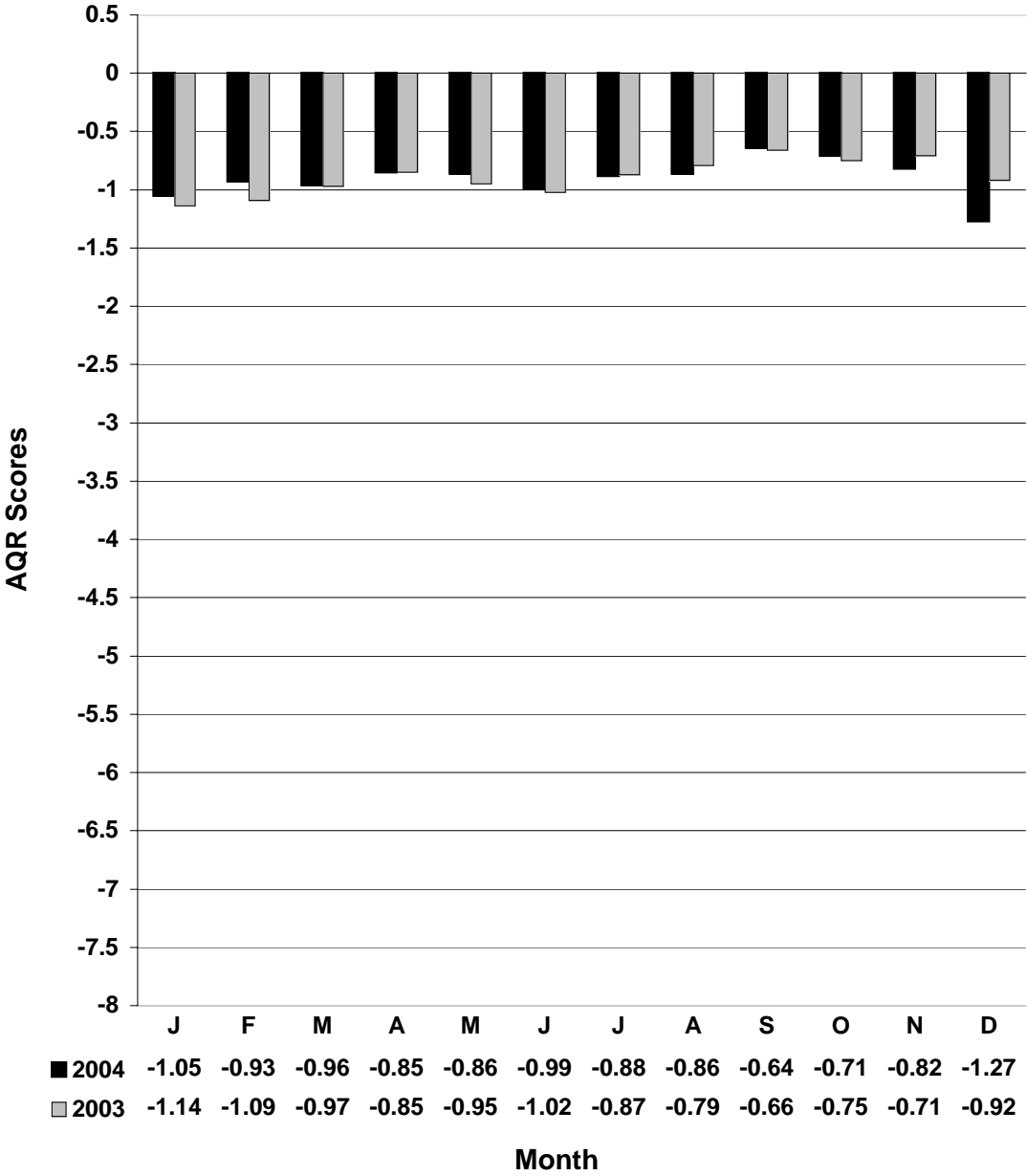
Airline Quality Rating

SkyWest Airlines 2004



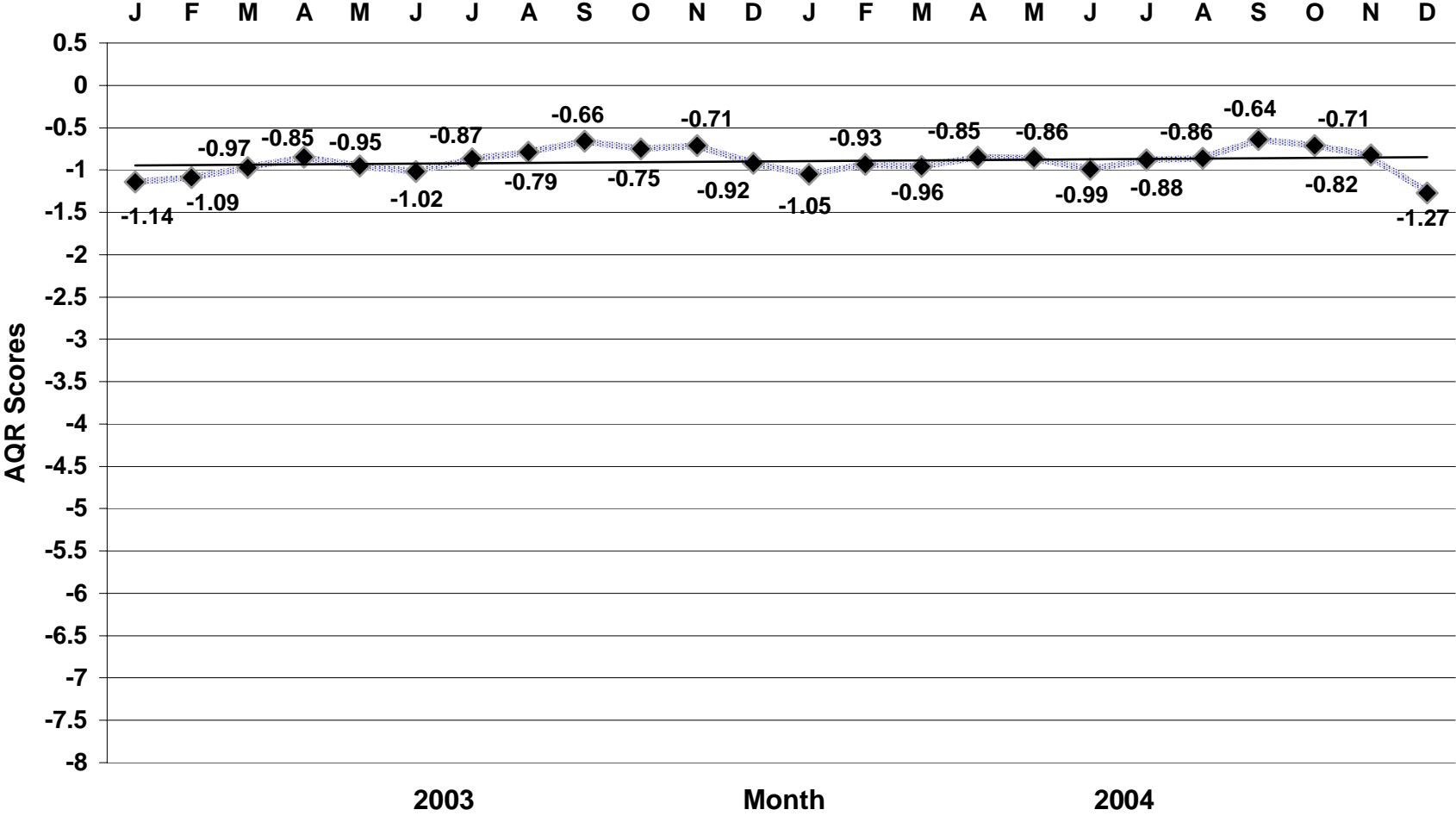
Airline Quality Rating

Southwest Airlines by Month



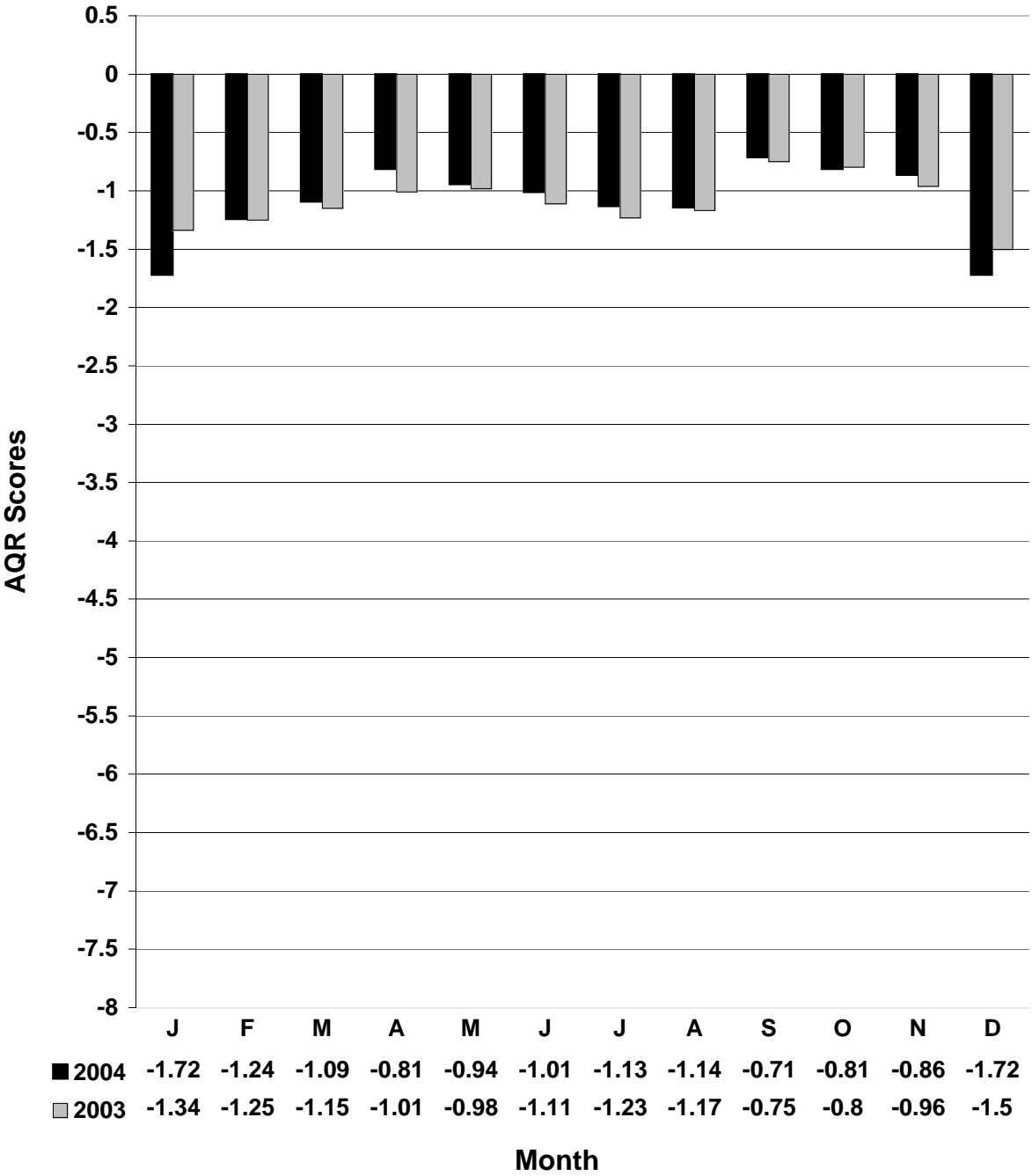
Airline Quality Rating

Southwest Airlines 2003 - 2004



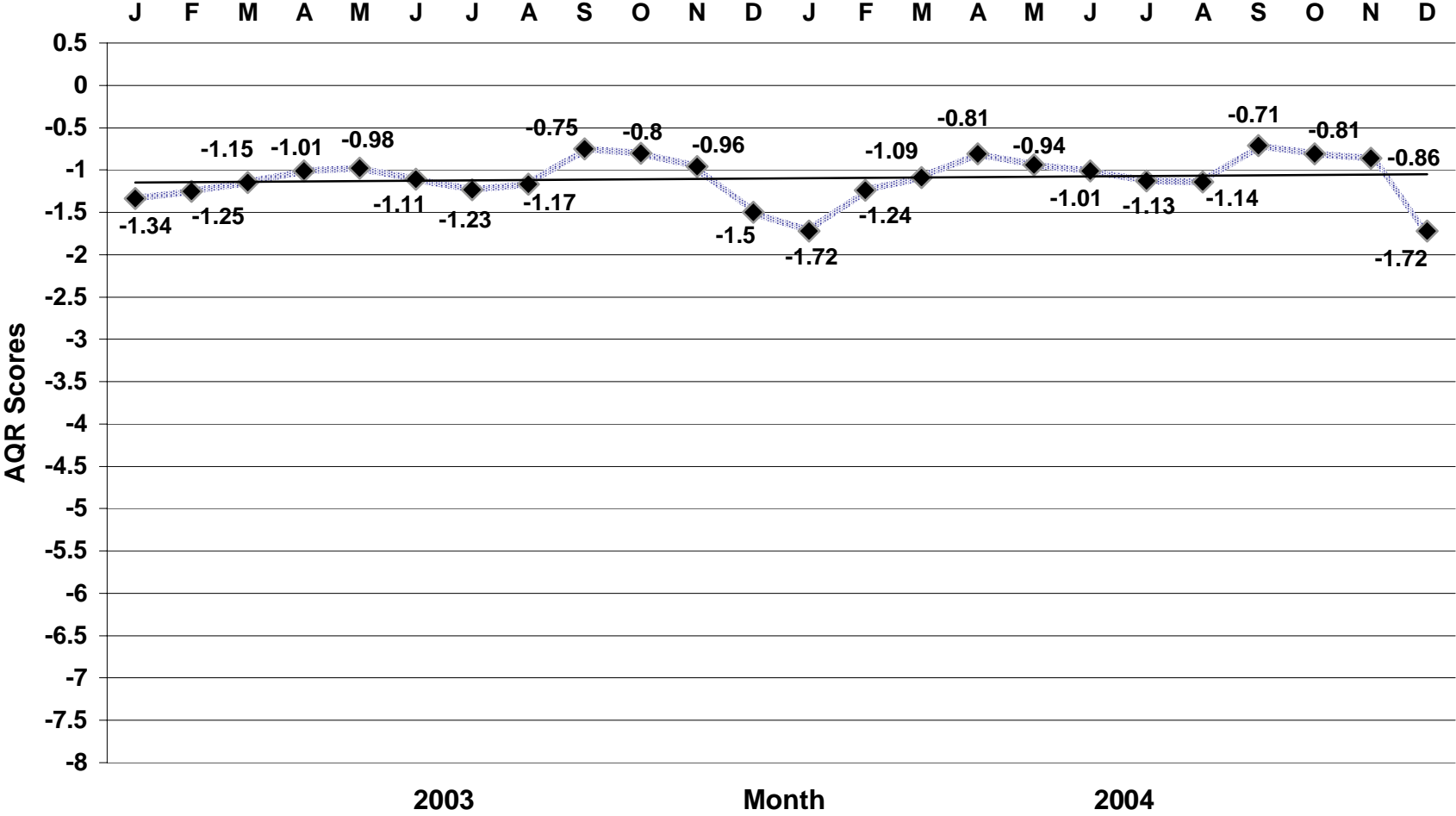
Airline Quality Rating

United Airlines by Month



