



ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN AVIATION, A STUDY ON ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES

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ABSTRACT

Airline companies are in highly competitive situation in aviation industry to stay high handed in the market and keep the customers satisfied by their services. Airlines are alive based on their number of passengers, so to keep the business alive and ongoing an airline company should maintain their old customers and provide best services to attract the attention of new customers.

Ariana Afghan Airlines was established in 1955, which is now in action as the only governmental airline company in Afghanistan. The airline is recognized as low cost and efficient carrier in Afghanistan air transportation market by standardizing their services, aircrafts and management system.

In this study, we will evaluate the Ariana Afghan Airline's service quality with all its dimensions to find out how service quality is affecting customer satisfaction. In addition, this study examines all gaps and essential points of services provided by the airline and it will contain the suggestion and solutions for airline management to promote their service quality.

For purpose of survey 200 questions was given to passengers of Ariana Afghan Airlines which most of them have experienced a flight with airlines during 12 past months, 164 of them responded and answered the questionnaires. Eventually, the result of this research indicates that all the result and hypothesis was evaluated efficiently.

Keywords: *Service quality, Customer satisfaction, AIRQUAL, SERVQUAL, Ariana Afghan Airlines.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Aviation sector is growing fast in Afghanistan and the private airline companies are increasing their market competition to maintain having high hand in the market. Customer satisfaction is a challenge for the airlines in Afghanistan as they are standardizing their services to passengers. Aviation is a fast, more safe and comfortable method of travelling and in current years, aviation has become more reachable. For that purpose, air traffic is getting busier and crowded year by year. The basic neutral of airlines is to deliver a secure and comfortable flight and at the same time to make sure of customer gratification through the service process. The passenger's suspense is to receive better quality service, and to have a safe and comfortable trip. The last and final decision on service quality is given and judged by the passenger. Therefore, in order to maintain with competition, it is significant for airlines to properly comprehend passengers' expectations and needs, and calculating service quality is more important for this.

Having good customer is an important key for every businesses to unlock the potential path of growing the in market. A good quality of service provided by company will lead to customer satisfaction and more growth. Customers are usually judging a company by looking at their service quality and if they have experience of good services they will be going to be forever, loyal and permanent customers for the business that is every corporation want to have (Kisang and Han, 2008).

Ariana Afghan Airlines is the first established airline company in Afghanistan that might appeal many travellers with increasing flight network to diverse parts of the country and the world. Due to intense competition in Afghanistan aviation market, this airline should attract more passenger's satisfaction for existence and survival in Afghanistan aviation sector and transportation market and also that it can keep its customers by providing better quality of service. For that reason, the current research key investigation would be "Whether the airline services have any belongings on level of customers' satisfaction. The airline management is working hard to stay in the competitive market. The core target of the airline is arranging safe, timely and entertaining domestic and international air transport Placing, organizing, civilizing and upgrading the quality of passenger and other aviation services, travel accessories, property (cargo), post and chick inside airports and flying aircraft providing technical services for the repair of damaged aircraft at domestic airports conclude with the commercial contracts.

Aviation industry plays a critical part in the economy of a country. It is the middle point of globalization for other all businesses and industries. According to Archana and Subha (2012), as delivering service quality is dynamic for airline companies to survive in this aggressively competitive environment, the interest of researchers in quality of service and satisfaction in aviation business has been increasing. Several past researches was done, which examines the impact quality of service on customer satisfaction in the aviation productiveness. However, there is no prior study has been conducted on Ariana Afghan Airlines yet. Therefore, this research is of special significance to Ariana Afghan Airlines with the purpose is to assess the way service quality delivered by Ariana Afghan Airlines affects the customer satisfaction.

Additionally, this research will provide practical contribution to Ariana Afghan Airline's travel agencies and marketers in giving a well knowledge of customer satisfaction and regarding airline

service quality. Therefrom, the marketers can develop and deliver better service quality to attain customer's satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality is playing a massive role in achieving customer's satisfaction and these two factors have high and positive relationship. The literature review of this study contains two main sections (Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction) and evaluating the impact of these two factors on each other.

a) Customer Satisfaction

The term customer satisfaction is a recognized state in many places such as marketing, customer exploration, aviation sector, commercial sensibility, welfare-economics and finances. The usual thing in customer satisfaction is to understand weather they customers are happy with the service or not in different period according to marker gained from the expectation, which means that the customer needs are not met and it may lead to unhappy and dissatisfied customers Bitner & Zeithaml (2003).

