Factors Affecting Customers' Insight On The Services Quality Of Emirates Airline

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Abstract: The goal of this research is to determine the customers' insights of the services offered by the Emirates Airline Company by using the SERVQUAL method. This research shows the effectiveness of the marketing strategies used by Emirates to enhance the customers' perception of the services offered at Emirates Airline. Primary data collection was the used method to achieve the desired objective and the research goal. This primary data was gathered mainly by means of questionnaire surveys distributed to Malaysian International Passengers. The results of data and information analyses show five key independent variables that determine the customers' point of view regarding the services provided at the airlines. These variables are: responsiveness, reliability, tangibility, assurance, and empathy. This study serves as a guideline for customers to provide a positive or negative perception towards the service quality of airlines. Furthermore, companies use the independent variables in order to enhance their service quality standards to attract new customers to the market and also satisfy the existing customers. The outcome of this research may not accurately depict the actual picture of the real-time situation due to the limited sample size used in conducting this analysis. In addition, differences in culture and language also influenced the data collection methods, which impacted the results of this research study. Nevertheless, this research study can be used by companies as a helpful guide for the purpose of constructing improved marketing strategies to fulfil the needs and demands of the target market.

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Emirates Airline, the company under study, is based in Dubai, and it offers air travel services for travels around the world. The airline is a subsidiary of the Emirates Group, formerly owned by Abu Dhabi, and now wholly owned by the United Arab Emirates government. An Emirates Airline operates nearly 3,400 flights each week across 133 cities of 74 countries on six continents. With its

hub located at Dubai International Airport, Emirates Airline has established itself as the leading airline within the Middle East region.

The Emirates Group and the Emirates Sky cargo company are involved in cargo operations. The Emirates Group is a Dubai investment company affiliate, offering domestic, global and more international air transport services. The airline provides facilities for aircraft transportation, catering, cargo and ground handling, IT, as well as travel services. Transportation, hospitality, retail, food and beverage, IT service, technology, tourism and air cargo are hence the company's primary focuses. Other services are also provided by the company. These include training and event management. The company also provides the most extensive range of flight trainings, well trained and customer centric cabin caves and staff, as well as high quality products throughout its Airbus A38 Boeing 777 fleets in all cabin categories. Emirates group owned a fleet of 268 aircraft as of March 2018 serving 155 destinations in 83 countries. It operates services in middle East, Europe, Americas, Africa and Asia pacific to various destinations. The aircraft included 102 A 380-800, 138 B 7773ER, 1 B 777-200LR, five B777-300 and 13 B777-200LRF (freighters).

At present time, the Emirates Group has the most comprehensive inflight entertainment. Its well-trained and large operating fleet strengthens its ability to serve its customers, while also increasing its overall performance. In its 31st annual report, the Emirates Group reported a profit of AED 2.3 billion ($631 million) for the fiscal year end of March 2018-19. This was 44 percent lower the profit reported in the earlier year. The revenue earned by Emirates Group was AED 109.3 billion (USD 29.8 billion) in 2019, demonstrating an increase of 7 percent from the year before. In the same year (2019), the cash balance reported by Emirates Group was AED 22.2 billion (USD 6.0 billion), showing a decrease of 13% year-on-year. Such decrease was mainly factored by large amounts of business investments which involved major acquisitions and the disbursement of the dividend previous year amounting to AED 2 billion (USD 545 million). Collectively, AED 14.4 billion (USD 3.9 billion) was invested in the procurement of new aircraft and machinery, corporate acquisitions, high-tech facilities, cutting-edge infrastructure, and personal initiatives, denoting a significant increase of AED 9.0 billion (USD 2.5 billion) over the previous year's capital expenditures (O'Connell & Buenos, 2018).

Employing a unique workflow, the Emirates Group maintains their diligent and smart efforts, taking the opportunities and challenges, to reap the rewards. The main objective of the group has always been to create a competitive, sustainable and accountable Dubai based business, and it (the objective) becomes the principle adhered by top management in guiding their decisions and investments to ensure Emirates' future success. Markedly, the main problem in aviation industry at this time is the demand of customers for good quality services, and customers are likely to fly an airline that provides better service. This will cause the customers' former airline to lose business and suffer a decline in productivity due to a reduction in the size of customer base.