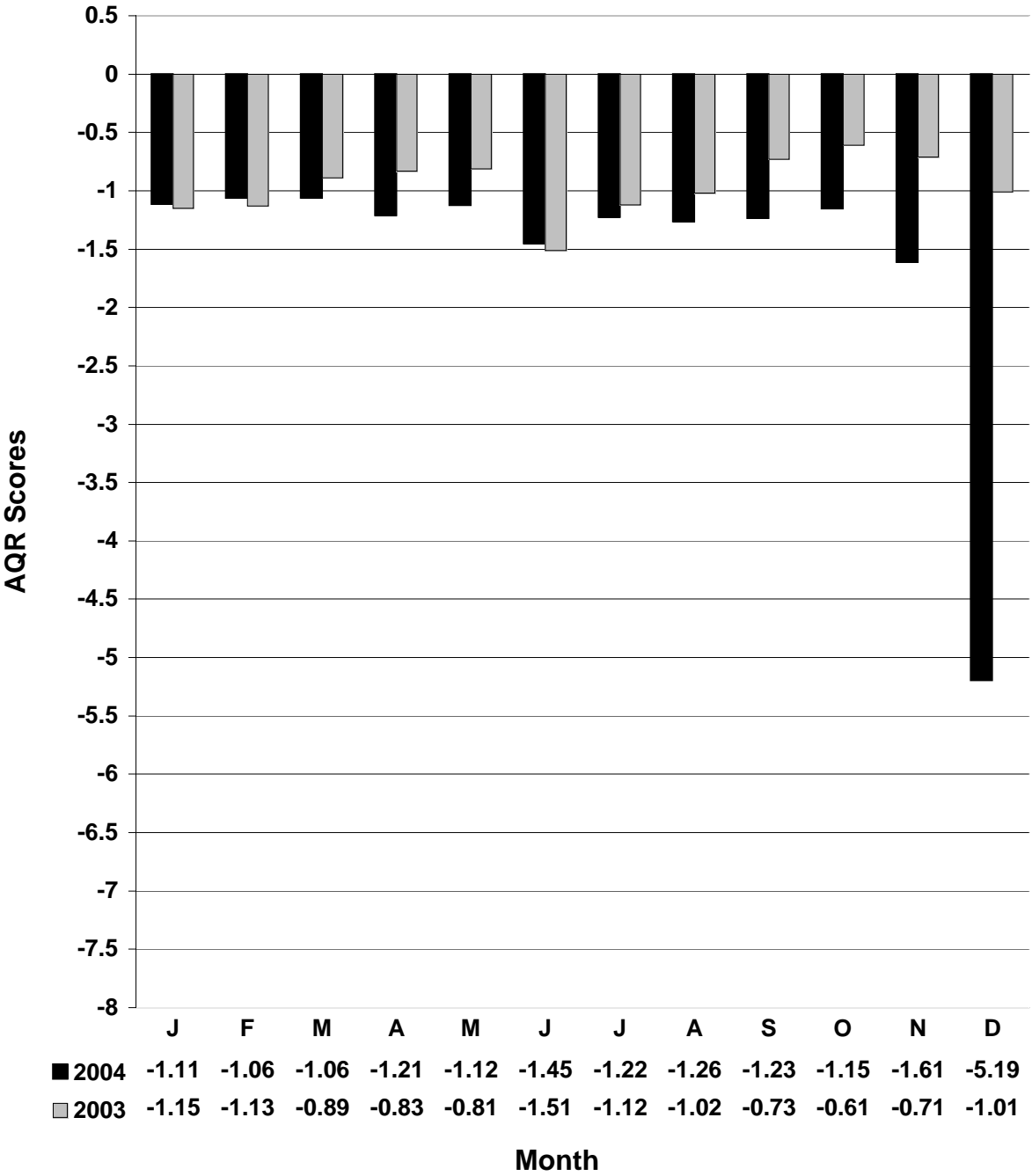
Airline Quality Rating

United Airlines 2003 - 2004



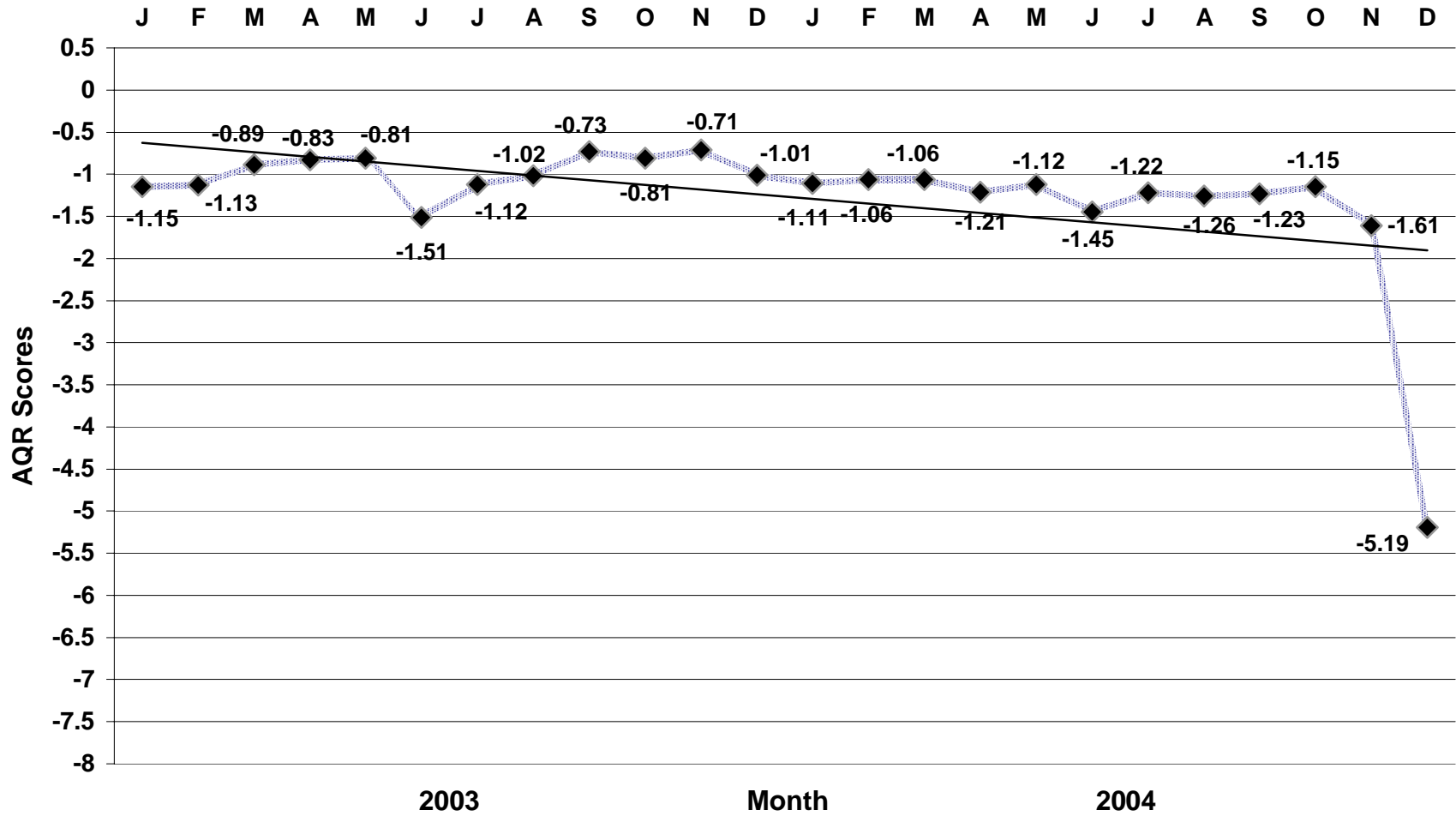
Airline Quality Rating

US Airways by Month



Airline Quality Rating

US Airways 2003 - 2004



Detail of Frequently Cited Airline Performance Criteria

Consumer interest remains high regarding such issues as on-time performance, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings (bumping), and treatment of customers. Since these criteria are central to the AQR calculations, it is important to provide more complete data for individual airlines in these areas. The following data tables and charts provide a detailed look at the performance of each of the 16 U.S. airlines that handled at least 1% or more of the total passenger volume for 2004 in the specific areas of on-time arrivals, mishandled baggage, involuntary denied boardings, and consumer complaints. Data were drawn from the U.S. Department of Transportation monthly *Air Travel Consumer Report*. The final pages of this report outline the Airline Quality Rating criteria definitions for reference and clarity in more fully understanding the nature of the data reported.

