# Customer Satisfaction of Airlines Based in the Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

*The study aimed to assess the customer satisfaction of local airlines. Specifically, it sought to present the profile of the respondents in terms of occupation, educational attainment, frequency of travel, and purpose of travel; determine the customer satisfaction in terms of airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image; and test the significant difference on the assessment of customer service when grouped according to profile. The study made use of descriptive method and utilized an adapted questionnaire distributed among 305 passengers of two airlines based in the Philippines. Majority of the respondents are employed, college graduate, travelling once a year due to leisure activities. The respondents are satisfied with the services of local airlines in relevance to personnel quality, airline tangible, airline image, terminal tangible and empathy. There is a significant difference found in the respondents' satisfaction when grouped according to frequency of travel, and educational attainment. Moreover, highly significant difference is found in airline tangible and terminal tangible when grouped to purpose of travel and found in personnel quality when grouped according to occupation. The proposed recommendations include conducting customer satisfaction survey, provide more flight schedules and different trainings for the employees of the local airlines to enhance the customer satisfaction towards their services.*

**Keywords***: Airline Tangible, Terminal Tangible, Personnel Quality, Empathy, Airline Image*

## INTRODUCTION

Transport is a crucial part of any contemporary society. The demand for transportation offerings in sincerely all nations has grown gradually over the years. The richer countries of the arena have invested in main transportation infrastructure. Addition to this, one of the important evolutions at the end of the century in the field of performance enhancement was the measuring of customer satisfaction as a main requirement of management systems in corporations and firms. Several efforts of business managers and experts in order to enhance performance management tools and to develop the responses to customers, shows that customer satisfaction is one of the important factors for any organization in business matters (Albonaeimi & Hatami, 2015; Mendoza, 2014;

Buted et al., 2014; Bencito, 2014; Maristela et al., 2015; Barlan-Espino, 2017; Devicais, 2014; Agulo et al., 2015).

The sustainable tourism gains interest to the air transport concept and how the tourist will be encouraged to visit places through extensive accessibility because of the easy transaction and fast track of travel. This is where the aviation sector entered the scene where the importance of their existence can help tourist attractions maintain its stability in the industry. Since aviation single handedly the air access, then they have a high participation in the accessibility of tourist destination. Nevertheless, there is a decrease in loyalty among customers and increase on their expectation on how services must be provided due to enormous amount of experiences, which became a challenge among the business sector to find ways to increase their services including aviation industry. The airlines must provide good marketing and service presentation to encourage customers to acquire their services, then efficiently and effectively enhanced their services through innovation to stay in the global market industry of air accessibility (Alotaibi, 2015; Borbon, 2016).

One of the trending air access services is the local airlines which provide low priced fares to small or limited number of services compared to huge aircrafts passenger. This became very appealing to aviation business because it can help people who usually travel but have limited finances. Since their reason for acquiring such services is more on travelling, then low-cost carriers can provide it without any delays. In the Philippines, most low-cost carriers are 50 percent lower than that of full cost carriers. And since limited services are offered, market tends to seek quality to these specific services. The quality of services is a concept where the airline industry fully understands its value to their business stability and patronage among their customers. More so, they should know how to measure its quality through the customers' perspective so that they will be able to focus on their point of weakness and carry out to attain the satisfaction of customers. Hence, being in the industry for a long time can impact their services due to extensive experiences in the past. So they knew that service quality can increase their profits, customer satisfaction, low expenditures, customer patronage and retention (Kaufman, 2016; Garcia et al., 2018; De Luna & Meñez, 2014).

Different local airlines found in the Philippines are categorized as mainline, regional, charter and cargo airlines. For mainline passenger airline include Cebu Pacific Air, PAL Express, Cebgo, Philippine Airlines, Philippine Air Asia, Air. Regional include Air Juan, Air SWIFT, Pan Pacific Airline, Sky Jet Airlines, Sky Pasada, and SeAir International. Airline industry is into high demand in the global market and needs to provide a positive service quality that can be identified through the assessment of airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image. This has been a marketing requirement as their means of competitive advantage and pressure.

The local airlines provide services that are minimal compared to the large-scale airlines. The increased competition in the domestic air industry also provided travelers with lower airfares, and from the travelers' perspective, the lower airfares are the most important result of the deregulation. The outcome is the rapid growth in domestic travel, at least before the financial crisis and the downsizing of PAL that affected the industry's seat capacity. PAL, however, still charges

the highest fare. The emerging picture shows that competition in the industry enables the more efficient, low-cost airlines to operate at fares lower than pre-competition days and yet keeps them profitable. Only two of the airlines are currently not incurring financial losses. The financial problem besetting the industry is an indication that only a few large efficient airlines may in the long run survive. The continued losses of the unprofitable airlines could drive them to withdraw or exit from the industry or merge with the profitable ones (Airlineratings, 2016).