Emirates Airline has been rated the best airline in the world in terms of quality service. The company is well known for providing clients with a unique service experience. The slogan 'Fly with Emirates' is synonymous with very fun and fulfilling customer experience. Nonetheless, Emirates Airline is obliged to consistently provide its high level of support for customer quality and any drop in service quality could result in a loss of customers. For Emirates, the delivery of high service performance in the aviation industry is underpinned by the notion that the provision of high-quality service is

important for the sustainability and profitability of airlines in current business climate. This is because good service quality will allow the airline in question to build a trustworthy brand image as service provider high quality among the customers. In addition, high service quality in airline industry is critical in attracting a number of customers, which results in the achievement of competitive advantages, consistently stable growth rate, pleased customers and attainment of added values.

Moreover, the value of the quality of service in the aviation industry can demonstrate how the quality of services provided meet the needs of customers. Ticking, checking, boarding and transportation for baggage handling are some examples of airline operations in which reliability is a major concern in creating a positive effect on customers.

What customers think and in what way they respond to airline services is directly related to the impression they have of the value of the services provided to them. There are several factors affecting the impression of customers, for instance, the implementation of new technologies and international quality standards on arrival time, baggage reports, and flight cancelation arrangements – all of these may be useful for an airline to improve the quality of service and customer perception.

In the current business climate, service plays an important role in the airline industry, particularly in gaining the market share. In Malaysian market, Emirates are facing tough competition not only from the middle east airways such Qatar Airways and Oman Airway, but also from Singapore Airline, Malaysia Airline and Thai Airways, which are excellent in terms of service quality. Each of these airlines are well known in Asian aviation market for their good services. In this case, Emirates Airline must provide outstanding facilities such as in-flight entertainment, airport check-in services, and the best cabin crew support. Service quality is particularly important in aviation industry because the provision of services of lower levels to customers could cause dissatisfaction among customers, which may cause them to switch airlines. Switching airline by customer means customer loss, and customer loss will cause profit loss to the airline. In an airline organization, profit is more complicated than it would be to an ordinary organization. In an airline organization, profit involves not only the way in which passengers are served on the aircraft, but also full-service experience of passengers from time they booked a ticket to the time they reached their destination.

Essentially, this research will highlight the importance of providing passengers with good services in terms of generating customer satisfaction. The advantages that travelers would derive from the efficient service offered by Emirates would also be analyzed. There will be an overview of Emirates trend in terms of sales result, to demonstrate how the airline has been doing over the years (O'Connell & Bueno, 2018). This research will also useful in understanding consumer perception of service quality and sensitivity, reliability, consistency, tangibility, and empathy. Specifically, it includes the ability to support clients and provide prompt service in terms of responsiveness, while reliability includes the ability to deliver the planned services in a specific and reliable manner. Assurance requires the competence and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and integrity. In terms of tangibility, it entails the presence of physical building, staff, equipment, and communication materials. Empathy is the next step which includes the care and individual attention that the company gives to the consumer.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The main theme of the dissertation is to understand the impact of service to customer's experiences. Good service quality can play a key role in attracting customers, winning business and attaining competitive advantage in the competitive environment of the industry today. Due to rising fuel costs, the global airline industry is currently facing tough challenges, growing competition and increasing numbers of utilities. Many service providers today have therefore opted to differentiate themselves by applying certain tactics. Meanwhile, in the event that customers are not satisfied with the service given, they (the customers) can easily switch to another organization that can provide better service to them. In the aviation industry, there are many airlines that passengers can choose from. For example, a person who frequently uses Emirates may switch to Cathay Pacific Airliners because they feel they're getting the right service or support. When such situation occurs, the airline providing the wrong service would lose customers. Additionally, bad word-of-mouth communication may arise from those customers which can have a very harmful effect on the competitiveness and growth of the airline. The provision of high quality and reliable service is thus important to ensure that Emirates Airline is providing service quality components that can have a positive impact on consumer experience. Through analyzing the customer's view of the service quality in Emirates Airline, the effect of quality services on customer's mindset can be calculated and understood (Bailey, Holyoak, & Snider, 2019).