As it is clear that increasing customer's satisfaction is very profitable for a company but the term how to bring good and high-level customer satisfaction is something mysterious and difficult condition. Customer satisfaction is caring about individual preferences, while reach out to every single problem there are some dimension to be considered in order to fully over view the customer satisfaction boundaries. (Oliver and Swan 1989). Measurement of the rate of customer satisfaction is also an amount of materials and products and how the services are made to present the company. Satisfaction is a multidimensional concept which has been hypothesized as a requirement for building relationships and is commonly designated as the complete conference of to someone demands (Oliver, 1980), and also measurement of the customers feeling towards a brand product or service which the customers feeling are playing very important role in making a brand image better (Cacippo, 2000). The dimensions can also provide valuable visions into new products or services your clientele want, putting one's company ahead of the competition. In addition, good path multi-dimensions of customer satisfaction should be considered to cover all the gaps and problem while a corporation wants to guarantee the high level of customer satisfaction.

With the studies of Oliver (1980), when consumers are comparing their emotions and feeling with a service there will a reduction in level of customer satisfaction. Some inconsistencies among the opportunities also with acting make the reduction and decline, which can be called as disconfirmation. By the studies of Oliver there three type of disconfirmation which are occurred by customers, these disconfirmations terms are listed below:

- When customers are highly satisfied or delighted, or in easy words when they service are better than what customers want is called: Positive disconfirmation.
- When the services are below and lower than customer's expectation it will be: Negative disconfirmation.
- When product or service is equal to what customers are expecting it will be Zero Disconfirmation.

b) Service Quality:

In past few years, we have witnessed the huge role of service quality in the market, which the better service be the more profit will a company gains. With this study, the theories are examining to find out the different aspect of service quality affecting a management and a business: "expectations", "satisfaction", and "quality". This discussion focuses on surveying and evaluating aspects of the existence of differences in jobs in different fields or the level of recruitment of graduates and professionals. There are several studies were conduct regarding to SERVQUAL, and all of them explained in this thesis to know the better ways and solutions to maintain the quality in products and works of corporation, which emphasizes the benefits of paying attention to faculties provided for the customers. Traditionally, service quality been hypothesized as the several methods among service provider which all of the service will be gained Expectation is viewed as needs or wants of consumer. For example, what may customer feel about the company which they may expect a better service provided by their favourite company while they have a good feeling about it. (Parasuraman et.al, 1988). Niteck and Hernon (2000) describe service quality in relations of gathering or surpassing client expectancy or as the alteration among customer observations and prospects of facility.

Parasuraman (1988) have stated five dimension of service quality, which is very affecting the customer satisfaction. I have used the dimensions in my study in order to emulate my questionnaires. The dimensions are as follow:

Tangibles: The touchable and physical equipment of an industry is tangibles. Such as good clothing, proper Martials, good views are included in this section.

Empathy: Having and paying a special and individual caring to customer called empathy. Every company should focus to train empathy to their employees.

Assurance: Assurance states to the being polite and trustworthy, assurance gives the clients a confidence to trust the company and be a loyal customer. The following assurance things should take under consideration:

Reliability: Reliability is very important from customer's eyes which reliability means doing a thing correctly while doing it for the first time and doing it without having any errors, which is necessary. Being reliable promotes the credit and company image in mind of people.

Responsiveness: Reliability is very important from customer's eyes which reliability means doing a thing correctly while doing it for the first time and doing it without having any errors, which is necessary. Being reliable promotes the credit and company image in mind of people.

The connection between customer satisfaction and service quality is deep that will show how these hypothesis and variables are interconnect and affecting each other. Parasuraman et.al (1994) decided that the misperception surrounding the difference among the two ideas to physicians and the general media using the rappers transferable, which make theoretic differences challenging.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study have three main questions, which the analysis methods are used to answer the research questions. These questions are as follows:

1. What is the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in Ariana Afghan Airlines?
2. How different attributes of service quality is distresses the satisfaction Ariana Afghan Airlines passengers?
3. How much is the level of awareness of Ariana Afghan Airlines passengers?