In airline industry, customer satisfaction is very important to encourage the clients to acquire their services. The satisfaction experienced by their passengers can be used as part of their marketing using "word of mouth" advertising. Further, patronage can be attained when the customers are satisfied with their experiences with the services of airlines.

However, there are issues, complaints and flight problems that the airlines are usually encountering. Customers can often encounter flight problems or cancellations, delays, misconnections, or any other deviations from schedule with or without warning from the airline. Further, baggage issues are also a concern because instances where the passenger reaches the destination but their complained about lost, damaged or delayed luggage, charges for excess baggage, carry-on luggage problems, and difficulties with airline claims procedures. Addition to this, ticket reservation and customer services gained the attention of aviation industry. These specific needs should be maintained and solved by the airline through the enhancement of service quality.

This is chosen by the researchers because they wanted to understand the marketing and price elasticity within the local airlines and how they provide their services towards their customers through assessment of satisfaction. This will allow the researchers to be knowledgeable of what is supposed to be given to their customers in case they wanted to apply as flight attendant or employee of low-cost carriers as their entry level in airline industry. This will benefit the CITHM for it will allow them to formulate plans and programs to enhance the service skills of tourism students. Further, the faculty will also be a significant factor for this study because it will provide information about airline industry at low cost level. Addition to this, students will learn a lot of things in this endeavor for it can enhance their awareness of the difference between low and full cost carriers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to assess the customer satisfaction local airlines. Specifically it sought to present the profile of the respondents in terms of: occupation, educational attainment, frequency of travel, and purpose of travel; determine the customer satisfaction in terms of airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image; test the significant difference on the assessment of customer service when grouped according to profile; and propose a plan of action based on the result of the study.

## METHODS

### Research Design

The study made use of descriptive method to assess the customer's satisfaction of local airlines . Descriptive method is a technique used by scholars and researchers to be able to identify the present discussion of facts that are basically occurring at the present time. The design is for using numerical coefficients and statistics to be able to determine the extent of occurrences of each event in the society (Kara, 2015).

### Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were 305 passengers of Filipino owned airlines. The researchers randomly selected their respondents in NAIA terminal 3 in Pasay City. They were chosen using the following criteria: passengers of PAL or CEBU PAC, both male and female, at least 15 years old and above to understand the statements written in the questionnaire, and passengers from terminal 3, that vary depending on their frequency of travel.

### Instrument

The instrument is an adapted questionnaire from the study of Ali, Dey and Filieri (2015) which passed the reliability test using Cronbach Alpha of 0.846 (airline tangible), 0.864 (terminal tangible), 0.882 (personnel quality), 0.832 (empathy) and 0.780 (airline image). This has two parts: Part I includes the profile of the respondents in terms of occupation, educational attainment, frequency of travel, and purpose of travel. Part II includes the assessment of customer satisfaction in terms of airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personnel quality, empathy, and airline image

### Procedure

The researchers constructed a letter for the management of Terminal 3 of Ninoy Aquino International Airport seeking permission to conduct the study within the airport premises. Addition to this, another letter was provided for the management of Cebu Pacific Air, and Philippine Airlines seeking permission to distribute questionnaire among their customers. Lastly, a letter with informed consent was distributed among the passengers with the attached questionnaire seeking approval for participating in the study. They gave enough time for the respondents to answer the questionnaire and retrieved it immediately. The data gathered were statistically treated, tabulated, interpreted and analyzed. The study made use of 4-Likert Scale where 4 is the highest and 1 as the lowest value.

### Data Analysis

To interpret the data gathered, the following statistical tools were used: Percentage and Frequency were used to determine profile of the respondents in terms of occupation, educational attainment, frequency of travel, and purpose of travel. Weighted Mean was used to determine the assessment of customer satisfaction in terms of airline tangibles, terminal tangibles, personnel

quality, empathy, and airline image. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the significant difference on the customer satisfaction when grouped according to profile