This study is aimed at assessing the satisfaction level of passengers of Emirates Airline towards the services provided to them. This is to find out whether the perceived quality of the service provided by Fly Emirates meets customer needs. This study can become a guide to Emirates Airline to increase its quality service relationship by identifying and assessing such relationship. This would help Emirates in establishing more customer-oriented approaches to boost their comparative ranking among major airline carriers.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The main objective of this study is to understand the marketing strategy of Emirates Airline to determine its customer-centric approach and to decide what Emirates needs to do to increase its level of service quality to customers. The main objectives of the study are as follows.

- To identify the relationship between customer perception and Responsiveness.
- To identify the relationship between customer perception and Reliability.
- To identify the relationship between customer perception and Assurance.
- To identify the relationship between customer perception and Tangibility.
- To identify the relationship between customer perception and Empathy.

This assignment addresses these questions below to determine how happy the passengers flying Emirates are towards the services offered by the Emirates Airline:

- Is there a relationship between customer perception and Responsiveness?
- Is there a relationship between customer perception and Reliability?
- Is there a relationship between customer perception and Assurance?
- Is there a relationship between customer perception and Tangibility?
- Is there a relationship between customer perception and Empathy)?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between customer perception and Responsiveness.
- Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between customer perception and Reliability.
- Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between customer perception and Assurance.
- Hypothesis 4: There is no relationship between customer perception and Tangibility.
- Hypothesis 5: There is no relationship between customer perception and Empathy.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical structure concerning this research, is situated below:
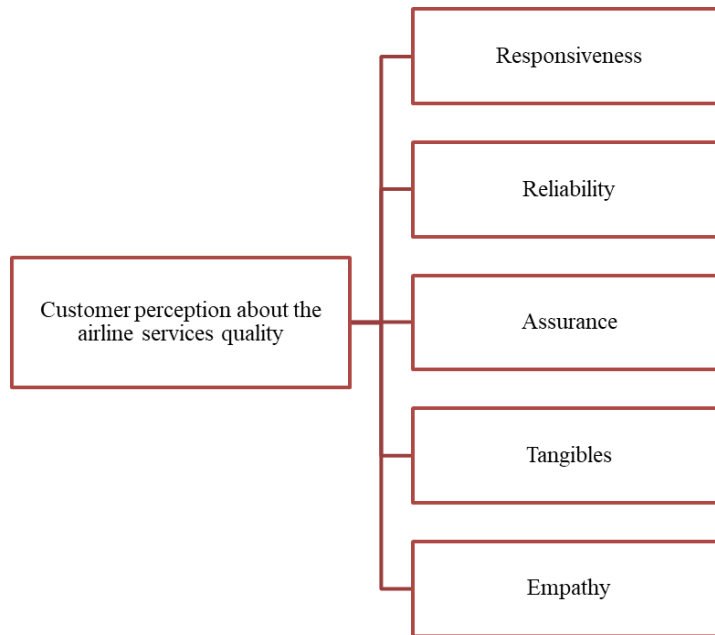
Figure 1: Hypothetical Framework

Figure 1 shows that this research focuses mainly on five independent variables and one dependent variable. These independent variables are: responsiveness, reliability, assurance, tangibles and empathy.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1 Customer Perception on Airline services quality

A number of theories and concepts including SERVQUAL factors, marketing mix and customers retaining policy are highlighted in this research, and they become the research pillars. Based on them, accurate information and data could be obtained, and this would facilitate the accomplishment of the research objectives, and the research questions could be efficiently addressed as well. The details of the principles underpinning the research are as follows:

