

**APPLICATION OF SERVQUAL IN AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aviation industry performs a primary function in transit humans or merchandise from one place to any other, be it domestic or international. The air transportation market has come to be even greater strong with the aid of using boom in variety of airways and they all have grew to become to attention on their higher offerings. Passenger satisfaction is one of the maximum essential elements in Airline enterprise and it's far taken into consideration to be because the soul of commercial enterprise achievement in today's contentious international. Satisfied passengers are a treasured asset to corporation via high-quality proposal of its offerings to friends, family, and others. It is sovereign for an airline to recognize what passengers want and expectancies to offer a favored service of carrier for them. Hence, an attempt is made to study the customer quality service in Airline Industry.

**Keywords.:** *aviation, quality service, Airport, Connectivity, mobile platforms, hospitality*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is sovereign for an airline to recognize what passengers want and expectancies to offer a favored service of carrier for them. Passenger satisfaction may be described as a fiat made on the premise of a selected carrier acquired. The expectancies of clients are variance and may be prompted with the aid of using phrase of mouth, enjoy and lots of greater. Service first-class is stated to be a passenger's general influence of the employer and its offerings. It is a situation affects an employer's aggressive gain with the aid of using keeping clients. Knowing the correct expectation of a character is the maximum vital step in know-how and handing over great offerings for them, in order that airways can without problems continue to exist and improve their competitiveness.

## **COCHIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (CIAL)**

Cochin International Airport is constructed with public-personal partnership. The airport has been taken for putting an innovation in infrastructure improvement. The suitable public participation, excessive assist from NRI and a powerful management have made CIAL, the corporation that constructed and operates the airport, and global logo. It additionally the primary global airport in the international absolutely powered with the aid of using solar energy. It is the fourth busiest airport in phrases of global passenger immensity and the 7th busiest in phrases of general passenger length. It is likewise one of the maximum acquainted airports in the USA. CIAL operates approximately 24 Airlines. Among them, one of the maximum acquainted and the international's biggest airline is Emirates which based in Oct-1985. It is stated to be the countrywide conveyor of the emirate of Dubai, UAE. Emirates working from its hub at Dubai International Airport offer a huge community of offerings in the Middle East in addition to Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, North America, Europe and South America.

## **EMIRATES GROUP**

Emirates Group is a state-owned Dubai-primarily based totally global aviation preserving corporation founded in Garhoud, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, close to Dubai International Airport. The Emirates Group comprises data, an aviation offerings corporation supplying floor dealing with offerings at 126 airports, and Emirates Airline, the biggest airline in the Middle East. Emirates Airlines flies to over one hundred fifty locations throughout 6 continents, working a fleet of over 250 huge-bodied planes.

Innovative Customer Service Emirates offers consists of In-flight Connectivity, Customer Relationship Management, Big Data, Mobile Platforms, IOT Baggage Management, Flexible Cloud Infrastructure, Better tariff discrimination.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Aviation Industry in particular targeted to enhancing the first-class of offerings so as to improve the satisfaction. Customer's valuation of first-class carrier is primarily based on their

personal expectancies and overall performance of an employer. The researchers agree that purchaser satisfaction lead a manner to purchaser loyalty and tips and for this reason has a high-quality effect at the nicely- being of an employer. Apart from on board carrier, the airline has to offer pre- flight offerings in an excellent way for attracting clients. The pre-flight carrier consists of reservation; take a look at in technique, bags dealing with, safety procedures, terminal declaration and flight scheduling. Here the airport floor carrier works. The floor personnel need to be greater helping to the clients thinking about demographic elements together with age and academic qualification. Therefore, airways are targeted operating at the in-flight product improvement and innovation to lead them to extraordinary from competitors. A variety of research have long gone via in first-class carrier associated theories and techniques in the airline enterprise. Although inspecting the impact of character immensity of carrier attributes has doubtlessly tremendous gain for airline managers. This observes is associated with first-class carrier and passenger satisfaction in Emirates airlines.

### **OBJECTIVES & HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The prime objectives of this study are:

- To examine the level of satisfaction on the pre-flight and in flight services rendered by the Emirates crews
- To examine customer quality services provided by Emirates Airlines in Cochin international Airport
- To elucidate the important in-flight services rendered by Emirates Airlines
- To explore the reason for choosing Emirates over the competitors and to find out the problems faced by the passengers of Emirates Airlines.