**Ethical Considerations**

To observe the highly confidential nature of the survey and the interview, no names were mentioned in the report. The identity of the respondents was not revealed except they were personnel and manager of the selected low-cost airlines. No opinion was given by the researchers, only information and results based on the data gathered.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile**

| Profile Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Occupation** | | |
| Businessmen/women | 67 | 22.0 |
| Employed | 154 | 50.5 |
| Unemployed | 84 | 27.5 |
| **Educational Attainment** | | |
| High School Graduate | 76 | 24.9 |
| College Graduate | 129 | 42.3 |
| with master's Unit | 31 | 10.2 |
| With master's degree | 26 | 8.5 |
| with Doctorate Unit | 22 | 7.2 |
| with Doctorate Degree | 21 | 6.9 |
| **Frequency of Travel** | | |
| once a month | 48 | 15.7 |
| twice a month | 47 | 15.4 |
| once a year | 100 | 32.8 |
| twice a year | 40 | 13.1 |
| Others | 70 | 23.0 |
| **Purpose of Travel** | | |
| Business | 88 | 28.9 |
| Religion | 20 | 6.6 |
| Education | 35 | 11.5 |
| Leisure | 96 | 31.5 |
| Medical | 18 | 5.9 |
| Others | 48 | 15.7 |

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their occupation, educational attainment, frequency of travel and purpose of travel.

The respondents' occupation shows that majority are employed which got the highest with 154 or 50.5 percent followed by unemployed with 84 or 27.5 percent and the least is

businessmen/women with 67 or 22.0 percent. This means that the customers of low-cost airlines are mostly employed and are capable to pay for their fare and expenses. They wanted to travel to go to different places that are slightly far from their everyday activities or to places where they needed to be due to leisure or work. By being able to pay for transport is a big factor when they are in need or wanted to travel.

According to the study of Abe, Anog, Gabay, Mendoza, Mendoza, and Reyes (2015) the accessibility and the capability of the travellers to pay for transport can affect their motivation to go to different places. They should be able to pay for their expenses and may carry out their purpose to go to different places, especially in different destination.

The study determines the educational attainment of the passengers which found out majority of them are college graduate with 129 or 42.3 percent followed by high school graduate with 76 or 24.9 percent. Meanwhile, respondents who have Doctorate degree got the lowest with 21 or 6.9 percent.

The respondents have finished their education by being a college graduate and were able to determine the function of airlines in their transportation. Addition to this, they are able to determine the most appropriate airline to which they will acquire transport services because they can foresee which services are needed during their travel.

According to the study of Lou and Giravoza (2014), most of the customers of travel industry are degree holders. This considers them to be well educated and capable of understanding the way the services are provided during transport.

The frequency of travel shows that majority of the respondents are travelling once a year which got the highest 100 or 32.8 percent followed by other number of times travelling with 70 or 23.0 percent, those who travel once a month got 48 or 15.7 percent, twice a month with 47 or 15.4 percent while the least is twice a year with 40 or 13.1 percent. This means that most of them are travelling annually. They wanted to travel through air at least once a year to be able to go to different places that have different culture and practices. During the interview, the researchers were able to ask some of the respondents why they travel once a year; this is because of the expenses and that at one point they wanted to bring their family in other places to experience new things especially during summer vacation.

Singh and Misra (2015) stated that people tend to travel once a year because they wanted to be away from the same place, especially those living in urban places and experience the fast track of daily activities. By being able to be away from the same environment can have a psychological and mental impact to them to release stress and have enjoyable time with friends or family.

Majority of the respondents' purpose to travel is leisure which got the highest with 96 or 31.5 percent, followed by business with 88 or 28.9 percent, while the least is medical reasons with 18 or 5.9 percent. It shows that the reasons they are travelling domestically are due to leisure and vacation purposes. This is because the passengers of airlines wanted to have leisure time in different places to experience new things and encounter different people or culture.

Study of Maranan, Olan and Olarte (2014) found out that most of the respondents who are travelling to different destinations would like to be entertained and experience recreational activities

that would provide leisure time for them They wanted to relax and be stress-free from their daily tasks such as house chores and work load. The life in city sometimes tend to be stressful due to the different things they needed to accomplish from day-to-day.

Table 2 presents the customer satisfaction as to airline tangible. The composite mean of 3.13 indicates that the respondents are satisfied. It means that the respondents are satisfied with airline tangible that the low-cost airlines are providing. They became satisfied with the airline's facilities and tangible services because they were able to foresee the things they need while travelling such as comfortable seat, good ambiance and temperature along with the overall environment it provides for them.

**Table 2 Customer Satisfaction as to Airline Tangible**

| | Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Aircraft are clean and modern looking | 3.29 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 2. | Quality of catering served in plane | 3.14 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 3. | Cleanliness of the plane toilets | 3.15 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 4. | Cleanliness of the plane seats | 3.07 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 5. | Comfort of the plane seats | 3.03 | Satisfied | 6 |
| 6. | Quality of air-conditioning in the planes | 3.10 | Satisfied | 4 |
| | **Composite Mean** | **3.13** | **Satisfied** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Satisfied; 2.50 – 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 – 1.49 = Less Satisfied; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Satisfied*

Hutchinson (2016) stated that designing a quality service is very complicated since the physical environment must be considered as well as other factors that could affect the satisfaction of the customers. The service industry must learn to understand the needs of their clients beforehand such as accommodations for families and children. The environment must be suitable to the customers across ages and that they will be comfortable with the appearance while enjoying the scenery which will be appealing to them. When customers bring their children, there should be amenities and facilities that would gain interests among them. Further, parents and geriatric age must have safe and secured places like railings so that there will be less risk for accidents and the customers will be able to pass through conveniently.