2004 On-Time Arrival Percentage by Month for U.S. Airlines

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	.732	.657	.853	.863	.802	.718	.776	.807	.766	.813	.776	.754	.777
Alaska (AS)	.677	.786	.802	.849	.817	.763	.788	.772	.788	.789	.701	.632	.765
America West (HP)	.763	.717	.748	.769	.803	.730	.764	.749	.822	.767	.750	.705	.757
American (AA)	.689	.750	.790	.829	.772	.705	.747	.735	.860	.821	.809	.720	.768
American Eagle (MQ)	.657	.744	.728	.787	.695	.659	.697	.740	.845	.782	.744	.699	.732
ATA (TZ)	.685	.794	.804	.876	.790	.792	.737	.807	.886	.866	.821	.736	.798
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	.815	.731	.878	.861	.801	.657	.745	.806	.778	.715	.681	.703	.763
Comair (OH)	.727	.772	.844	.853	.780	.754	.733	.792	.820	.782	.801	.625	.773
Continental (CO)	.799	.799	.799	.786	.760	.681	.765	.813	.859	.877	.778	.757	.789
Delta (DL)	.765	.709	.837	.830	.756	.681	.729	.762	.770	.795	.766	.737	.762
Jet Blue (B6)	.781	.882	.850	.869	.834	.825	.784	.754	.838	.868	.875	.675	.818
Northwest (NW)	.738	.774	.792	.848	.768	.742	.772	.812	.854	.818	.842	.735	.791
SkyWest (OO)	.739	.781	.871	.871	.868	.822	.844	.862	.888	.840	.824	.712	.827
Southwest (WN)	.835	.822	.839	.820	.802	.746	.771	.774	.854	.800	.810	.740	.801
United (UA)	.716	.819	.808	.851	.743	.766	.775	.801	.879	.839	.835	.743	.797
US Airways (US)	.800	.835	.841	.842	.817	.761	.769	.756	.816	.809	.787	.686	.792
All by Month		.751	.774	.817	.833	.781	.730	.761	.781	.837	.808	.792	.716
		.783											
Atlantic Coast (DH)^{1,2}	.648	.730	.740	.797	.694	.718	.700	.777	.825	.791	.815	.724	.747
Express Jet (RU)¹	.769	.804	.784	.795	.740	.694	.747	.793	.863	.842	.743	.670	.769

¹These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 16 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value. Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

² Atlantic Coast Airlines became Independence Air in November, 2004.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2003 On-Time Arrival Percentage by Month for U.S. Airlines

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	.820	.731	.764	.861	.800	.777	.725	.688	.852	.843	.820	.701	.781
Alaska (AS)	.816	.780	.821	.873	.874	.819	.812	.773	.862	.806	.759	.729	.810
America West (HP)	.778	.722	.795	.882	.859	.852	.820	.808	.864	.842	.820	.794	.820
American (AA)	.863	.796	.869	.860	.847	.805	.767	.745	.850	.882	.772	.741	.817
American Eagle (MQ)	.786	.716	.821	.833	.844	.812	.776	.770	.825	.850	.711	.685	.786
ATA (TZ)	.750	.702	.747	.842	.823	.851	.766	.806	.888	.888	.747	.771	.800
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	.777	.693	.715	.785	.739	.725	.651	.681	.816	.829	.836	.796	.754
Continental (CO)	.854	.778	.827	.884	.867	.814	.804	.798	.781	.882	.787	.767	.820
Delta (DL)	.849	.773	.835	.895	.838	.820	.793	.777	.861	.854	.836	.749	.823
Jet Blue (B6)	.792	.715	.769	.879	.901	.844	.885	.783	.921	.904	.888	.815	.843
Northwest (NW)	.849	.780	.817	.865	.858	.833	.827	.812	.868	.882	.798	.761	.829
Southwest (WN)	.875	.801	.860	.908	.901	.854	.840	.858	.897	.867	.855	.835	.863
United (UA)	.880	.843	.840	.879	.854	.844	.807	.817	.879	.864	.747	.750	.833
US Airways (US)	.821	.714	.825	.840	.807	.777	.737	.717	.824	.869	.846	.785	.797
All by Month		.842	.772	.829	.870	.850	.820	.792	.785	.858	.864	.804	.767
.820													
*Atlantic Coast (DH)	.701	.570	.718	.789	.761	.815	.756	.764	.833	.844	.734	.685	.748
*Express Jet (RU)	.792	.727	.798	.865	.861	.809	.784	.771	.778	.854	.772	.726	.795
*SkyWest (OO)	.839	.854	.892	.921	.900	.903	.916	.898	.923	.888	.844	.754	.876

*These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 14 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value. Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2004 Involuntary Denied Boardings by Quarter for U.S. Airlines
(per 10,000 passengers)

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Annual
AirTran (FL)	0.86	0.17	0.05	0.13	0.28
Alaska (AS)	2.24	0.90	0.96	0.83	1.22
America West (HP)	0.73	0.78	0.41	0.90	0.70
American (AA)	0.57	0.47	0.37	0.67	0.52
American Eagle (MQ)	0.38	0.44	0.44	0.37	0.41
ATA (TZ)	1.19	1.49	2.63	4.24	2.33
Atlantic Coast (DH) ^{1,2}	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	N/A
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	3.20	1.53	1.92	2.88	2.37
Comair (OH)	4.58	2.30	1.48	1.33	2.28
Continental (CO)	1.16	1.99	1.56	2.27	1.76
Delta (DL)	1.65	1.07	0.78	0.99	1.12
Express Jet (RU) ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jet Blue (B6)	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.01
Northwest (NW)	0.86	0.89	0.45	0.93	0.78
SkyWest (OO)	0.00	0.22	0.06	0.49	0.27
Southwest (WN)	1.47	1.12	0.62	0.64	0.95
United (UA)	0.82	0.46	0.27	0.47	0.49
US Airways (US)	0.54	0.76	0.52	0.76	0.65
All by Quarter	1.08	0.88	0.63	0.90	0.87

¹These airlines are not included in the Industry value. Only the 16 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Industry value. Due to size of aircraft operated, these carriers are not required to report this statistic.

² Atlantic Coast Airlines became Independence Air in November, 2004.

