

Airline Service Quality in South Africa and Malaysia- An International Customer Expectations Approach

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Abstract: This study attempts to identify the various service and value factors that matter most to domestic airline passengers in South Africa and to benchmark it with the domestic airline industry in Malaysia that has similar airline services. A survey methodology involving face-to-face interviews was employed to conduct interviews with 196 participants from South Africa and 189 from Malaysia. Respondents were targeted on a convenience basis. Despite the use of this non-probabilistic sampling method, the data that were yielded showed high levels of internal consistency. A random splitting of each of the two datasets (i.e. South Africa and Malaysia) and subsequent comparison of firstly, demographic characteristics and secondly, the average ratings of key items revealed no significant differences, thus confirming repeatability or reproducibility of measurement. Trained fieldworkers assisted with the interviews. The findings revealed the following. The first research objective identifies those aspects that respondents typically consider most and least important when travelling on a domestic airline. The mean importance ratings obtained for each of the service items were calculated and ranked from highest to lowest scores. The items were ranked within the four broader service dimensions for the two samples. The first dimension is labelled 'convenience of booking' and the results reveal considerable similarities between the two samples, with both South African and Malaysian respondents rating online booking opportunity as the most important aspect within these dimensions. The second service dimension investigated in the study is 'cabin service escapes'. The item that was rated most important by both South African and Malaysian respondents was comforts of the seats. The third service dimension labelled 'cabin crew'. Cabin crew's credibility obtained the highest average importance rating. The last dimension studied was labelled 'timeliness of flight'. The top rated item was on-time departures and arrivals.

Keywords: *airline industry, service quality, customer preferences*

1. Introduction

Research into airline service quality has increased rapidly since its relationship with passenger satisfaction and profitability has been established (Namukasa, 2013; Bukhari, Ghoneim, Dennis & Jamjoom, 2013; McKechnie, Grant & Golawala, 2011; Saha, 2009). Nowak and Newton (2006) report that there is a direct linear relationship between customer satisfaction and profitability, which implies that with increased satisfaction, comes increased profits. This point of view is supported by Park (2007) and even initiated by Park, Robertson and Wu (2004), noting that high quality service rendering to passengers is essential for the airline industry to survive. During the last decade, the airline transportation industry has gone through dramatic changes. The changes were due to ever changing customer demands and expectations as well as responding to amongst other the technological and political environmental demands. The deregulation of the airline business is another reason for these changes (Rhoades & Waguespack, 2008). It is often argued that merely satisfying customers is not enough to significantly increase behavioural outcomes such as customer retention, word of mouth and profitability. Service quality conditions influence companies' competitive advantage by either causing to loose or retain customer patronage depending on their experience. This influences market share and consequently profitability. The rapid increasing rate of airline passengers to developing countries like South Africa and Malaysia needs to be synergised with good planning of all necessary services and facilities, of which transport is vital, but often a neglected area (De Jager, 2012). Travelling to South Africa has increased at a progressive pace especially after presenting a successful 2010 FIFA football world cup. Following the lifting of sanctions during 1994, South Africa became a global competitive tourist attraction. For this reason, it is important to ensure that passengers, local and international, are satisfied with the services provided by domestic airlines. This can be achieved by managing service quality with an emphasis on customer experience management (CEM). This study attempts to identify service and value

factors that matter most to domestic airline passengers in South Africa and to benchmark it with the domestic airline industry in Malaysia that shows similar characteristics.