Research Approach: In this study, first of all I have used librarian method of research by collecting data from published books and I have collected some terminology from the most lawful and reliable books, topics and magazine's articles, published research papers, and websites. This analysis aimed to test the impact of service quality of Ariana Afghan Airlines provided to their customers and measurement of (A.A.A) customers satisfaction from the airline.

Research Strategy: In order to increase adequate information through research process, an investigation methodology is used in order to accumulate data and break down to determine significant results to achieve facts and targets of this examination. Research system is known as the establishment of an examination and its decisions through in this way must agree with the exploration techniques and methods.

Data Collection: For this thesis, questionnaire method is used for gathering information and implementing survey. An administered questionnaire which includes -- questions is passed and sent to the passengers and customers of Ariana Afghan airlines which had a flight with the airline during the past 12 months.

Questionnaire development: The survey questions are categorized into three main portions. The first part of the questionnaire contains the personal information of passengers' demographic. The second part relates to quantity airline service quality and measures the SERVQUAL scales; the third part deals with customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the first part includes nominal scales, while the two parts later will use a five point of scales for Likert, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The 17 questions involving the five dimensions of service quality with their scales are assumed from the dimensions or SERVQUAL and AIRQUAL scale from the studies of Parasuraman et al. (1989), Alotaibi (2015) and Bari et al. (2001). The 17 items of the instrument are categorized into five dimensions. The 7 questions which are related to customer satisfaction driven from the studies and researches of Westbrook and Oliver (1991) and Baumann, Elliott.

Data Analysis: Firstly, I used SPSS program for this study to analysis and present the outcome of my survey in tables and figures. Second, Cronbach's Alpha analysis is castoff to test the inner uniformity of the questionnaire. Third, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis is utilized to verify the grade of correlation between all control variables, service quality and customer satisfaction. Finally, the association between two different variables has been determined using linear regressions.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In this study, 200 questionnaires shared to passengers of Ariana Afghan Airlines. As whole numbers of answers was 164 out of 200. The passenger profiles and flight information are shown in tables below. This chapter contains the surveyed information. The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) used in analysing the data and information. The discoveries charted in Tables, Line charts, Pie diagrams, and structured presentations. In chapter the main segment is devoted to breaking down number of polls given by Ariana Afghan Airlines customers, the second for preparing surveys, the third for association activities to prepare its councils and the fourth segment will be the result of my survey.

Cronbach's Alpha Equation (Reliability Statistics):

Reliability Statistics for Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Tangibility .786	.787	4
Reliability .776	.777	3
Responsiveness .800	.799	3
Assurance .784	.783	3
Empathy .859	.859	4
Customer Satisfaction .911	.911	7

As we can see in table Cronbach's Alpha all the question in questionnaire are highly reliable internally and very consistent because all result values are more than 0.7.

Pearson Correlation Testing: Correlation analysis is a good way for definition of relations and associations among two variable of an analysis.

Correlations

		SQT	SQR	SQRESP	SQA	SQE	CS
SQT	Pearson Correlation	1	.846**	.740**	.744**	.725**	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						
SQR	Pearson Correlation	.846**	1	.793**	.778**	.784**	.790**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
SQRESP	Pearson Correlation	.740**	.793**	1	.808**	.825**	.798**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
SQA	Pearson Correlation	.744**	.778**	.808**	1	.855**	.786**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
SQE	Pearson Correlation	.725**	.784**	.825**	.855**	1	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164
CS	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.790**	.798**	.786**	.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to above table I have examined the level of associations among five attributes of service quality and relation between customer satisfaction and all attributes of Ariana Afghan Airlines service. Service quality tangibility have high positive correlation with the rest of four attributes of service quality which the highest value of relation among these two variable are the correlation between SQT and SQR which ($r = .846$) near to very high positive relation. In addition, the relation between dependent variable (customer satisfaction) and independent variable (five attributes of service quality) is found to be high positive, as the relation between ($CS - SQT = .758$), ($CS - SQR = .790$), ($CS - SQRESP = .798$), ($CS - SQA = .786$) and ($CS - SQE = .796$). We can say that customer satisfaction have a High positive relation with five attributes of service quality which the highest values belongs to relation between Customer Satisfaction and Service quality responsiveness.