All items were rated satisfied and aircraft are clean and modern looking got the highest weighted mean with 3.29. It was followed by cleanliness of the plane toilets (3.15) and quality of catering served in plane (3.12). This means that the respondents are satisfied with the cleanliness and modern looking of the airplane that carry passengers to different location in domestic or international flights. The cleanliness and modern looking of the aircraft/airplane is what makes the customers satisfied with the airline tangibles because it provides an impression that it has facilities that could cater the needs of their customers.

Haller (2015) stated that the physical environment can affect the factors that encourage tourists to travel, especially the basic factors like cleanliness. Addition to this, when the transport facility provides modern looking, it may encourage patronage since it provides essential experience towards the customers travel.

However, items such as quality of air-conditioning in the planes (3.10), cleanliness of the plane seats (3.07) and comfort of the plane seats (3.03) follow respectively. The respondents are satisfied with the air-conditioning and plane seats because of the airplane structure that is usually in state of the art.

When customers bought an airline ticket, it does not matter where they will sit or what class do, they belong to. The important thing is their comfort, convenience and if the services provided for them are needed while they are in flight. Though, most passenger would prefer to pay for first class tickets because of the provision of services that they think they needed while in flight and the things that would make them more comfortable (Bamber, Gittel, Kochan, & von Nordenflytch, 2014). The customers will determine if the quality of service meets their expectation through their understanding of what services should be visible and expected. Such perception is the reaction of the customers about how an enterprise provides their services and offered to their customers. This is the process of acquiring information from the environment, word of mouth, the experiences and media (Rathi, 2014).

**Table 3. Customer Satisfaction as to Terminal Tangibles**

| | Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Cleanliness of the airport toilets | 3.24 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 2. | Number of shops in airport | 3.14 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 3. | Effective air-conditioning in airport | 3.05 | Satisfied | 6.5 |
| 4. | Effective sign system in airport | 3.11 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 5. | Availability of trolleys in airport | 3.07 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 6. | Reliability of security control system | 3.05 | Satisfied | 6.5 |
| 7. | Employees' uniforms are visually appealing | 3.15 | Satisfied | 2 |
| | **Composite Mean** | **3.11** | **Satisfied** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Satisfied; 2.50 – 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 – 1.49 = Less Satisfied; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Satisfied*

Table 3 presents the customer satisfaction as to terminal tangible. The composite mean of 3.11 indicates that the respondents are satisfied. The respondents are satisfied with terminal tangibles which affect the overall service quality of any airline companies. Although the airport is not totally part of the airline tangibles, it can affect the overall perception and satisfaction of the customers travel experience.

The airport has become an investment in any airline companies since services start at the point when the customers arrive at the terminal so in the evaluation of customer service the terminal tangibles are considered. Nevertheless, studies about this concept are usually focused on the internal aspect of service and the performance of the airline, and not in the perspective of the consumers. The internal availability of services is for benchmarking only, but it has insufficient considerations and measurement when the customer satisfaction is at stake. Even the airport management tends to assess the customers' feedback about airline services, it was unable to assess the satisfaction of customers about the physical amenities and facilities of the terminals. So, it is important that

terminals such as airport must have a deep understanding how their facilities will affect the airline industry and the customers' experiences (Losekoot, 2015).

All items are rated satisfied. Among the items, cleanliness of the airport toilets got the highest with 3.24 followed by employees' uniforms are visually appealing (3.15) and number of shops in airport (3.14). The respondents perceived that airport toilets are clean, and they are satisfied because it is one of the facilities which is mostly needed by the customers when they arrived in the airport before they go onboard with the airplane and aircraft.

Cleanliness has significant positive impact on the perceived satisfaction among customers and their experiences of airports services. They usually emphasize the facilities in relation to restroom activities that should be maintained at all time. Since airport is the place where many passengers are found, heavy foot traffic for restroom activities can affect the management and maintenance of this facility. Hence, must be upkept to maintain the image of the airport and meet the expectations of their customers (Vitali, 2018).