2. Passengers' expectations and customer satisfaction in the air transportation industry

Literature in service marketing and management generally acknowledges that retaining customers and developing relationships with new ones is the key to business strategy. For any business, continuing support depends on repeat customers (Atalik, 2007). According to Park (2007), and Atalik (2007), the most effective way to ensure repeat customers is to provide a product or service that continuously meets customer's expectations and to keep promises. In reality, endeavouring to deliver a service of continued quality is a formidable task. Aksoy et al. (2003) however point out that most companies do not recognise the importance of this approach until driven to it by circumstances. Saha (2009) are of the opinion that dissatisfied customers are significantly more likely to provide negative feedback than are satisfied customers to provide positive feedback. This leads to the thinking of long term relationships with customers' that according to Atalik (2007) does not happen by chance. In fact long term relationships are cultivated and grounded firmly in an organisation's approach to service and value – which can be enhanced by an effective recovery system that can even strengthen customer loyalty in the sense that satisfied customers' can be less sensitive to the price being offered. Aksoy et al. (2003) point out that passengers' expectations are among the factors influencing the service decisions of everyone involve in the air transportation industry and realised the success of customer focussed service development that relies on a deep understanding of customer needs, expectations and preferences. Lovelock (as cited by Atalik, 2007) states that the principle law of a quality system is "do it right the first time". Therefore, it is important to determine what customers expect and try to react to each aspect.

Service quality represents a critical success factor. Therefore, it is particularly important, for every organisation, to define not only customers' satisfaction (measurable, in the context of quality, by the perceived quality) but also the factors that their clients consider most important for a service of high quality (expected service). When a pleasurable consumer experience is planned, a variety of consumers' expectations should be taken into consideration, especially expectations of convivial service (Le Bel, 2005). One of the most used methods to gauge the level of satisfaction and the customers' expectations is the administration of questionnaires. These questionnaires should measure amongst others peoples' expectations regarding service delivery elements.

Table 1: Critical incidents between an airline and its customers

Pre sales	Initial telephone inquiry Making reservations
Post sales, Pre consumption	Issuing of ticket Check in baggage Inspection of ticket Issue of boarding pass Advice of departure gate Quality of airport announcements Quality of waiting conditions
Consumption	Welcome on boarding aircraft Assisting in finding seat Assisting in stowing baggage Reliability of departure time Attentiveness of in-flight service Quality of food service Quality of in-flight entertainment Quality of announcements Safe/comfortable operation of aircraft Fast transfer from aircraft to terminal
Post consumption	Baggage reclaim Information available at airport arrival Queries regarding lost baggage

Source: Palmer, 2008

According to Palmer (2008) a number of incidents occur, each time producers and consumers come together in an encounter. Some of these interactions may be so important that they become critical to a successful encounter. A simple analysis of the interactions between an airline and its customers may reveal the pattern of critical incidents indicated in table 1. McKechnie, Grant and Golawala (2011) regard this service encounters so important that they partitioned airline service encounters into touch points in order to enhance service quality to establish a competitive advantage. Nejati, Nejati and Shafaei (2009) claim that only a few airlines have been able to establish a reputation of high service quality over the years. The reason for this is the rapid change in the industry both in terms of changing customer needs and as well as what constitutes the industry itself. The pattern of critical incidents (Table 1) has been adapted and used in this paper to try defining expectations of passengers using services offered by South African domestic airlines and to compare it with domestic airlines operating in Malaysia.

The airline industry and need satisfaction: Namukasa (2013) states that owing to the choice of transport available and the competitive environment for travellers in free market economies, transport operators recognise the importance of ensuring that the travel experience is both pleasurable and fulfils consumers' expectations. Any investigation should therefore include aspects that originate from the pre-booking stage through to the completion of the journey. McKechnie, Grant and Golawala (2011) point out that several studies suggest that airline service quality is one of the most critical factors that is likely to influence travellers' airline selection decision and significant relationships exist among reputation, service and retained preference. Attributes that are related to service quality and perceived as important by airline customers are price, safety, timelines, luggage transportation, quality of food and beverage, comfort of the seat, check-in process, inboard service and marketing promotion of airlines (Aksoy et al., 2003; Graham, 2008). Initially, Chang and Yeh (2002) and Park (2007) were of the opinion that one aspect only, *price*, could be regarded as primary competition weapon. However, airline companies soon realised that competition on price alone represent a no win situation on the long run. Empirical studies of demand for airlines show that service quality is central to the choice of airlines for both business and leisure travellers.