2003 Involuntary Denied Boardings by Quarter for U.S. Airlines
(per 10,000 passengers)

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Annual
AirTran (FL)	3.36	2.17	0.21	0.38	1.45
Alaska (AS)	0.63	0.47	0.84	1.29	0.81
America West (HP)	0.51	0.40	0.38	0.32	0.40
American (AA)	0.62	0.71	0.48	0.57	0.59
American Eagle (MQ)	0.22	0.80	0.44	0.14	0.38
ATA (TZ)	0.76	0.96	1.16	0.65	0.89
*Atlantic Coast (DH)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	7.51	11.79	6.32	5.83	7.86
Continental (CO)	0.83	1.35	0.63	1.40	1.06
Delta (DL)	1.16	1.68	1.20	1.16	1.30
*Express Jet (RU)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jet Blue (B6)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Northwest (NW)	0.70	0.86	0.76	0.49	0.70
*SkyWest (OO)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Southwest (WN)	1.29	1.25	0.77	0.80	1.02
United (UA)	0.53	0.79	0.53	0.75	0.65
US Airways (US)	0.46	0.52	0.14	0.26	0.34
All by Quarter	0.90	1.08	0.70	0.78	0.86

*These airlines are not included in the Industry value. Only the 14 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Industry value. Due to size of aircraft operated, these carriers are not required to report this statistic.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2004 Mishandled Baggage by Month for U.S. Airlines

(per 1,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	3.16	2.98	3.02	2.75	2.87	3.35	3.02	3.12	2.21	1.81	2.18	3.23	2.82
Alaska (AS)	4.09	2.79	2.74	2.73	3.12	4.29	4.76	4.30	2.95	2.33	2.90	4.28	3.51
America West (HP)	3.96	3.58	3.50	3.07	2.94	4.24	4.46	4.76	3.24	3.61	3.95	6.23	3.98
American (AA)	6.10	4.67	4.19	3.49	4.25	5.39	4.96	5.06	3.21	3.64	4.05	7.59	4.73
American Eagle (MQ)	12.60	8.46	8.38	6.56	8.38	10.16	10.11	9.51	6.11	6.78	7.52	13.41	8.95
ATA (TZ)	5.60	3.63	3.76	3.21	3.23	3.65	4.22	4.14	2.90	2.95	3.10	5.47	3.82
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	19.61	16.08	12.17	10.27	10.94	15.91	13.38	12.10	11.03	12.21	12.56	28.16	14.49
Comair (OH)	14.90	10.48	9.39	7.88	8.89	10.66	10.60	9.84	7.79	8.61	9.08	22.23	10.66
Continental (CO)	3.25	2.91	3.05	2.89	3.41	4.34	3.79	3.38	2.94	2.80	3.73	6.15	3.58
Delta (DL)	5.75	6.83	4.21	3.05	3.19	4.32	3.95	5.08	4.91	4.98	5.45	12.69	5.17
Jet Blue (B6)	3.64	2.92	2.91	2.51	2.18	2.85	3.25	4.35	2.58	2.17	2.44	3.90	2.99
Northwest (NW)	4.59	3.44	3.39	3.17	4.08	4.68	5.28	4.02	3.69	3.28	3.44	7.87	4.22
SkyWest (OO)	16.79	12.84	10.13	7.97	7.94	9.47	8.86	8.49	6.80	7.55	8.53	16.50	10.00
Southwest (WN)	3.48	2.96	3.08	2.98	3.07	3.45	3.60	3.41	2.69	2.91	3.39	5.15	3.35
United (UA)	5.64	3.74	3.64	2.96	3.57	3.72	4.36	4.16	2.62	3.29	3.27	6.43	3.93
US Airways (US)	3.85	3.66	3.97	4.01	4.02	4.95	4.44	4.21	4.05	3.94	5.83	17.13	5.33
All by Month		5.65	4.81	4.18	3.57	4.00	4.91	4.84	4.79	3.80	4.01	4.53	9.11
4.83													
Atlantic Coast (DH)^{1,2}	19.06	13.74	12.27	9.81	11.98	15.33	17.32	7.68	5.30	5.34	3.06	4.87	10.68
Express Jet (RU)¹	5.76	4.65	4.73	4.43	5.45	6.59	6.05	5.48	3.99	4.27	6.32	10.31	5.70

¹ These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 16 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value.

Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

² Atlantic Coast Airlines became Independence Air in November, 2004.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2003 Mishandled Baggage by Month for U.S. Airlines

(per 1,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	3.22	3.52	3.12	2.37	2.57	2.87	2.69	3.23	2.18	2.27	2.35	3.79	2.84
Alaska (AS)	2.34	2.01	2.15	2.18	2.18	2.71	2.97	3.22	2.32	1.97	2.56	3.41	2.56
America West (HP)	4.50	4.31	3.52	2.53	2.68	3.12	3.44	3.59	2.40	2.77	2.77	4.12	3.30
American (AA)	4.61	4.99	4.52	3.84	3.85	4.71	5.02	5.71	3.30	3.01	3.76	5.70	4.45
American Eagle (MQ)	10.31	14.21	11.21	9.10	8.22	8.09	8.47	9.28	5.73	5.73	7.35	10.49	8.42
ATA (TZ)	6.48	5.04	4.87	3.63	3.89	3.99	4.30	4.28	2.41	3.12	2.81	4.13	4.06
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	22.52	18.34	16.99	13.54	14.88	14.75	15.81	16.94	11.91	11.56	11.06	17.74	15.41
Continental (CO)	3.16	3.38	3.30	2.46	2.35	3.43	3.54	3.54	2.58	2.54	2.91	3.95	3.11
Delta (DL)	4.76	4.56	3.98	3.01	3.25	3.27	3.70	4.28	2.76	3.10	3.04	6.28	3.84
Jet Blue (B6)	3.72	3.89	3.68	3.02	3.26	3.88	3.05	3.86	2.44	2.58	2.28	2.98	3.21
Northwest (NW)	4.29	4.19	3.71	3.00	2.89	3.09	3.29	3.94	2.76	2.65	2.92	4.36	3.42
Southwest (WN)	3.95	3.73	3.45	3.03	3.40	3.66	3.45	3.21	2.77	3.05	2.83	3.70	3.35
United (UA)	5.02	4.80	4.08	3.39	3.27	3.73	4.29	4.06	2.72	2.72	3.37	5.61	3.93
US Airways (US)	3.95	4.09	3.29	3.10	3.09	5.31	4.09	3.86	2.83	2.43	2.52	3.97	3.55
All by Month		4.81	4.76	4.20	3.46	3.56	4.08	4.19	4.43	3.03	3.07	3.31	5.20
4.00													
*Atlantic Coast (DH)	10.87	11.17	9.62	7.87	7.09	7.98	9.28	10.40	6.10	6.94	8.37	15.80	9.23
*Express Jet (RU)	3.94	4.82	5.11	3.76	3.23	4.73	5.18	5.07	3.92	3.60	4.54	5.96	4.51
*SkyWest (OO)	9.14	9.43	7.75	5.87	6.52	7.10	8.88	7.71	5.60	6.75	8.57	19.06	8.62