However, the effective sign system in airport (3.11), availability of trolleys in airport (3.07) and the least is effective air-conditioning in airport and reliability of security control system with lowest mean score of 3.05. The respondents are also satisfied with the air-conditioning of the airport and reliability of security system. Since there are high number of passengers and airline companies found in the NAIA, there are instances that the air-conditioner and the security system were not able to cater all the needs of their passengers.

According to Kotopoules and Nikopoulou (2016) the customers' satisfaction may be affected by indoor thermal requirements for airports and boarding areas. Since airport has very large area, the need for thermal requirement is usually demanded by their passengers compared to their personnel and employees who are usually settled in small areas with limited thermal needs.

**Table 4. Customer Satisfaction as to Personnel Quality**

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Employees' general attitude | 3.08 | Satisfied | 5.5 |
| 2.  Whether airline personnel give exact answers to my questions | 3.31 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 3.  Whether personnel show personnel care equally to everyone | 3.11 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 4.  Employees have the knowledge to answer your questions | 3.06 | Satisfied | 7 |
| 5.  Empathy of the airline personnel | 3.19 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 6.  Awareness of airline personnel of their duties | 3.16 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 7.  Error-free reservations and ticketing transactions | 3.08 | Satisfied | 5.5 |
| **Composite Mean** | **3.14** | **Satisfied** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Satisfied; 2.50 – 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 – 1.49 = Less Satisfied; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Satisfied*

Table 4 presents the customer satisfaction as to personnel quality. The composite mean of 3.14 indicates that the respondents are satisfied. This means that the respondents are satisfied with

the personnel quality of the flight attendants and other personnel of airlines because they can provide services and information about the flight details and issues that occur during flight.

The knowledge of employees, personnel and flight attendant are very important factor in marketing their services. They must be equipped with knowledge about the essential information about travel and tour packages, recreational activities, and leisure time that are available for the customers. There are low rates and fare during these packages and the most convenient way to provide this information is to employ a travel specialist that could manage the arrangements for travel and vacation activities. Consumers who expect to grab the best travel deals by shopping online may be deterred by the latest news about the pricing practices of some online booking sites. In a traditional sales retailer might, for example, offer discounts to veterans or to senior citizens or give greater visibility to higher-priced products by positioning sale racks at the back of stores (Steven, 2015).

The respondents perceived to be satisfied and the item airline personnel gives exact answers to my questions got the highest mean of 3.31 followed by empathy of the airline personnel (3.19) and awareness of airline personnel of their duties (3.16). The respondents are satisfied with personnel who provides the exact answers to their questions because they are at times confused with the protocol and the provided services for them when they are already inside the plane. When it comes to customer care skills, the airline industry needs a lot of competencies from their employees and workers. The industry is very much in demand of workers who are willing to work very hard and competent enough with relevance to their knowledge of the industry. Being cognitively attached is expected so that the workforce is capable of being time-conscious and professionally ready to face the challenges without being affected by personal matters that are not related to their work. Trimming of workforce is a common occurrence in the industry so it is an advantage for potential employees to be knowledgeable and became an asset to make themselves competent in the hospitality industry (Gambo, 2016).

However, whether personnel show personnel care equally to everyone (3.11), employees' general attitude and error-free reservations and ticketing transactions (3.08) got lower weighted mean and the least is employees have the knowledge to answer your questions with 3.06. This means that the respondents are satisfied with the knowledge of the airline personnel to answer their queries and questions during their flight.

Being reliable is also part of professional ethic. Every person who possesses good ethics and virtues such as being punctual or make it to be present in the workplace at a given time will be a strong advantage for the potential employees. They are considered as dependable and proficient workers who guarantee the industry of good performance and productivity at work (Kaufman, 2016).

Table 5 presents the customer satisfaction as to empathy. The composite mean of 3.01 indicates that the respondents are satisfied. This means that the respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the low-cost airlines due to the empathy and compassion that they show towards their customers.

**Table 5. Customer Satisfaction as to Empathy**

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  Punctuality of the departures and arrivals | 3.13 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 2.  Transportation between city and airport | 3.03 | Satisfied | 3 |
| 3.  Compensation schemes in case of loss or hazard | 3.04 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 4.  Care paid to passengers' luggage | 2.94 | Satisfied | 5 |
| 5.  Locations of the airline company offices | 3.02 | Satisfied | 4 |
| 6.  Number of flights to satisfy passengers' demands | 2.93 | Satisfied | 6 |
| **Composite Mean** | **3.01** | **Satisfied** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Satisfied; 2.50 – 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 – 1.49 = Less Satisfied; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Satisfied*

This is the way the service staff will make their customer feels unique and special through enhanced service delivery. From simple way of courtesy to remembering their favorite place or food can enhance the satisfaction among customers. They wanted to feel that they are being treated fair and that they are considered when being served. Even the company is a small scale, its ability to sympathize with its customers can give a clear advantage in the market compared to large firms (Albonaeimi, & Hatami, 2015).