Airline marketing strategies - towards customer care: According to Tiernan, Rhoades and Waguespack (2008), in the pre deregulation era, airline service quality was assessed with respect to industry and managerial variables such as flight frequency, load factors, transit times and aircraft type. This has been changed due to the post deregulation and liberalised environment where the provision of superior service quality has been accepted as an important source of customer retention and loyalty, which may lead to competitive performance. Airlines that is amongst others still differentiating by offering more convenient routes and more promotional incentives in an attempt to consolidate their market share and enhance profitability, however realized that the marginal benefits gradually reduce because most of the airlines act similarly (Namukasa, 2013). Due to the recognition of the limitation of marketing strategies, some airlines rather tend to focus on improving customer service quality (De Jager, 2012; McKechnie, Grant & Golawala, 2011).

Like any other industry, the airline industry's understanding of what passengers expect is essential to providing superior service quality. Namukasa (2013) suggest that delivering superior service quality is a prerequisite for success and survival in today's competitive environment. Rhoades and Waguespack (2008) point out that an essential component of a successful positioning strategy is gaining a better understanding of customers' perception of service quality. Nejati, Nejati and Shafaei, (2009) emphasise that a positioning strategy should wove together promises of distinct experiences, benefits, and personal values with the actual production of the service experience. The passenger should experience the feeling of power when they, for example, experiences a bigger seat compared to the normal economic class seat. McKechnie, Grant and Golawala (2011) went further with their study titled, Partitioning service encounters into touch points to enhance service quality in order to build a competitive advantage. The above mentioned clearly demonstrate the importance of adopting and maintaining a healthy service delivery policy to enhance service quality in the industry.

Airline passenger service quality studies characterized through various phases: For the purpose of the study, developments in airline research was monitored from 1991 to, 2013 (see appendix A). Various research projects with one common purpose related to service quality focusing on the customer in the airline industry were undertaken. Customer specific researches were performed e.g. measuring service quality (1991), managing the air travel experience (2005), customer rights (2006), customer complaints (2007), managing of human resources for service excellence (2008). The latest research keeps up with

the general demand of passengers as dictated by the available technological environment. Research for the period 2010 -2013 resolves mainly around passengers needs for doing business on line or electronic. Aspects such as customer behaviour including browsing attitudes, continuous intention to make use of web sites to book a flight, to purchase the ticket, selecting seats and web check in, are investigated (Bukhari, Ghoneim, Dennis & Jamjoom, 2013; Law, Qi & Buhalis, 2010). Other recent studies (2013) focused on the effect of in flight service quality on passenger satisfaction, pre flight service quality as well as post flight service quality (Namukasa, 2013).

The abovementioned research studies were mainly conducted in Europe, the USA and Asia, while only one study conducted in Africa (Uganda) could be traced. The need for the current research is derived from the fact that South Africa, as developing country in Africa, has taken a leading role in terms development and economic growth. Being recently added to the BRICS consortium it is therefore amongst others vital to ensure that the airline industry is providing a service that satisfies the needs of passengers making use thereof, including local and foreigners. After South Africa hosted a successful Fifa world cup during 2010, tourists to the country has been on the increase and therefore more than ever needs to be satisfied. The abovementioned lack of airline satisfaction related information in South Africa gave rise to the reason why the current study has been performed and will benchmark with Malaysia that is also a developing country with similar airline characteristics.

Research objectives: The research objectives are as follows:

- To identify specific items that respondents typically consider most and least important when travelling on a domestic airline.
- To rank the broader underlying service dimensions in terms of importance when travelling on a domestic airline.

Study approach and methods: A quantitative approach to the study was followed where members of the public from respectively South Africa and Malaysia whom have travelled by means of their domestic airlines during the previous 12 months were targeted.

3. Methodology

A survey methodology involving face-to-face interviews was employed to conduct interviews with respondents. Trained fieldworkers assisted with the interviews and the data collecting phase span over a six week period. The fieldworkers were also assisted by supervisors, whom were responsible for field editing.