* These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 14 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value. Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2004 Total Complaints to Department of Transportation by Month for U.S. Airlines

(per 100,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	1.90	1.18	1.21	1.38	0.54	0.69	1.44	0.42	0.69	0.45	0.36	0.41	0.89
Alaska (AS)	1.43	1.24	0.52	0.46	0.23	0.33	0.36	0.36	0.39	0.55	0.76	0.71	0.58
America West (HP)	1.23	0.97	1.17	1.21	0.86	1.13	0.82	1.41	1.30	0.66	0.57	0.90	1.02
American (AA)	1.11	1.04	1.04	0.78	0.65	0.51	0.82	1.50	1.04	0.60	0.73	0.67	0.88
American Eagle (MQ)	0.73	0.39	0.59	0.42	0.48	0.76	0.36	0.83	0.31	0.43	0.40	0.85	0.54
ATA (TZ)	1.85	0.76	0.74	0.65	0.35	0.10	0.86	0.72	0.86	0.61	1.43	0.93	0.79
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	0.42	0.00	0.72	0.12	0.23	0.55	0.41	0.54	0.00	0.41	0.21	0.95	0.40
Comair (OH)	0.81	1.09	1.12	1.04	0.36	1.05	0.61	0.89	0.70	0.61	0.71	4.23	1.10
Continental (CO)	0.71	0.92	0.85	0.92	0.63	0.81	0.93	0.94	1.05	0.71	0.69	0.70	0.82
Delta (DL)	1.22	0.83	1.02	0.67	0.61	0.75	0.47	0.84	0.83	0.73	0.48	1.06	0.79
Jet Blue (B6)	0.61	0.00	0.31	0.00	0.64	0.00	0.28	0.28	0.72	0.10	0.29	0.19	0.27
Northwest (NW)	1.39	1.10	0.89	0.90	0.87	0.94	0.89	0.81	0.82	0.77	0.49	0.89	0.89
SkyWest (OO)	0.22	0.75	0.87	0.61	0.39	0.61	0.80	0.77	0.16	0.08	0.26	0.91	0.56
Southwest (WN)	0.17	0.17	0.21	0.21	0.15	0.22	0.14	0.27	0.18	0.17	0.14	0.09	0.18
United (UA)	1.33	1.42	0.86	0.83	0.60	0.79	0.81	1.13	1.01	0.45	0.68	0.88	0.89
US Airways (US)	1.04	1.05	0.72	1.07	0.66	1.02	0.86	1.25	1.38	0.85	0.77	4.04	1.21
All by Month		1.01	0.87	0.81	0.72	0.55	0.66	0.66	0.91	0.80	0.55	0.53	1.00
0.76													
Atlantic Coast (DH)^{1,2}	2.18	1.44	0.81	1.11	0.84	1.00	0.98	0.74	0.37	0.47	0.60	0.84	0.95
Express Jet (RU)¹	0.23	0.22	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.24	0.19	0.00	0.26	0.50	0.16

¹These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 16 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value.

Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

² Atlantic Coast Airlines became Independence Air in November, 2004.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

2003 Total Complaints to Department of Transportation by Month for U.S. Airlines

(per 100,000 passengers)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
AirTran (FL)	0.86	0.79	1.01	1.04	0.41	0.19	0.61	0.81	1.04	0.30	1.03	1.84	0.83
Alaska (AS)	0.38	0.78	0.42	0.26	0.56	0.72	0.26	0.95	0.52	0.17	0.66	0.46	0.52
America West (HP)	1.42	1.25	1.09	0.84	1.04	0.61	0.63	0.75	0.71	0.78	0.70	0.36	0.84
American (AA)	1.44	0.72	1.01	0.86	0.76	0.88	1.01	0.91	0.94	0.67	0.72	0.62	0.88
American Eagle (MQ)	1.67	0.62	0.21	0.42	0.69	0.38	0.91	0.09	0.31	0.28	0.39	0.37	0.51
ATA (TZ)	1.49	0.88	0.68	0.96	0.24	0.33	0.42	0.66	0.87	0.60	0.27	0.73	0.66
Atlantic Southeast (EV)	0.43	0.76	0.76	0.52	0.72	0.36	0.83	0.66	0.56	0.49	0.91	0.13	0.59
Continental (CO)	1.50	0.99	0.98	0.83	1.04	0.91	0.96	0.85	1.31	0.73	0.67	0.83	0.95
Delta (DL)	1.30	0.86	0.86	0.95	0.78	0.58	0.87	0.76	0.75	0.61	0.56	0.50	0.78
Jet Blue (B6)	0.47	0.00	0.67	0.27	0.27	0.82	0.23	0.23	0.44	0.00	0.26	0.12	0.31
Northwest (NW)	1.12	1.10	0.97	1.40	1.20	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.94	1.00	0.44	0.52	0.95
Southwest (WN)	0.29	0.21	0.08	0.10	0.14	0.12	0.21	0.13	0.10	0.08	0.15	0.11	0.14
United (UA)	0.86	0.64	1.01	0.88	0.87	0.92	1.08	1.07	0.76	0.74	0.59	0.50	0.83
US Airways (US)	1.20	0.84	0.77	0.68	0.55	1.16	1.15	0.95	0.94	0.79	1.09	0.72	0.90
All by Month		1.08	0.74	1.14	0.76	0.71	0.69	0.81	0.75	0.74	0.58	0.58	0.51
	0.67												
*Atlantic Coast (DH)	1.55	0.17	0.83	0.29	1.20	0.51	1.52	0.90	0.14	0.39	0.59	0.88	0.76
*Express Jet (RU)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.09	0.26	0.48	0.11	0.28	0.31	0.29	0.21
*SkyWest (OO)	0.86	0.24	0.21	0.11	0.31	0.28	0.30	0.00	0.22	0.20	0.52	0.39	0.30

*These airlines are not included in the Monthly value. Only the 14 airlines that report all data elements included in the AQR are part of the Monthly value. Performance statistics are presented here for reference and comparison.

