A Study on Passenger Satisfaction on the Services Offered by Domestic Airlines with Special Reference to Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT   *Satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. Customer satisfaction is what guarantees the future of airlines and it is achievable by an adoption between their service and passenger needs. The study has tried to find out the level of satisfaction on the services offered by domestic airlines in Coimbatore district. Total of 300 respondents have been taken by applying non-probable convenience sampling method and chi-square test is used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study reveal that the passengers are fairly satisfied with the services offered by domestic airlines.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern society dictates a physical distinction between home and work, forcing people to transport themselves for their daily activities. Air transport is the most modern, the quickest and the latest addition to the modes of the transport. Over the past century, the airline industry has grown from an experimental mode of transportation to a major part of the world's transportation system, carrying an estimated 1.5 billion passengers annually. [1]

Today competition is not only rife, but growing more intense constantly. Customer satisfaction is what guarantees the future of airlines and it is achievable by an adoption between their service and passenger needs.[2] The key indicator of the performance of an organization – customer satisfaction – cannot be ignored. Satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation. [3]

Needs are expression of customers, indicating the requirement to be fulfilled by the selected airline. There are customers who are "just satisfied" (expected satisfaction) with their basic needs. There are a few of them who articulate their needs, the provision of which provides them with "more satisfaction" (desired satisfaction). Yet there are a few customers who "optimize their satisfaction" (exciting satisfaction) by enjoying the exciting provisions from the airlines. It becomes necessary for the airline to provide greater attention to the target customers for higher levels of satisfaction and retention.[4]

2. AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Indian Aviation Industry is one of the fastest growing airline industries in the world. India is currently the ninth largest aviation market in the world. India's Open Sky Policy of 1990 and the Air Corporations (Transfer of Undertakings and Repeal) Act of 1994 further freed up India's civil aviation industry and eradicated the government carrier monopoly.[5] In India it is estimated that Foreign exchange transactions worth $22.5 billion are directly facilitated by the civil aviation sector, and another $96 billion indirectly through civil aviation services. Indeed, 95% tourist arrivals into the country are by air, and 40% country's exports/imports by value take the aerial route. [6] The Coimbatore Airport is located at a distance of 21 kilometers from the city centre. It was formerly known by the name of peelamedu or Coimbatore Civil Aerodrome. It is the eleventh largest airport in India in terms of total passenger movement and the second largest in Tamil Nadu, after Chennai International Airport.[7]

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Yu Kyoung Kim, Hyung Ryong Lee, (2011) entitled "Customer Satisfaction using low cost carriers". This study examines the relative importance of perceived service quality and the relationship between perceived service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention using multidimensional methods. The results from this study indicate that the significant dimensions of customer satisfaction are tangibles and responsiveness8.

2. Megha Gupta and Amit Kumar, (2009) entitled, "Customer Satisfaction with Low Cost Airlines in India: An Empirical Study". Customer satisfaction has become an important tool in developing customer satisfaction measures. Airlines must understand that customer satisfaction is what guarantees the future of these companies and it is achievable by an adoption of a comparative tool to minimize discrepancies between their services and passengers needs. In India, Low cost airline industry is going through an interesting phase of competition. Layoffs, shut downs and industry consolidation have battered employee morale and that shows up the negative influence on the satisfaction level of the customers 9.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Customer satisfaction can be viewed from two perspectives-internal and external. Internal is based on the conformance to specifications. External is based on relative customer- perceived quality. To offer a customized service in the civil aviation industry, it is very essential to know the expectations and perceptions of the customer with regard to the quality of services provided by various airlines.

Based on the above stated issues, it has been considered pertinent to focus the study on customer relationship management in domestic airlines with the following query:

a) What is the Satisfaction level of the passengers on the services offered by Domestic Airlines in Coimbatore District and the factors that influence their perception?

5. OBJECTIVES

The study has the following objectives:
a) To present a theoretical framework of the concept of Customer Satisfaction.
b) To measure the extent of variation of passenger satisfaction on the services offered by Domestic Airlines in Coimbatore District.
c) To offer suggestions to airlines for improving the satisfaction level of the customers.

6. HYPOTHESES

In tune with the objective of the study, null hypotheses were formulated that there is no significant association between the passenger satisfaction on the services offered by domestic airlines in Coimbatore district and the various independent variables relating to the sample respondents.

7. METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS USED

The study is based on primary data and the required data for the study were collected through structured questionnaire from three hundred airline passenger in Coimbatore city. The respondents for the study were drawn by means of convenient

sampling method. SPSS package were used for analysis. In order to find out the influence of various factors relating to the sample respondents on the satisfaction of airline passengers chi – square test (5%level of significance) has been used to discover any variances about the satisfaction of airline passengers among the sample respondents.

8. EXTENT OF VARIATION ON AIRLINE PASSENGERS SATISFACTION BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS
Totally twenty variables were taken and five point scale was used to measure the passenger satisfaction in domestic airlines in Coimbatore city. The quartiles used to find Less, Fair and High.

The total scores were divided into three categories i.e., Less, Fair and High in accordance with their perception on the domestic airlines in Coimbatore city. The total scores upto 86 were grouped as "less satisfied respondents", the respondents with the scores between 87 and 100 were grouped as "fairly satisfied respondents" and the respondents with the scores above 101 were grouped as "highly satisfied respondents".

Majority of the respondents derived fair level of satisfaction on

the services offered by the domestic airlines. Majority of the Male respondents (60%) were satisfied with the services offered by the airlines. The calculated value of chi-square of the gender is 5.9188 and the value is less than the table value and hence there is no significant relationship between Gender and Passenger Satisfaction on the Services offered by the Domestic Airlines.

Middle age group respondents are majority (42%) who are satisfied with the services offered by the domestic airlines. The calculated value of chi-square of the age group of the respondents is 10.6336 which is greater than the table value and hence there is significant relationship between the age group of the respondents and Passenger Satisfaction on the Services offered by the Domestic Airlines.

Majority of the respondents who are satisfied with the services offered by domestic airlines are Professionals (32%). The calculated value of chi-square of the educational qualification of the respondents is 12.4499 which is less than the table value and hence there is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of the respondents and the Passenger Satisfaction on the Services offered by the Domestic Airlines.

Table 1: Satisfaction Level of Passengers on Services offered by Domestic Airlines

Sl. No.	Category Total		Level of Satisfaction				
			Less	Fair	High	Calculated Chi-square value	
1	Gender	Male	179	35	75	69	5.9188
		Female	121	18	68	35	
		Total	300	53	143	104	
2	Age	Young	61	15	28	18	10.6336
		Middle	127	18	53	56	
		Old	112	20	62	30	
		Total	300	53	143	104	
3	Education	School Level	59	9	29	21	12.4499
		Graduate	67	11	26	30	
		Professional	93	18	55	20	
		Others	81	15	33	33	
		Total	300	53	143	104	
4	Occupation	Employed	67	11	35	21	12.5586
		Self –employed	76	12	31	33	
		Professional	72	13	44	15	
		Others	85	17	33	35	
		Total	300	53	143	104	
5	Service Provider	Kingfisher	59	10	32	17	9.7523
		Spice jet	66	12	26	28	
		Indian Airlines	90	14	52	24	
		Jet Airways, Paramount and Deccan	85	17	33	35	
		Total	300	53	143	104	

Majority of the other category respondents (28%) under occupation are satisfied with the services offered by the domestic airlines. The calculated value of chi-square of the Occupational Status of the respondents is 12.5586 which is less than the table value and hence there is no significant relationship Services offered by the Domestic Airlines.

Majority of the respondents of Indian Airlines (30%) are satisfied with the services offered by the domestic airlines. The calculated value of chi-square of the respondent's airline service provider is 9.7523 which is less than the table value and hence there is no significant relationship between the Airline Service provider of the respondents and the Passenger Satisfaction on the Services offered by the Domestic Airlines.

9. SUGESSTIONS
• Airlines should develop tangibles and responsiveness for the enhancement of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

• It is suggested that airlines should offer solutions that leverage the internet in building comprehensive measures allowing them to handle customer interactions in all forms.
• It is suggested that the airlines should alter the services according to the customer perception.
• It is suggested that a higher incidence of positive word-of-mouth syndrome may convert a satisfied passenger into a loyal passenger.
• Efforts should be made to redress the problem of the customers as early as possible.

10. CONCLUSION
Customer Satisfaction is a comprehensive approach for building long term customer relationship and improving business performance. Gathering all the information about customers help airlines to develop customer insights and enhance customer interaction.

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