Data gathering and sampling method: The interviews were conducted more specifically in Cape Town (South Africa) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Both these cities are served by national airports and are considered favourable destinations for domestic travellers. A total of 196 and 189 participants from South Africa and Malaysia participated in the study. Respondents were targeted on a convenience basis. While this is not a particularly statistical scientific method of sampling, it is often used as part of exploratory studies. Despite the use of this non-probabilistic sampling method, the data that were yielded showed high levels of internal consistency. A random splitting of each of the two datasets (i.e. South Africa and Malaysia) and subsequent comparison of firstly, demographic characteristics and secondly, the average ratings of key items revealed no significant differences, thus confirming repeatability or reproducibility of measurement.

Survey instrument: A structured questionnaire served as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was developed in the light of the purpose of the study and primarily involved consulting academic literature as well as marketing materials on the aspects considered important by tourists when travelling on a domestic airline. A study conducted by De Jager, Van Zyl and Toriola (2012) provided particular reference to the design of the questionnaire. These researchers conducted a similar study amongst a sample of tourists from South Africa and Italy measuring amongst other the importance of various items that tourists typically consider when travelling on a domestic airline. An exploratory principal component analysis provided further insight by identifying broader underlying service dimensions that are thought to be significant in influencing passengers' perception of airline service quality.

Borrowing largely from the study of De Jager, Van Zyl and Toriola (2012), but also consulting the latest academic literature as well as marketing material of domestic airlines, the more recent research project

focused on measuring the importance of four main service dimensions, namely convenience of booking, cabin service scape, cabin crew and timeliness of flight. The questionnaire was designed in English to accommodate the majority of both target groups. The first section consisted of questions capturing the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second section listed the items relating the four main service dimensions. Respondents had to rate the items in order of importance when travelling on domestic airlines. A 7-point Likert type scale was used, ranging from, 1 = not important at all to 7 = very important. Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Version 20.

4. Results and findings

Characteristics of the sample: The two samples reveal consistent similarities with regard to age distribution as well as travel behaviour. The characteristics and behaviour of the two samples are compared in Table 2. Inspection of the sampling characteristics for both groups reveal that 60,7% of the South African participants and 73,5% of the Malaysian participants indicated that they were students at the time of the survey. It was therefore no surprise that the distributions representing South African and Malaysian participants are skewed towards younger age groups, with respectively 73,9% and 86,2% of participants being younger than 30 years. The majority of South African participants (65,3%) indicated that they have travelled on a domestic airline only once in the past 12-month period flying mostly economy class (85,2%). Very similarly travel behaviour manifest from the Malaysian group with 73,5% having travelled only once on domestic airlines over the past 12 months, with 83,1% flying economy class. The majority of participants, South African and Malaysian also indicated that the reason for travel being solely for vacation purposes or to visit family or friends.

Table 2: Demographic and travel statistics of the samples

	SA (n = 196)	Malaysia (n = 189)
Age		
20 yrs and younger	17,3%	18,0%
21 - 30 yrs	56,6%	68,3%
31 - 40 yrs	17,3%	11,1%
41 - 50 yrs	5,1%	2,6%
Older than 50 yrs	3,6%	0,0%
Occupation		
Self employed	9,2%	3,2%
Private sector	12,2%	13,2%
Public sector	17,9%	10,1%
Student	60,7%	73,5%
Number of flights in last 12 months		
Once	65,3%	73,5%
2 - 10 times	30,6%	23,8%
More than 10 times	4,1%	2,6%
Main purpose of travel		
Business/ Education	28,1%	20,1%
Vacation/ Visit to family or friends	71,9%	79,9%
Class mostly booked		
First	4,1%	4,2%
Business	10,7%	12,7%
Economy	85,2%	83,1%

Importance of service items when travelling on a domestic airline: The first research objective involved identifying those aspects that respondents typically consider most and least important when travelling on a domestic airline. The mean importance ratings obtained for each of the service items were calculated and ranked from highest to lowest scores. The results are presented in Table 3 with the items ranked within the four broader service dimensions for the two samples.