Punctuality of the departures and arrivals got the highest with 3.13 and verbally interpreted as satisfied. It is followed by compensation schemes in case of loss or hazard (3.04) and transportation between city and airport (3.03). The respondents are satisfied with the punctuality of departures and arrivals of the airlines which were a major problem before and have now been addressed by the low-cost airlines.

Travelling brings people into contact with each other. As sustainable tourism has an educational element it can foster understanding between people and cultures and provide cultural exchange between guests and hosts. This increases the chances for people to develop mutual sympathy, tolerance and understanding and to reduce prejudices and promote the sense of global brotherhood (Ali, Dey & Filieri, 2015).

Also rated as satisfied are the locations of the airline company offices with 3.02, care paid to passengers' luggage with 2.94 and the least is number of flights to satisfy passengers' demands with 2.93. This means that they are also satisfied with the number of flights they have to cater all their customers. While the study of Gambo (2016) revealed that no relationship was found between check-in process and customer satisfaction however, a relationship was found among four service quality attributes (in-flight services, reliability, responsiveness and baggage handling services) and customer satisfaction.

Table 6 presents the customer satisfaction as to airline image. The composite mean of 3.12 indicates that the respondents are satisfied. This means that the respondents are satisfied with the airline image that the low-cost airlines have because whatever that is being advertised by them is the exact services they have.

**Table 6. Customer Satisfaction as to Airline Image**

| | Indicators | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Availability of low-price ticket offerings | 3.16 | Satisfied | 1 |
| 2. | Consistency of ticket prices with given service | 3.14 | Satisfied | 2 |
| 3. | Image of the airline company | 3.12 | Satisfied | 3.5 |
| 4. | Service provided by the low-cost carriers | 3.12 | Satisfied | 3.5 |
| 5. | Satisfaction of customers of the low-cost carriers | 3.06 | Satisfied | 5 |
| | **Composite Mean** | **3.12** | **Satisfied** | |

*Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Satisfied; 2.50 – 3.49 = Satisfied; 1.50 – 1.49 = Less Satisfied; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Satisfied*

The image of the airline includes the physical facilities as well as the structure of the aircraft. This includes how the internal operation must be provided for the comfort of the passengers (Idaho Food Code, 2015). Passengers of airline are very dependent on the image of the aircraft because if they have bad experiences then they will not acquire again services from the same airline. Further, they do not want same experiences because they wanted to feel secure and enjoyable while travelling. When inside the aircraft, it can make the passenger bored due to disclosed facilities and small spaces. So, the airline must provide the equipment's, amenities and facilities that could make their passenger comfortable and enjoyable (Springer Miller System, 2016).

It can be gleaned that availability of low-price ticket offerings got the highest with 3.16, followed by consistency of ticket prices with given service with 3.14. This means that the respondents are satisfied with availability of low-price tickets and discounts provided by the airlines because they can avail them when they need to travel. While the least is satisfaction of customers of the low-cost carriers with lowest mean score of 3.06 and rated as satisfied.

Lastly, excellent customer service is vitally important when pricing strategies are compared with other airlines. Pricing is a calculated amount and is charged to the payment source you have designated. The cost of an airline ticket is based on the distance of the trip, total travel time and the base fare (the amount the ride starts at). Transport industry and sector has interrelationship with variety of business service providers and tourism business products like attractions and destination, tour activities and agents to tour the customers. Among these services, the agencies need to compromise their transactions in order to achieve the desired output. They need to support and assist each other to be able to come up with a good plan that enhances the experience and satisfaction of the customers and tourists (Business Life, 2013).

The item, image of the airline company, and service provided by the low-cost carriers got the lowest weighted mean of 3.12. This means that the respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the airlines. Whatever they market or advertised is the same extent of service they provide their passengers.

As shown from the result of table 7, there was a significant difference observed on personnel quality when grouped according to occupation since the computed p-value of 0.042 was

less than 0.05 alpha level. This means that the responses differ significantly and were found out that employed have higher level of satisfaction.

**Table 7. Difference of Responses on the Customer Satisfaction When Grouped According to Occupation**

|  | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Airline Tangible | 0.511 | 0.675 | Not Significant |
| Terminal Tangibles | 1.039 | 0.376 | Not Significant |
| Personnel Quality | 2.758 | 0.042 | Significant |
| Empathy | 2.241 | 0.084 | Not Significant |
| Image | 1.198 | 0.311 | Not Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

The respondents who are employed have higher assessment with the personnel quality since they are also working in organizations that provide services and were able to distinguish the extent of service provided by the airline companies. Further, since they are employed, they knew a lot of people where they can recommend the airlines to others.