Regression Analysis:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
SQT 1	.758 ^a	.574	.572	.63346
SQR 1	.790 ^a	.625	.622	.59482
SQRESP 1	.798 ^a	.636	.634	.58536
SQA 1	.786 ^a	.618	.616	.59988
SQE 1	.796 ^a	.634	.632	.58743

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality Tangibility, Service Quality Reliability, Service Quality Responsiveness,

Service Quality Assurance, Service Quality Empathy.

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction.

One of the best ways for finding out how one variable affects the other one is Regression analysis. Through this table on service quality tangibility (SQT) it can be seen that R-square is 0.574 or 57.4% which is a very strong effectiveness degree. The interpretations can be drawn that customers satisfaction which is a dependent variable can be clarified or predicted by independent variable which is service quality by 57.4% or the DV is affected by IDV by this percentage. It shows that according to the aviation sector these two variables are affecting each other. It is also noticeable that the Ariana Afghan Airlines managers should focus and consider a lot on their service quality to improve the airline performance beside of increasing the service quality.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

SQR R square value is 62.5% effecting customer satisfaction, which this frequency is more than SQT, SQRESP with 6.36%, is the highest value of effecting and predicting the dependent variable customer satisfaction, SQA with 61.8% and SQE with 63.4 predicts the CS as independent variable.

As result of regression analysis all the five attribute of service quality is predicting and effecting customer satisfaction which all the R square values of those five attributes were ($P < 0.05$), so this means that all hypothesis are accepted.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the hierarchical regressions' result, it shows that airline service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction, meaning that if airlines attempt to better their quality of services, it will make their customers more happy and satisfied. The result is in route with previous studies conducted by Parasuraman et al. (1988). Outcomes of the analysis shows that all attributes of service quality have their special effect on how they are making passengers happy. Every passengers is most happy with one specific service provided by airline. The study of authors in thesis show that reliability shown a lot to be above all other five dimensions of SERVQUAL.

In sum, Ariana Afghan Airline's managers should more focus on these three dimensions of their services. Some recommendations can offered as; they should offer consistent services and perform service right the first time without any delay, also they should take special care when dealing with customers. It also proves that the employees of company should not be busy or careless about giving responses and should be in instant contact.

The results of survey proved the following terms:

- Airline services has a wise and important role on making passengers happy.
- As the quality of services are a raised that much the passengers would be happy with the airline.
- All scopes of service quality is directly effecting the level of customer satisfaction in aviation industry.

Future work: Further research suggestions in this research section, the researcher has assessed the amount of customer satisfaction, which obtained from management of Ariana Afghan Airlines customers and it covers only passengers from Kabul Afghanistan and Istanbul turkey. The sample size was only 164 customers. For future, the researcher recommends others to investigate similar issue by including all or most of the areas that Ariana Afghan Airlines have flight to by taking large number of sample size. In addition, it is also better if other customer satisfaction measurement and instruments is to be install to find out other factors that can affect customer satisfaction.

Recommendation: As per the findings and additional analysis of this study the following thing are recommended: the attributes which are in Tangible section which is more focused on the physical and body of the component of the service as seen on the finding have strong association with customer gratification. In addition, the scores of highest undesirable gap score, which shows customers, are not so happy or dissatisfied on the enactment of the airline on empathy dimension according to results. Managers and responsible bodies of the airline should address the problem by making their equipment modern and their physical facilities visually appealing pay good care to individual passengers and refurbishing, and the airline should make its printable advertising materials and statements more attractive by preparing them in clear, more understandable and visually appealing manner. In addition, employees should appear neat to customers to satisfy them. Being reliable to customers, which is the ability to perform the promised service more dependably and accurately, have significant effect on satisfying customers as well as making them loyal and it increases their reputation of purchase but the study indicates that perceived performance of the

airline is below customers' expectation. To satisfy customers the airline should keep its promises by telling customers the truth regarding the services it provide and the exact time specially on the flight timing which it provides and at most it should also make accounts zero from errors. Willingness and intention of helping the passengers and giving them the good service will definitely satisfy customers.

NOTE

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