Table 3: Respondents' rating of service items

Items	South Africa			Malaysia		
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank
Convenience of booking						
Online booking opportunity	6,55	0,71	1	6,58	0,60	1
Convenience in making reservation/booking	6,47	0,83	2	6,53	0,67	2
Availability of airline website on the internet	6,42	0,91	3	6,33	0,85	4
Adequacy of information on airline's website	6,24	0,87	4	6,42	0,69	3
Pre-seating options	6,22	0,95	5	6,00	0,95	6
Allowable weight	5,93	1,09	6	6,08	0,92	5
Cabin service scape						
Comforts of the seats	6,52	0,80	1	6,69	0,56	1
Cabin cleanliness	6,44	0,81	2	6,66	0,60	2
Quality of the food served	6,42	0,76	3	6,58	0,68	3
Cabin ventilation	6,31	0,86	4	6,38	0,71	5
Continuous innovation & service improvements	6,24	0,85	5	6,47	0,67	4
Carry-on (overhead) storage space	6,13	0,94	6	6,29	0,72	6
Variety of food served during flight	6,02	1,08	7	6,27	0,85	7
Amenities in aircraft	5,87	1,03	8	6,03	0,90	8
Timeliness of food and drink service	5,76	1,19	9	6,02	0,89	10
Amount of the food served during flight	5,46	1,32	10	6,03	0,87	9
Cabin crew						
Cabin crew's credibility	6,53	1,36	1	6,53	0,74	2
Cabin crew's ability to answer questions	6,44	0,88	2	6,61	0,59	1
Physical appearance of cabin crew	6,14	1,09	3	6,25	0,89	3
Timeliness of flight						
On-time departures and arrivals	6,68	0,68	1	6,64	0,59	2
On-time luggage delivery on arrival	6,63	0,74	2	6,67	0,57	1
Speed of check-in	6,56	0,82	3	6,49	0,65	4
Direct service to destination	6,34	0,94	4	6,50	0,67	3

The first dimension is labelled 'convenience of booking' and encompass elements such as adequacy of information on airline's website, allowable weight, availability of airline website on the internet, convenience in making reservation/booking, online booking facility and pre-seating options. The results reveal considerable similarities between the two samples, with both South African and Malaysian respondents rating online booking opportunity and convenience in making reservation/booking as the two most important aspects within these dimensions. Of the six items rated, pre-seating options and allowable weight were rated least important. The average ratings of these items were significantly ($p < 0.05$) lower than the top two rated items amongst both samples.

The second service dimension investigated in the study, namely 'cabin service scape' relates to those service elements that passengers typically encounter during flight. These service elements mostly encompass elements such as food offered (quality, variety, amount and timeliness) and cabin features (cleanliness, ventilation, seating). The three items that were rated most important by both South African and Malaysian respondents were comforts of the seats, cabin cleanliness and quality of the food served. The three items that obtained the lowest ratings were amenities in aircraft, timeliness of food and drink service and amount of the food served during flight. The third service dimension labelled 'cabin crew' relates to their ability to answer questions, ability to speak foreign languages and close attention by cabin crew. Cabin crew's credibility obtained the highest average importance rating, followed by cabin crew's ability to answer questions, and physical appearance of cabin crew rated lowest. The latter items were rated significantly less important than the other two items ($p < 0,05$).

The last dimension studied was labelled 'timeliness of flight'. This service dimension considers service elements such as direct service to destination, on-time departures and arrivals, on-time luggage delivery on arrival and speed of check-in. The top rated item was on-time departures and arrivals, with the least

important item being direct service to destination. The latter item was rated significantly lower than the first one ($p < 0,05$). Inspection of ratings across all items show that despite the very similar views of the two samples regarding the ranking of items from most important to least important, the South African sample showed more variation in ratings than the Malaysian respondents.