**Table 8. Difference of Responses on the Customer Satisfaction when Grouped According to Educational Attainment**

|  | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Airline Tangible | 2.429 | 0.035 | Significant |
| Terminal Tangibles | 3.607 | 0.003 | Significant |
| Personnel Quality | 4.006 | 0.002 | Significant |
| Empathy | 2.779 | 0.018 | Significant |
| Image | 1.860 | 0.101 | Not Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

As shown from the table 8, there were significant difference observed on airline tangible, terminal tangibles, personnel quality and empathy when grouped according to educational attainment since the resulted p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level. Based from the post hoc test, it was found out that with doctorate units and doctoral degree have higher level of satisfaction when it comes to airline tangible, terminal tangibles, personnel quality and empathy.

This implies that the educational attainment of the respondents and their perception of satisfaction in airline differ due to their knowledge of how these services must be provided.

Ali's, Dey's and Filieri's (2015) study found out that educational attainment has higher impact to the customers' satisfaction. Having the knowledge of how the service is given, the respondents were able to identify if the airlines are providing the needed services or they can foresee the needs of their customers that lead to satisfaction.

Further, their assessment with terminal tangible will be different based on their educational attainment because of the knowledge they acquire from school about the physical facilities provided by the aviation services.

The study of Alotaibi (2015) found out that those people who have higher learning tend to become more equipped with knowledge about the facilities they need as they travel.

Educational attainment of the respondents will affect their satisfaction due to their level of understanding of the kinds of services that the airlines must provide such as personnel quality because they understood the different skills that airline employees must possess to be able to provide the services that may affect the satisfaction of their customers. Lu's (2015) study was able to find out how the customer satisfaction is affected by their educational background. They know how the quality of the employees will influence their satisfaction because of how the personnel will response to their need and assure them of the promised service to make them feel important and comfortable.

Lastly, the empathy of the airline personnel is determined by the educational background of their customers because of their understanding when the personnel is sincere with the services they provide. Zhu (2016) posited that the airline quality service competency is determined by the empathy demonstrated by the employees. This is distinguished and understood by the customers due to higher educational background. At the end, the study concluded that difference was found in the educational background and the empathy level demonstrated by the airline personnel.

The information about the tourist destination can be primarily distinguished by the culture and heritage of such place and the exact tourist attraction to be marketed along with the transport services of both aviation and passenger vessels. The experience in the past is one of the most accurate examples of initial image that the tourist has and the experiences during their stay in a destination. Furthermore, another source of information is through the external sources where the tourist can acquire data and advertisement of services (Yeo, 2013).

**Table 9. Difference of Responses on the Customer Satisfaction when Grouped According to Frequency of Travel**

|  | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Airline Tangible | 2.429 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Terminal Tangibles | 3.607 | 0.002 | Significant |
| Personnel Quality | 4.006 | 0.000 | Highly Significant |
| Empathy | 2.779 | 0.004 | Significant |
| Image | 1.860 | 0.005 | Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

As shown from the table 9, there were significant difference observed on airline tangibles (0.000), personnel quality (0.000) and image (0.005) when grouped frequency and travel. This was observed from those who visit once a month which shows higher level of satisfaction. In addition, there was a significant difference also observed on terminal tangibles (0.002) and empathy (0.004) and was observed from those who visit the place often.

This means that the respondents' frequency of travel depends on their assessment of airline tangible because being a passenger of airline once a year makes them satisfied due to the first impression that the airline provides to them.

Jahmani (2017) found out that there is a significant difference on the number of visits among customers of airlines to their satisfaction of the services. All service quality dimensions have a positive relationship on passengers' satisfaction. The results of this study indicated that service quality is an important factor that affects passengers' satisfaction

There will be also a difference on their satisfaction with personnel quality because the passengers who are travelling only once a year may have many questions and queries on the process of their flights which made them dependable on the flight attendants and other personnel.

Addition to this, they are also satisfied with terminal tangible even they have been there at least once a year because they have insufficient experiences of being in a terminal and experience little services it provides but achieved their satisfaction. Chen (2015) found out that there is a significant difference on the satisfaction of the respondents to the tangibility aspect of the airline's terminal because of the comfortable facilities of the airlines. The customers are also satisfied with the empathy or personnel knowledge about the services they provide since airlines are informed of how service quality is provided to the customers.