6.1.1   SERVQUAL model

The SERVQUAL model refers to a measurement scheme used by numerous companies in order to collect and evaluate the quality of customer service on the bases of the customers' perception and experience. The main focuses of this model comprise of three key terms, namely the recognition of

service-related relationships, the key service dimensions, the identification of the issues raised in a service relationship and ways to solve them. When the SERVQUAL model is used on service organizations, measurements are taken from five important aspects namely responsiveness, reliability, tangibility, assurance and empathy. These aspects result in the complete dimensions of the organization related to their respected programs. In conclusion, SERVQUAL acts as measuring tool in service industries, and it allows companies to calculate the service quality between the customers' preferences and perceptions related to their service delivery (Baglieri, Cinici, & Crupi, 2019).

6.1.2   Service Quality

The aim of every service organization is generated satisfaction of their customers. This is achieved through calculating and evaluating the quality of services offered by using two methods, one of which is the user-based approach. In the user-based approach, the main focus is the customers' satisfaction not only towards the organization but also towards the quality of every executed operation. As the saying goes, "customers come first." In an airline company, customer satisfaction is accomplished through monitoring the success rate of the airline company and the performance of each employee in carrying out the services to the customer. For instance, the time taken to serve each customer, the customer's body language after being served, the number of complaints per employee and the effectiveness of the services offered.

6.1.3   Customer Perception

Within the context of service industry, customer perception is about customer beliefs relating to received, experienced or anticipated services. From a marketing perspective, the understanding of the consumer refers to a measure of the company's marketing effectiveness. Positive consumer understanding helps companies assess the success of their marketing activities. Negative consumer perception offers guidance for companies to increase the efficiency of their promotional activities so that the companies could draw more customers. Consumer understanding is key to organization success. Companies seek to gain positive customer perception towards their offered services, and thus, it is important that companies understand the link between customer's expectations and actual delivery of services (Seiler, Müller, & Herzog, 2018).

6.1.4   Crosstabs:

The satisfaction of all the consumers of a particular service provider can be a challenge to be achieved. This is because the insights of the customers differ based on age, gender, income levels and other demographics, and thus, all of these factors need to be taken into account. The difference in demographics produces different outcomes. For example, people with low incomes have lower expectations in comparison to those with high incomes. In addition, students are more concerned with the price and the quality of the service than with the flexibility of the service. It is therefore challenging for service organization to meet the expectations of customers from different demographics, and this also limits their ability to deliver services that boost the company's image and promote competitive advantage. In today's challenging airline industry and fast-paced world, it is important for an airline company to attract new customers and maintain the existing ones through increasing the customer's confidence in using their products and services and through continuously

evolving to meet the customer's needs. By enhancing the service quality, airline companies can improve the customer's perception (Silva, 2018).

6.2 Customer Perception to Responsiveness

The major factor that contributes to the success of a marketing strategy is the creation of appropriate response to meet the needs of the consumer. The response will affect the sensitivity of business towards the preferences of the customers, which in turn will affect their purchase behavior. Notably, companies that are able to design effective advertising campaigns have shown their willingness to help customers while providing immediate solutions to customers' needs - this positively impacts the perception of consumers (Ban & Kim, 2019). In airline companies, timely services and appropriate responses to customers' requirements are vital. However, it is difficult for organizations to provide additional services that will satisfy the consumer's needs while maintaining the same level of product value. This results in an increased charge in the prices of 'special' service, i.e., the timely availability of a product or a service which produces a negative consumer perception. However, customers tend to assume that companies charge an additional price for the provision of these special services and would refuse to take interest in these companies due to the additional budget weight.

A good and well-rounded aircraft crew provides customer with the necessary online booking information, check-in times, departure times, proper handling of baggage and other convenient services in an easy and effective manner. Besides that, they also address the customer's inquiry related to the in-flight entertainment and security issues. An efficient airline information system helps companies to adapt sufficiently and this influences the positive perception of consumers about their goods and services. It is also important for the airline crew to be capable in dealing with emergency situations in order to save passengers' lives. Moreover, they need to ensure that the passengers feel relaxed and disturb-free during their travel. They also need to provide timely services with consideration to customer needs, which will result in an impressive impact to the customers. Meanwhile, unsatisfactory services can have adverse impact to the minds of customers and distract them from the effectiveness of the product. In addition, the rapid response of airline companies makes the customers perceive that they would provide the same response in every area. This increases the customer's expectations for the company's offerings, but it is extremely challenging for businesses to exhibit the same sensitivity over a long period of time in each area (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Papastathopoulos, 2019).