Importance of service dimensions when travelling on a domestic airline: The second research objective aimed to gain insight into the importance of the broader underlying service dimensions relative to one another and across the two samples. A composite score was calculated for each dimension (Table 4). Higher average values are associated with higher importance. The Cronbach alpha values, which provide an indication of how well a set of items a specific construct measures, were 0.86, 0.76, 0.70, and 0.78 respectively for the four dimensions for the South African sample. For the Malaysian sample the values were 0.87, 0.77, 0.87 and 0.77. The results show that timeliness of flights was rated as the most important broader service dimension amongst both the South African and Malaysian samples. This dimension was regarded significantly more important than any of the other three dimensions ($p < 0,05$). The average ratings of this dimension also did not differ significantly between the two samples ($p > 0,05$). Second most important service dimension (based on average rating) for the South African sample was convenience of booking, followed by cabin service scape. The lowest rated service dimension was cabin crew. Amongst the Malaysian sample the second most important service dimension (based on average rating) was cabin crew, followed by convenience of booking. The lowest rated service dimension was cabin service scape.

Table 4: Respondents' rating of service dimensions

Factors	South Africa			Malaysia			Sig.
	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	
Cabin service scape	6,12	0,65	3	6,32	0,50	4	0,002
Cabin crew	6,09	0,89	4	6,47	0,62	2	0,000
Timeliness of flight	6,55	0,58	1	6,60	0,54	1	0,327
Convenience of booking	6,31	0,62	2	6,33	0,54	3	0,905

Notes:

* Summated averages calculated on items

** Ranking of factors based on summarised averages

5. Discussion and conclusion

Palmer (2008) identified various incidents where airline staff and passengers converge in an encounter, which often directly affects customer satisfaction levels. While airline staff in many of these instances acts as direct representative of the airline company, in some instances along the passenger journey encounters take place between passengers and situated agents that delivers an auxiliary or support function, but are not direct situated agents of the airline. For example, checking in of baggage might be handled by an independent service operator that is not on the payroll of the airline company. Other auxiliary encounters handled by independent agents might include advice of departure gate, airport announcements, waiting area, baggage reclaim, transfer from aircraft to terminal and information available at airport arrival. The quality of these encounters can equally influence overall passenger satisfaction and the perceptions held of a particular airline. While all these encounters and touch points should be considered, the aim of this study was to focus on the more direct encounters between passengers and the airline itself. More specifically, the focus fell on identifying those service and value factors that matters most to domestic airline passengers in South Africa. Furthermore to benchmark the results to the domestic airline industry in Malaysia that shows similar characteristics. The importance relating to four overarching service dimensions were measured, namely that of convenience of booking; cabin service scape; cabin crew and timeliness of flight.

The results show that timeliness of flights was rated as the most important broader services dimension amongst both South African and Malaysian samples and significantly more important compared to the other service dimensions. This aspect emphasises an important explanatory factor of passenger satisfaction. Firstly, passenger satisfaction is not only correlated with levels of service quality delivered by contact staff, but is also moderated by the quality of ground personnel that often do not have direct contact with passengers. This, for example, includes flight technicians responsible for ensuring that an

aircraft is operational, or staff that is responsible for refuelling of an aircraft. These areas deal with the critical area of operational efficiency of the airline and are considered a key success factor of profitability and sustainability. Secondly, with domestic travel often forming one leg of an expanded journey, passengers rely heavily on the timeliness of flights. Flights that are delayed or behind schedule can have severe time and financial implications for a passenger, thus affecting levels of satisfaction. With regard to the convenience of booking, the results reveal considerable similarities between the two samples with both South African and Malaysian respondents rating online booking opportunity and convenience in making reservation/ booking as the two most important aspects within these dimensions. While websites and mobile applications provide additional platforms for travellers to access airline information and book online, the convenience experience is enhanced by user friendly designs. Information gathered from passengers' interaction with airlines on websites, forums and social media could provide rich data that could be intelligently, harvested, mined and analysed to improve service delivery. Of the six items rated, pre-seating options and allowable weight were rated least important. The average ratings of these items were significantly lower than the top two rated items amongst both samples.