**H1:** Age is an influencing factor for passengers while travelling.

**H2:** Occupation is an influencing factor affecting the purpose of travelling.

**H3:** Monthly income of the passengers affects their type of class preferred for air travel.

**H4:** Gender affects the passengers and their purpose of travelling.

**H5:** Gender influences the reputation of Emirates among passengers.

**H6:** Age influences the quality of food served at Emirates airlines.

**H7:** Quality service experience does not have any relation with the overall satisfaction of airport and in - flight services.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

*Archana. R* (2012) in her findings revealed that, the passengers' satisfaction extraordinary airline corporations relied on the offerings delivered to them. *Baker, David Mc. A* (2013) pointed out that the airline enterprise has been suffering with many challenges: reducing costs, handling fluctuating call for, retaining up with tight first-class necessities even as looking to keep advanced offerings and fulfill the desires of numerous purchaser groups. *Chow, Clement Kong Wing* (2018) make a specialty of analyzing the connection among customer satisfaction measured with the aid of using customers attitudes and their expectation of the on-time overall performance of Chinese vendors and the way the purchaser proceedings have an effect on the

monetary overall performance of vendors. *Althaqafi, Sultan (2019)* investigated the customers' satisfaction degrees in the direction of offerings furnished with the aid of using Saudi Airlines. They emphasized that the main hassle consists of bags dealing with, remedy of passengers at airport in case of any grievances, meals first-class, and leisure on board. *Hussain Ram (2019)* studied that service quality was then used as an antecedent to measure customer satisfaction, a condition which can bring about brand loyalty. In a research initiative using a quantitative approach, data from 253 questionnaires were analyzed. Using structure equation modeling, the data analysis suggested that service quality, perceived value, and brand image have a positive significant impact on customer satisfaction, which can in turn lead to brand loyalty. Theoretical and managerial implications were also discussed. *Ban, Hyun-Jeong (2019)* conducted the study to understand customer experience and satisfaction through airline passengers' online review. To achieve the purpose of this study, the semantic network analysis was conducted qualitatively by collecting reviews in top 10 airlines selected by Skytrax (airlinequality.com). In addition, this study quantitatively identified the relationship among six evaluation factors (seat comfort, staff, food and beverage (F&B), entertainment, ground service, and value for money), customer satisfaction and recommendation.

### **SERVQUAL IN AIRLINE SERVICE**

Service quality can be defined as a consumer's overall impression of the relative efficiency of the organization and its services. Understanding exactly what customers expect is the most crucial step in defining and delivering high-quality service (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). SERVQUAL is one of the best models for evaluating customers' expectations and perceptions (Pakdil and Aydm, 2007; Chen, 2008). Despite criticism from other research, SERVQUAL remains the most commonly used diagnostic model for evaluating service quality. SERVQUAL has five main dimensions to measure service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). In addition to SERVQUAL related studies, many scholars have measured airline service quality through various quality dimensions. Gourdin (1988) categorized airline service quality in terms of three items: safety, timelines and price. Elliott and Roach (1993) proposed food and beverage, timely luggage transport, seat comfort, the check in process, and in-flight service dimensions. Haynes (1994) used the processing of luggage, seat cleanliness, and the check-in process, the convenience of transit, timeliness, and handling of customer complaints as the standards of service quality.

### **BEHAVIOR INTENTION**

Consumer behavior is a integrate science; it includes economics, marketing, psychology and sociology. It includes the feelings and thoughts experienced by consumers and the behavior during their buying process. At the same time, it also includes environment which affect consumers' emotion, cognition and behavior, like other consumers comment, advertisement marketing, product price information, package, product appearance ...etc. As compared with the service quality or customer satisfaction variables, intended behavior are more closely related to actual behaviors and reflect richer diagnostic value.

## **SATISFACTION**

The performance of a company leads to customer satisfaction with a product or service (Huang and Feng, 2009). Customer satisfaction is fundamental to the practice of consumer sovereignty. In recent research, customer satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) has become an important issue for marketing practitioners because of the rapid business environment. Customer satisfaction can be defined as a judgment made on the basis of a specific service encounter. Satisfaction and loyalty are not surrogates for each other (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995; Oliver, 1999). It is possible for customers to be loyal without being highly satisfied (e.g., when they are few other choices) and to be highly satisfied and yet not loyal (e.g., when many alternatives are available).