The placement of higher standards on the quality of service can impact negatively on the understanding of consumers, because businesses cannot consistently satisfy them. For example, if the airline provides the necessary information to customers on time; customers are likely to also expect that the company will provide them effective services prior to and following the journey. Such high expectations can negatively affect the perception of customers because companies cannot meet them on a continuous basis. In every segment, however, companies may not be able to achieve well, and this can create negative customer perception of the products and services that the company offers. If an airline performs flights on schedule in compliance with consumers ' needs and preferences, it is able to draw consumer attention to the products and services of the business. Airline companies also need to collect feedback from their customers about their products and services. The obtained feedbacks would allow the companies to address the concerns and problems expressed by the customers at the earliest opportunity.

Emirates Airline as the examined company, has been providing their customers speedy services via its various facilities. These include online booking, seat selection, 24-hours self-check-in, minimum 6 language crew on board, baggage handling, private suite, on board lounge, in-flight Wi-Fi, 1,500 On-Demand inflight entertainment channels, shower spas, and so forth. Also, the comfort and satisfaction of its customers during their journeys have been improved, as expressed in customer feedback about the services offered. Emirates Airline receives feedback from customers through online survey, 24-hour helpline service, social media and feedback, and makes rectification based on feedbacks as soon as possible. Furthermore, the organization organizes training and development programs to improve customer sensitivity. This helps to increase the skills and knowledge of staff, and consequently, customers' expectations could be satisfactorily met. The company also pays great attention towards employees' behavior and attitude towards customers in these training programs so that they can deliver fast, high-quality services. New IT resources that the company utilizes increases the in-house capabilities while accelerating the service delivery to customers (Bailey, Holyoak, & Snider, 2019).

6.3 Customer Perception of Reliability:

Consistency is linked to the company's ability to consistently provide customers with the promised services. Experts claim that the consistency of quality services allows companies to improve consumer expectations in an easy way. Companies can change the consumer's perception of products and performance by means of different marketing campaigns and interaction tools and technologies. Furthermore, researchers have explored various marketing strategies and tools, for example, online marketing campaigns, offline marketing and partnerships, all of which encourage businesses to provide consumers with quality data. With this help, companies can quickly change consumer perception. The services industry is to help in shifting the opinions of consumers from negative to positive. Researchers have observed that reliable service quality offered to customers helps businesses in maintaining efficient customer base and services quality on the market (Pourfakhimi, Duncan, & Coetzee, 2019).

It has been reported in relevant past studies that the service industry uses various types of communication tools and techniques like publicity and promotions to improve the reliability of service quality. These techniques assist businesses in communicating the service information and also in delivering the services to customers. The tools and techniques also help businesses in building an efficient customer relationship by offering new creative technologies and discounts. Most service companies use online marketing strategies to easily supply the information related to the services and quality of services to companies that cover a large geographic area by changing the customer perception of reliability. Through the use of relationship strategies, performance can change consumer views (Belobaba, 2016) and through relational approaches, businesses use product, value and marketing services that support the development of business relationships with customers. These relationship marketing strategies also help retain customers, improve product benefits, establish long-term customer relationship, increase customer engagement, improve customer relations and make effective decisions about customer service and market quality. In the aviation business, most airlines focus on marketing relations to gain a positive customer view of their offering and service quality. In order to change the views of customers and maintain a positive interaction, companies develop effective communication partnerships with existing and new clients and provide them the information.