Investigating the second dimension, cabin service scapes, revealed that the three items that were rated most important by both South African and Malaysian respondents were comforts of the seats, cabin cleanliness and quality of the food served. The three items that obtained the lowest ratings were amenities in aircraft, timeliness of food and drink service and amount of the food served during flight. In the third dimension, cabin crew's credibility obtained the highest average importance rating, followed by cabin crew's ability to answer questions, and physical appearance of cabin crew rated lowest. The latter items were rated significantly less important than the other two items. In the last dimension, labelled timeliness of flight, the top rated item was on-time departures and arrivals, with the least important item being direct service to destination. The latter item was rated significantly lower than the first one. In conclusion, the findings of this study is a clear indication of what passengers values when making use of an airline and should be communicated with all stakeholders in the airline service delivery process that form part of the total product service offerings provided by the airlines. Adhering to the needs and expectations of the passengers will result in high level of service offerings and consequently overall satisfaction with the services rendered. Considering the research findings and applying the recommendations should result in improved effectiveness of services rendered by the airline industry. Despite auxiliary airport services not being directly measures in this study, it was still evident that these situated agents remain contributors towards overall passenger experience.

Limitations and opportunities for further research: A non probability sample was used because airlines were not willing to make their database available for the purpose of the research. The limitation resulted because the conclusions could not be generalised for the total population but for the sample that participated. The two samples were taken at only two major international airports, one in Johannesburg and the other one in Kuala Lumpur. Further research imperatives call for the replication of the study to include more national airports and to determine whether there are significant differences between them. A separate study with the inclusion of international passenger airlines is also suggested in order to distinguish between international and local passengers airline related preferences.

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Appendix A

Table 1: Evolvement of selected airline relate research

Year	Author	Nature of article
1991	Fick & Richie	Measuring service quality in the travel and tourism industry
1999	Gustafsson, Ekdahl, & Edvardsson	Customer focused service development in practice. A case study at Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS).
2000	Sultan & Simpson	International service variants: airline passenger expectations and perceptions of service quality
2001	Rhoades & Waguespack	Airline quality: present challenges, future strategies
2002	Change & Yeh	A survey analysis of service quality for domestic airlines
2003	Gilbert & Wong	Passenger expectations and airline services: a Hong Kong based study
2003	Aksoy, Atilgan, & Akinci	Airline services marketing by domestic and foreign firms: differences from the customers' viewpoint
2005	Done	A business model going places? Premium airlines lay down a challenge for the big network carriers
2005	Le Bel	Beyond the friendly skies: an integrative framework for managing the air travel experience
2005	Bowden and Headly	Airline quality ratings report
2006	Europa	Air passenger rights, Europe
2007	Reed	Airline may never fly right on customer service expert warn
2007	Atalik	Customer complaints about airline service: a preliminary study of Turkish frequent flyers
2007	Park	Passenger perception of service quality: Korean and Australian case studies.
2007b	Yu	Flight delays worst in 13 years
2007b	Yu	Airline score lower than IRS in customer satisfaction
2008	Wirtz, Heracleous & Pangarkar	Managing human resources for service excellence and cost effectiveness at Singapore airlines
2008	Tiernan, Rhoades & Waguespack	Airline service quality
2008	Rhoades & Waguespack	Twenty years of service quality performance in the US airline industry
2008	Moneim & Ahmed	Create superior customer values: new direction for Middle Eastern airlines.
2008	Babbar, & Koufteros	The human element in airline service quality: contact personnel and the customer.
2009	Neyati, Nejati & Shafaei	Rankings airlines' service quality factors using a fuzzy approach: study of the Iranian society
2010	Zane & Reyes	Airline' plight: where has all the luggage gone?
2011	Slatten & Mehmetogly	Antecedents and effects of engaged frontline employees
2011	McKechnie, Grant & Golawala	Partitioning service encounters into touch points to enhance quality
2012	Sreenivasan, Lee & Goh	Tweeting the friendly skies
2013	Singhaseni, Wu & Ojiako	Modelling overbookings on air cargo transportation
2013	Numukasa	The influence of airline service quality on passenger satisfaction and loyalty
2013	Bukhari, Ghoneim, Dennis & Jamjoon	The antecedents of travellers' e-satisfaction and intention to buy airline tickets online