## **SERVICE VALUE**

The issue of value creation or value added is treated as the main part of organization's mission statements and objectives. Service value has been defined as an important variable of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (McDougall and Kevesque, 2000). Zeithaml (1988) described perceived value conceptually as the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceived of what is received and what is given. She also identified four unique definitions of the value construct by an exploratory investigation: (1) Value is low price, (2) Value is whatever I want in a product, (3) Value is equality I get for the price I pay, (4) Value is what I get for what I give. Overall, value is a trade-off between get (benefits) and give up (sacrifices). The value of what is given and what is received vary across consumers.

## **PERCEIVED SACRIFICE**

Sacrifice is defined as what is given up or sacrificed to acquire a service / product (Zeithaml, 1988). The measured scale of the sacrifice can be described as the consumers' perceptions of the monetary and the non-monetary price when they acquire a service/product. Monetary price is evaluated by a direct measure of the dollar price of the service, and non-monetary price is evaluated by direct measures of time and effort of the service (Cronin, Bredy, and Hult, 2000). Because risk is an inherent part of the cost of the acquisition and use of any service/product, sacrifice is described as a composite of perceived monetary price, perceived non-monetary price, and perceived risk (Cronon et al., 1997).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is descriptive in nature. The researcher has made the data collection from Emirates passengers in Cochin International Airport. Methodology of the study helps the researcher to draw a systematic approach for the research process. Data and Information about the study were collected using both primary and secondary sources. The present study considers the customer quality service and satisfaction in Emirates Airlines in CIAL. The population of current study consists of passengers travelling in various classes in Emirates Airline departure.

Emirates Airport Manager and Cochin Airport Terminal Manager were contacted for their co-operation in providing permission for taking the survey.

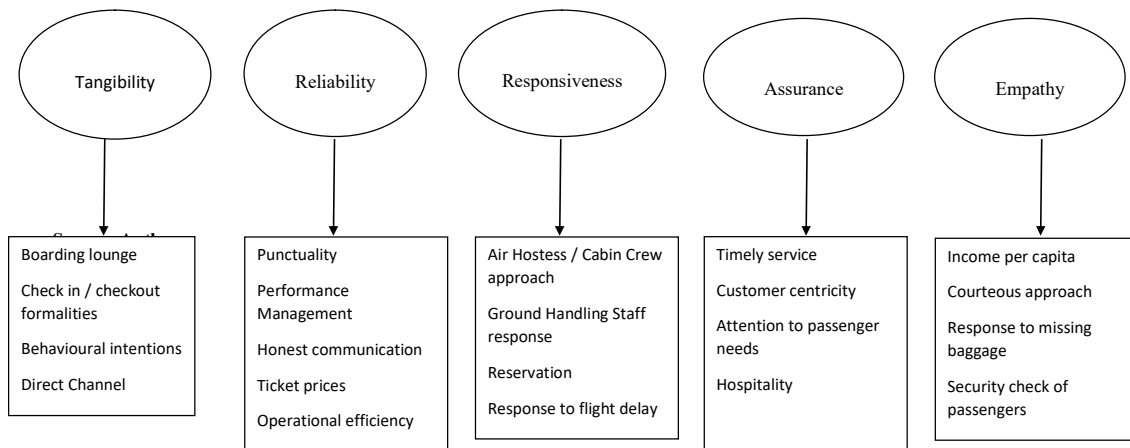
The Emirates have two departures per day. One departure at 11:30 pm and another departure at 3.30 am. Due to various constraints such as inadequate time, Availability of passengers, Administrative limitations, and demographic factors, only 50 passengers per day were contacted. Simple Random sampling design was used in this study. There are 12 gates in CIAL. Mostly Emirates land on first gate or second gate. So after all the procedure of security checking the passengers would come in these two boarding gates. Hence they were approached for data collection.

For the purpose of the study, both primary data and secondary data were resorted to. Primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire that includes both open ended questions and closed ended questions from the passengers of Emirates Airlines. The study covers a sample size of 150 respondents as passengers of Emirates Airline. Secondary information were collected from sources such as CIAL Website, Emirates Website and other journals.

### STATISTICAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Statistical tools like Chi Square analysis, Rank analysis, Analysis of Variance and Correlation analysis were applied for the analysis.