On the other hand, reliability in the service industry is based on the company's ability to deliver services and timely offers. However, there are certain factors which influence companies to provide services on time, changing the nature of the service and the organization as a whole. Considerations in this respect include the lack of communication, inadequate methods and the lack of efficiency of the delivery system, all of which can influence customer opinion and change their minds regarding the quality of service of the airline (Belobaba, 2016).

The corporate image of Emirates Airline demonstrates trustworthiness in bringing new innovations into the field of cultures and principles. The company offers services in line with its promises to offer creative and high-quality services, and to offer the customers comfort during their journey. The company's participation in ethical and social issues also ensures the reliability of the services of the company through efficient communication instruments, enabling it to develop its services among customers reliably by regularly communicating the information relating to new offers, discount and service to customers.

Today, Emirates Airline is also able to successfully implement online marketing policies in the development of customer relationships in social media and other online communication tools. This aims to provide efficient resources in marketing strategies, and the company tries to implement them for improving the customers' sense of value. Furthermore, the company implements efficient customer relationship management to establish strong long-term customer relations and deliver customer services on an ongoing basis. The company uses both brand creation strategies and relationship management to create positive consumer expectations on its products.

6.4 Customer Perception of Assurance:

Mohy-Ul-Din et al. (2019) found that the success of companies in instilling confidence to their customers in terms of service quality helps the companies in maintaining a good relationship with the customers and encouraging them to purchase the product(s) and/or service(s) of the companies. The authors found that organizational success depends on the level of customer satisfaction in the marketplace. Notably, contact plays a significant role in this through efficient communication, and businesses may improve employee actions and abilities in order to offer benefits and develop consumers' trust in the quality of their services.

Altuntas, Dereli and Kaya (2018) mentioned that service quality plays an important role because customers are encouraged to buy products from the retailer by the retailer increasing the quality of their operation. The efficiency of the company and its staff often plays an important role in influencing the customer's view of its services. Therefore, the quality of operation and customer expectations for company are both distinct. Quality of service is an accomplishment in customer services that allows the enterprise to successfully develop any operation. However, customer perception is the main cause of an organization's market success or failure. The researchers indicated that if the organization's quality of service is effective, consumers' expectations can be positively influenced, but if the enterprise has a poor level of service, the performance of the company and consumer attitudes will change.

In order to attract buyers, different companies provide multiple programs and services on the market. The quality of these programs and services impacts customers' perceptions that can influence organizational performance. The assurance of service quality helps companies in building customer trust. The delivery of efficient and quality services allows firms to change customers' perceptions from negative to positive. The assurance element also provides effective quality service

measurements to assist companies in identifying their customers' perception through the complaints of customers on employees' behavior and attitude.

Employee expertise helps the company build customers' confidence by helping the company in establishing long-term relationships between the management and the customers. In fact, researchers have found that the employees' ability to improve the mechanism for quality-of-service provision at most times benefits the company and it helps the company in building customers' trust in buying the services from the market. Also, the customer's impression is often affected by the service received.

Emirates Airline delivers the services in accordance with customer expectations by assuring that its employees perform their tasks effectively. For instance, in the event of fleet delays, passengers will be promptly informed, and Emirate airline employs knowledgeable and competent staffs, who are capable of promptly providing attention to passengers. This is one of the company's efforts in developing assurance about the services provided by the company. In order to build customer loyalty, customer satisfaction is vital to the company. In order to boost customer satisfaction even more, Emirate airline also offers lucrative deals as skyward miles, bonus miles airport passes, and so forth.

In addition, with the help of the capabilities of the employees, Emirates Airline ensures its service quality for customers. These employees are trained to build customer confidence towards the company. In turn, Emirates Airline frequently funds major events that foster sponsorship and trust. For instance, at the 2006 FIFA world cup, Emirate Airline was one of the sponsors, and this has helped the company in reaching its customers globally.