Source: *Air Travel Consumer Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings.

**Overview of Complaints Received by Department of Transportation for
All U.S. Airlines 2003 and 2004**

	Complaints for All U.S. Airlines		Top Four Categories¹ of Complaints to All U.S. Airlines, 2004			
	2003	2004	1	2	3	4
Jan	533	529	FP	BG	TB	CS
Feb	316	498	FP	BG	CS	TB
Mar	418	521	FP	BG	TB	CS
Apr	369	447	FP	BG	TB	CS
May	385	352	FP	CS	BG	TB
Jun	381	447	FP	BG	TB	CS
Jul	490	452	BG	FP	TB	CS
Aug	425	615	FP	BG	CS	TB
Sep	365	424	FP	BG	RF	TB
Oct	316	353	FP	RF	BG	CS
Nov	298	323	FP	RF	BG	CS
Dec	306	853	OT ²	BG	CS	TB
	4,601	5,863	FP	BG	TB	CS

Percent (%) of Complaints in these Categories for 2004

23.4 19.1 12.5 11.9

¹ FP = Flight Problems; CS = Customer Service; BG = Baggage; TB = Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding; RF = Refunds; DA = Disability.
Details of categories are at the back of this report.

² OTHER complaints. 250 of the 270 complaints for this category originated because of the 11/30/04 cessation of operations by the public charter carrier, Southeast Airlines.

Airline Quality Rating Criteria Overview

The individual criteria used to calculate the AQR scores are summed up in four basic areas that reflect customer-oriented areas of airline performance. Definitions of the four areas used in this AQR 2005 (2004 data) are outlined below.

OT ON-TIME PERFORMANCE (+8.63)

Regularly published data regarding on-time arrival performance is obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report*. According to the DOT, a flight is counted "on time" if it is operated within 15 minutes of the scheduled time shown in the carriers' Computerized Reservations Systems. Delays caused by mechanical problems are counted as of January 1, 1995. Canceled and diverted operations are counted as late. The AQR calculations use the percentage of flights arriving on time for each airline for each month.

DB INVOLUNTARY DENIED BOARDINGS (-8.03)

This criterion includes involuntary denied boardings. Data regarding denied boardings can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report*. Data includes the number of passengers who hold confirmed reservations and are involuntarily denied boarding on a flight that is oversold. These figures include only passengers whose oversold flight departs without them onboard. The AQR uses the ratio of involuntary denied boardings per 10,000 passengers boarded by month.

MB MISHANDLED BAGGAGE REPORTS (-7.92)

Regularly published data regarding consumer reports to the carriers of mishandled baggage can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Air Travel Consumer Report*. According to the DOT, a mishandled bag includes claims for lost, damaged, delayed, or pilfered baggage. Data is reported by carriers as to the rate of mishandled baggage reports per 1,000 passengers and for the industry. The AQR ratio is based on the total number of reports each carrier received from passengers concerning lost, damaged, delayed, or pilfered baggage per 1,000 passengers served.

CC CONSUMER COMPLAINTS (-7.17)

The criteria of consumer complaints is made up of 12 specific complaint categories (outlined below) monitored by the U. S. Department of Transportation and reported monthly in the *Air Travel Consumer Report*. Consumers can file complaints with the DOT in writing, by telephone, via e-mail, or in person. The AQR uses complaints about the various categories as part of the larger customer complaint criteria and calculates the consumer complaint ratio on the number of complaints received per 100,000 passengers flown for each airline.

CONSUMER COMPLAINT CATEGORIES

Flight Problems

Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to cancellations, delays, or any other deviations from schedule, whether planned or unplanned for each airline each month.

Oversales

This complaint category includes all bumping problems, whether or not the airline complied with DOT oversale regulations. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to oversales for each airline each month.

Reservations, Ticketing, and Boarding

This category includes airline or travel agent mistakes in reservations and ticketing, problems in making reservations and obtaining tickets due to busy telephone lines, or waiting in line or delays in mailing tickets, and problems boarding the aircraft (except oversales). Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to ticketing and boarding for each airline each month.

Fares

As defined by the DOT, consumer complaints regarding fares include incorrect or incomplete information about fares, discount fare conditions and availability, overcharges, fare increases, and level of fares in general. Data is available for the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to fares for each airline each month.

Refunds

This category includes customer complaints about problems in obtaining refunds for unused or lost tickets, fare adjustments, or bankruptcies. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to refunds for each airline each month.

Baggage

Claims for lost, damaged, or delayed baggage, charges for excess baggage, carry-on problems, and difficulties with airline claim procedure are included in this category. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to baggage for each airline each month.

Customer Service

This category includes complaints about rude or unhelpful employees, inadequate meals or cabin service, and treatment of delayed passengers. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to customer service for each airline each month.

Disability

Previously included as part of the Reservations, Ticketing and Boarding Category (through 6/99), this category includes complaints about civil rights complaints by air travelers with disabilities. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints pertaining to disabilities for each airline each month.

Advertising

These are complaints concerning advertising that is deemed unfair, misleading or offensive to consumers. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints regarding advertising for each airline each month.

Discrimination

Civil rights complaints by air travelers (other than disabilities); for example: complaints based on race, national origin, religion, etc. (this category was first reported in May, 2002).

Animals

This category, added in October 2000, tracks customer complaints about loss, injury, or death of an animal during air transport by an air carrier. Data is available by the total number of customer complaints regarding animals for each airline each month.

Other

Data regarding consumer complaints about frequent flyer programs, smoking, tours credit, cargo problems, security, airport facilities, claims for bodily injury, and other problems not classified above are included in this category. Data is available by the total number of consumer complaints regarding other problems for each airline each month.