Figure 1 – SERVQUAL Model



Source: Authors

### DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION

**Table 1 - Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES</b>	<b>PARTICULARS</b>	<b>RESPONDENTS</b>
Gender	Male	95 (63.33%)
	Female	55 (36.66%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Age	<20	7 (4.66%)
	21-30	40 (26.66%)
	31-40	58 (38.66%)
	41-50	25 (16.66%)
	Above 50	20 (13.33%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Occupation	Student	32 (21.33%)
	Professional	85 (56.66%)
	Managerial	25 (16.66%)
	Retiree	8 (5.33%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Education Level	School level	5 (3.33%)
	Higher secondary	3 (2%)
	Under Graduate	70 (46.66%)
	Post Graduate	72 (48%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Monthly Family Income	10,000-20,000	5 (3.33%)
	21,000-30,000	15 (10%)
	31,000-40,000	30 (20%)
	41,000-50,000	60 (40%)
	Above 50,000	40 (26.66%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Purpose of Travelling	Business / professional	40 (26.66%)
	Government related	20 (13.33%)
	Visit family / friends	50 (33.33%)
	Tourism	30 (20%)
	Study purpose	10 (6.66%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Frequency of Travelling	Once a week	15 (10%)
	Once a month	10 (6.66%)
	2-3 times a month	25 (16.66%)
	Once a year	60 (40%)
	A few times a year	40 (26.66%)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Preference of Class	Business class	25 (16.66%)
	Economy class	125 (83.33%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Source of Reservation	Travel agent	40 (26.66%)
	Online application	90 (60%)
	Airline ticket office	20 (13.33%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
Awareness of Airline	Newspaper Ads	5 (3.33%)
	Online search	75 (50%)
	Travel agent	60 (40%)
	Friends/ Family	10 (6.66%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

Source: Primary Data

63.33% of the respondents are male. 38.66% are in age between 31- 40 years. 56.66% travels are professionals. 48% are in Post graduate level. 40% income lies between Rs.41,000 - Rs.50,000. 33.33% travel abroad to visit their family or friends. 40% travel once a year. 83.33% prefer to travel in Economy class. 60% book their reservation of seats through Online. 50% have awareness of the airline through Online search.

#### Ranking of Major Factor to choose Emirates over a Competitor

**Table 2 - Kendalls Rank Test**

Factors	Mean Rank	Assigned Ranks
Seat comfort and leg space	4.24	1
Flight entertainment	3.84	2
Clean craft interior	2.82	3
Offer Airfares during seasons	2.09	4
Ticket Fares	2.01	5

Source: Computed from Primary Data

**Table 3 - Test Statistics**

N	150
Kendall's W <sup>a</sup>	.408
Chi-Square	245.061
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance



The significance value is less than 0.01 which clearly shows that there is a highly positive agreement between the respondents regarding the ranking of major factor to choose Emirates over a competitor at 99 % confidence level. It can be concluded that Seat comfort and leg space ranked 1, Flight entertainment ranked 2, clean craft interior ranked 3, Offer Airfares during seasons ranked 4 and Ticket fares ranked as 5.

**Ranking of Most Important In-Flight Services provided by Emirates**

**Table 4 - Kendalls Rank Test**

FACTORS	MEAN RANK	ASSIGNED RANK
Seating Arrangement	7.03	1
Quality of food	7.00	2
Courtesy of flight crews	6.97	3
Comfort of seating	4.24	4
Availability of flight attendants	3.84	5
Appearance of flight crews	2.82	6
Space for luggage storage	2.09	7
Pilots communication with passengers	2.01	8

Source: Computed from Primary Data

**Table 5 - Test Statistics**

N	150
Kendall's W <sup>a</sup>	.812
Chi-Square	852.763
Df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

The value of Kendall's W is .812 and the significance level is 0.000. The significance value is less than 0.01 and clearly shows that there is a highly positive agreement among the respondents regarding the ranking of important in-flight services provided by Emirates at 99 % confidence level. It can be concluded Seating arrangement ranked 1, followed by Quality of food ranked 2, courtesy of flight crews ranked 3, Comfort of seating as 4, Availability of flight attendants as 5, Appearance of flight crews as 6, Space for luggage as 7 and pilots communication with passengers ranked as 8.

**Table 6 - Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Result
Pearson Chi-Square	183.034 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000	Relevant
	226.171 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	Relevant
	120.000 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	Relevant

	129.483 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000	Relevant
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Source: Computed from Primary Data

- a) 14 cells (56.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.
- a) 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .53.
- a) 3 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .83.
- a) 1 cells (10.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.73.