6.5 Customer Perception of Tangibility

In the SERVQUAL model, tangibility is a newly added construct. This construct measures firm's service quality specifically on the physical evidence and the appearance of the firm's service quality. In an airline organization evaluation, the tangibility factor is regarded as a vital factor as it greatly contributes in the satisfaction of the criteria and standards of the customers. Accordingly, the in-flight environment, the cabin crew's appearance and attitude, the seating facilities offered, the in-flight entertainment facilities, the selection and quality of in-flight meals, and baggage handlings are among the tangible factors which affect customers' perception for the airline industry (Rezaei, Kothadiya, Tavasszy, & Kroesen, 2018).

The factors of tangibility have a significant impact on the loyalty of passengers in the aviation industry because it is one of the most desirable product expletive metrics in its business. In general, travelers expect that an airline company would provide them comfortable flights with great facilities such as excellent staff, food and other physical attributes. Sharing the same belief, consumers often appreciate the quality of services dependent on the clear ties between the client and its facilities. Taking into account this perceived quality of service leads to better customer satisfaction and perception in the service sector. These tangible advantages help service organizations to give their customer greater value by using effective strategies to provide services of high quality. In order to improve their behavior and communication skills, firms regularly organize training for their employees to increase their aptitude in meeting their customers' expectations. For majority of airline companies, their focus is majorly on providing the best seating arrangements and high-quality meals to generate passengers' satisfaction and loyalty of cabin crew. The tangibles allow the airline industry to create a consumer identity by offering high quality pre-flight and in-flight facilities. In

this context, many companies are compelled to improve their physical facilities, air conditioning and aircraft technology to meet their customers' expectations.

Contrariwise, intangibility which is the opposite of tangibility, is more important for measuring service quality in the airlines sector because most physical amenities such as flight entrainment, the actions of staff, employee uniforms and cabin classes can be affected in a positive or negative way by enjoyment with passengers. The airline programs are not measurable, but they play an important role in customer satisfaction. It has been reported that provider of services can create positive perception of customers towards their quality of service through the provision of effective physical equipment and friendly behavior of the employees.

Rashid (2018) found that the tangibility factor has earned consumers with the strongest understanding, but does not play a role in the services industry. For airlines, this tangibility factor forces them to improve the flight ticketing process to offer customers the best facilities, but this would incur higher costs. This dimension pushes airlines to raise their ticket prices as their costs increase so as to provide the best facilities. This could push clients to low-cost airlines with more basic ticketing process. Meanwhile, human structures, staff, form and facilities are classed in the tangibility factor. There are wireless communication and business class stations in Emirates Airline that are useful in managing their various business activities for this class. The organization also has an elaborate ICE network for educating passages on all aspects and delivering the best travel experience. Emirate Airline is indeed a company with an extensive information, connectivity and entertainment. The company also provides customers with its brand image through a wide range of communication tools, such as email, telephone, machine telephone and message service, etc. It also provides exceptional services. This company also has well trained employees who use their expertise to deliver customers quality services.

6.6 Customer Perception of Empathy

Ting (2019) mentioned that an important aspect of the quality of service focuses on the customer courted approach used by an organization to effectively understand its customers' requirements and expectations. It has been noted that consumers perceive the degree of empathy by the degree of personalized services that the company offers them. Notably, the attitude of company towards the consumer significantly impacts consumer happiness, because a consumer generally has the desire to learn whether or not the organization seeks to consider and satisfy their needs.

For organization, focusing on the needs and expectations of customers could facilitate the organization in maximizing the happiness of the consumer. This situation can also raise brand awareness by praising the consumers who can help attract more buyers. Equally, companies that understand the basic needs of customers and provide services in the best interest of the customers are more likely to be successful in creating customer loyalty. In this regard, the sense of empathy assists companies in understanding their customers' needs. According to Ting (2019), the commitment of consumers to the continuous use of corporate operation is not directly affected.

Ting (2019) mentioned that empathy will help bridge the gap between the services understood and the services anticipated. For the airline industry, it is important for an airline to deliver superior service to passengers by understanding the specific needs of their customers. Past studies on service quality have also stated that an air carrier can satisfy the needs of every passenger during flights by safeguarding the best interests of passengers, and this can encourage the passengers to use the services again in future. In the airline industry, the majority of airlines have established customer

experience and connectivity as an assurance of superior service delivery. Past studies have indicated that it helps to develop positive perception among customers concerning the services and quality of the company so that the satisfaction and loyalty of the customers could be increased.