Haller (2015) intends to connect the number of experiences of passengers to the services provided by the airlines. The more experience they have, the more satisfaction they gained because they will not return and seek the same services if they are not satisfied. Airline image gains difference on the responses of the respondents based on their frequency of travel because they are satisfied with the experiences they had as it is expected from these low-cost airlines.

The study of Curtis, Rhoades, and Waguespak (2012) were able to prove that the level of satisfaction among airline customers will decrease the more the passenger acquires their services because they start to become accustomed to the common services that airline provides. However, the perceived importance of amenities provided by airlines increased when the passengers acquire their services many times. Further, the airline quality varies depending on the nationalities and socio-economic structure of the passengers. Also, there are differences found in the short or long time of flights and well as the destination which is related to the services they provide. But this is hindered by the culture of airline businesses where fuel and labor cost are far more important than the satisfaction that the passenger may feel.

**Table 10. Difference of Responses on the Customer Satisfaction when Grouped According to Purpose of Travel**

|  | F-value | p-value | Interpretation |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Airline Tangible | 3.249 | 0.007 | Significant |
| Terminal Tangibles | 2.396 | 0.038 | Significant |
| Personnel Quality | 2.063 | 0.070 | Not Significant |
| Empathy | 1.319 | 0.256 | Not Significant |
| Image | 1.971 | 0.083 | Not Significant |

*Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05*

Based from the table 10, there was significant difference observed on airline and terminal tangibles when grouped according to purpose of travel. This was observed since the obtained p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level.

The purpose of travel will differ on their assessment of airline tangibles. This may be because when the passenger travels due to leisure, they wanted all experiences to be satisfactorily including the terminal of airports and the tangible aspect of the aircraft. They do not want to be disappointed because it may affect all of their travel itinerary. When the passengers became disappointed with the services of their transport, their disappointment may affect their overall travel and purpose of having optimum leisure time.

The study of Albonaeimi and Hatami (2015) assess how service quality provided by Zagross Airlines may affect customer satisfaction. It was found out that there is a positive relationship and impact between customer satisfaction and service quality. Further, the respondents who wanted to have leisure time as their purpose to travel may have different assessment of the terminal tangibles because they wanted to have positive travel experiences. Zhu (2016) found out also that the respondent's satisfaction is affected by other variables outside the service quality of airlines. This includes the accessibility of the aircraft and customer relationship of airports.

**Table 11. Proposed Plan of Action to Enhance the Customer Satisfaction toward Low Cost Airlines**

| Key Area Objectives | Activities / Strategies | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| **Airline Tangible.** To enhance the comfort that the customers experience with regards to plane seats | Provide more colorful materials such as pillow and blankets to make the customers comfortable with their seats | The passengers of low-cost airlines are comfortable during their flight by having comfortable plane seats |
| **Terminal Tangibles** To enhance the air-conditioning of the airports | Provide an office or area for the passengers while waiting for their flight where there is enough air-condition facilities including clean toilet | The air-conditioning facilities are enhanced and provided comfortable experiences while waiting for their flight |
| To increase the reliability of security features | The area may have its own security features and facilities for each destination and flights | The security features are enhanced while the passengers are still in terminal |
| **Personnel Quality.** To enhance the knowledge of personnel about the queries of the customers | Customer-Centered Seminar and Trainings | The personnel are competent and have increased knowledge about the queries of their customers |
| **Empathy.** To address the satisfaction of the customers about the number of flights | Encourage the customers to avail suggested time and number of flights by offering discounts and freebies | The passengers of low-cost airlines are satisfied with the frequency of flights that the airline provide |
| **Airline Image** To increase the satisfaction of the customers of the low-cost airlines image | Provide personnel who will ask customers of their feedback on the image of the airline and their satisfaction | The customers are satisfied with the airline images that the low-cost airlines have |

**CONCLUSIONS**

Majority of the respondents are employed, college graduate, travelling once a year due to leisure activities. The respondents are satisfied with the services of low-cost airlines in relevance to personnel quality, airline tangible, airline image, terminal tangible and empathy. There is a difference found in the respondents' satisfaction when grouped to frequency of travel, and educational attainment. While difference was also found in airline tangible and terminal tangible when grouped to purpose of travel and found in personnel quality when grouped according to occupation. The researchers proposed an action plan to developed and enhance the customer satisfaction towards the services of low-cost airlines.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Airline companies will conduct customer satisfaction survey about the quality of the airlines' services to be able to determine on what criteria they excel, and which categories need improvements. The airline companies may provide more flight schedules. The HR may conduct different trainings on customer service for the employee. The researchers proposed a plan of action to be used by the local airlines to enhance the customer satisfaction towards their services. The future researches may be done using other factors and variables affecting the service quality and customer satisfaction towards local airlines.

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