There is a significant relationship between the Age and major problems faced while travelling. Pregnant Women, People travelling with newborn babies and those with pre-existing medical conditions are advised to consult their physician to understand the potential risks of air travel and to find ways to make their trip safe and comfortable.

***There is a significant relationship between the Occupation and Purpose of Travelling. Air Travel facilitates integration into the global economy and provides vital connectivity on an international scale. It also helps generate trade, promote tourism and create employment opportunities.***

There is a significant relationship between the Monthly income and type of class preferred for air travel. There is a positive effect where increase in income per capita is increasing aviation demand.

There is a significant relationship between the Gender and Purpose of Travelling. The study reveals that Gender is one of the significant predictors of air travel.

**Table 7 - ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	31.257	1	31.257	1205.707	.000
Within Groups	3.837	148	.026		
Total	35.093	149			

Source: Computed from Primary Data

There is significant difference in opinion of Gender and the reputation of Emirates among passengers. 65.33% strongly agree that Emirates have good reputation among passengers.

**Table 8 - ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	31.369	1	31.369	32.968	.000
Within Groups	140.824	148	.952		
Total	172.193	149			

Source: Computed from Primary Data

There is significant difference in opinion of Age and the quality of food. The passengers have tasted their menus on in-flight Dining at Emirates and since most of them belong to the business category, they like the quality, variety, flavours and service of the meals served.

**Table 9 - Karl- Pearson Co-efficient of Correlation**

		Feel about quality services	Satisfaction with overall services
Feel about quality Services	Pearson Correlation	1	.915**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Satisfaction with overall services	Pearson Correlation	.915**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

Source: Computed from Primary Data

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

There is a correlation between quality service experience and satisfaction with overall airport and in-flight services. The correlation co-efficient of 0.915 shows, that there is a strong (positive) linear correlation between the two variables.

63.33% of the respondents are male. 38.66% are in age between 31- 40 years. 56.66% travels are professionals. 48% are in Post graduate level. 40% income lies between Rs.41,000 - Rs.50,000. 33.33% travel abroad to visit their family or friends. 40% travel once a year. 83.33% prefer to travel in Economy class. 60% book their reservation of seats through Online. 50% have awareness of the airline through Online search.

Seat comfort and leg space are the major factors to choose Emirates. Seating arrangement is an important in-flight Services provided by Emirates and ranked one. There is a significant relationship between Age and major problems faced while travelling. There is a significant relationship between the Occupation and Purpose of Travelling. Air Travel facilitates integration into the global economy and provides vital connectivity on an international scale. there is a significant relationship between the Monthly income and type of class preferred for air travel. There is a positive effect where increase in income per capita is increasing aviation demand.

The study reveals that Gender is one of the significant predictors of air travel. There is significant difference in opinion of Gender and the reputation of Emirates among passengers. The passengers have tasted their menus on in-flight Dining at Emirates and since most of them belong to the business category, they like the quality, variety, flavours and service of the meals

served. There is a correlation between quality service experience and satisfaction with overall airport and in-flight services.

### **LIMITATIONS & FUTURE STUDIES**

Researcher focuses only with the passengers of Emirates Airline in Cochin International Airport. Incomplete data given by the passengers lead to decrease in number of respondents. Data collection was difficult as much time was consumed in meeting them and even if the researcher could meet them, they were not ready to respond to the questions as they were in a hurry to go home. The answer may be subject to respondent bias. The accuracy of the findings was trusted by the accuracy of the statistical tools used for analysis. A study may be conducted on the area of measuring the customer quality service among Indian and international Airports Airline passengers. Many studies were conducted on the customer's satisfaction on various Airlines. The contribution of the air transport industry has significantly improved and an estimated states that the air transport industry will contribute 13.7 million direct jobs and \$1.7 trillion of GDP to the world economy by 2038. Areas related to expansion of global route networks, brand loyalty and cost control adopted in Airlines could be focused upon.

### **CONCLUSION**

Transport plays an important role in modern contentious world. It helps in reducing barriers. An effective transport system helps to improve the economic growth of a country. It plays a major role in increasing national and international integration. An airline is a business which offers air transport services for travelling passengers and freight. Airports are a primary part of a country's infrastructure and increases economic activities by providing international commerce and tourism. Emirates Airline is one of the familiar airlines that provides a better quality service to the passengers and with their innovative technology helps to meet the expectations of their passengers.

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