It has been found that the increase in service quality will increase customer loyalty, and this consequently will increase profits. Within today's competitive business climate, individual attention and proximity to customers have little benefits or reach for airlines. It has been clarified that potential airline customer cannot be driven by sympathy because of their limited interest in this field. Positive customer satisfaction and loyalty should thus be established. Effective communication between staff and clients can help to create brand satisfaction. It also helps to offer customers tailored, versatile and scalable options that satisfy their needs and expectations. Positive customer satisfaction and loyalty relationships are important and effective communication among employees and clients may lead to the creation of customer loyalty. Furthermore, it helps to provide customers the services that meet their needs and expectations in a personalized, flexible and adjusted way.

Emirates Airline spends more in taking personal care of passengers. For example, the company operates young flyer programs in which families with children get a priority, and pays attention at each stage of the journey to assure their comfort. For instance, families with children are given priority boarding, a free stroller, changing tables and so on. Basinets are also made available to make the journey easier for babies. Separate check-in facilities for young flyers and staff are made available as well. For skyward and bonus members, Emirates Airline offers additional and custom-made services like pre-assigned seats, visas, special meals, etc. All of these are demonstrating Emirates Airline's concern towards their customers.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Sampling date

Sample size entails the number of people selected for a given survey. In this study, 200 participants were randomly selected. Random selection of sample generally would lead to a sample comprising participants with different backgrounds. This will help researcher in obtaining more generalizable data.

This sample of this study comprises individuals who chose to fly Emirates specifically to Malaysia. Those respondents were sourced from Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The use of random selection method in this study is to provide equal chances to all eligible individuals to participate in the questionnaire survey.

7.2 Primary Methods

To explore the significance of customer perception in terms of service quality, a questionnaire survey has been chosen as a tool for obtaining the data from a large population. A questionnaire survey assists researcher in finding out the viewpoints of customers concerning the effectiveness of customer perception of services for business growth. This type of data gathering instrument is rather cost effective and faster to complete compared to other sources of primary data collection. The questionnaire is a method of data collection that has been used to gather specific information from large populations about what they think and believe. The questionnaire survey was carried out at the airport where passengers chose Emirates Airline to fly in Malaysia. It is helpful to identify the lack of service quality in Malaysian market for Emirates Airline and also the perception of customers of

the services (Ting, 2019).

Passengers who choose to fly with Emirates were selected for the questionnaire survey, regardless of their age, in order to gain important insights in this research. A number of passengers of different nationalities and from the region were selected for the questionnaire survey. A non-random selection method was used to select the samples so that every customer of Emirates Airline had a chance to participate in this study. In this way, the researcher was able to reduce bias and improve the reliability of the analysis. The questionnaire took 15 minutes to be answered and was comprised of questions that were written in an understandable language. The use of jargon and confusing terminologies was avoided. Accordingly, five-point Likert scales were used in drafting the instruments, and this has enabled the researcher to garner robust and comprehensive insights. The five-point scale ranges from 1 to 1 in descending order, with 5 representing the strongest measure and 1 the weakest measure:

Table (1) five-point Likert scales

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7.3 Data Analysis and Presentation

For data analysis, all data are presented in the graphs and tables to improve user understanding of the research. The Social Science Statistical Package (SSPS) program was utilized in this study to display, analyze, and construe the data with emphasis on the statistical estimates as shown in the next section. This method is easier than other methods as the amount of data available could be fit in row form. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study, in order to obtain the best amount of data. Meanwhile, the techniques for descriptive analysis were based on the main facts that are necessary for compilation. The most important part of this approach was the use of all aspects of the research that help to explain all the features of the study. The aspects were also helpful in describing the sample type or steps taken during the study. Certain methods were used to test the data that may or may not be appropriate for the research theory. They were also used to collect the data from structured research. The basics of statistical testing were the following techniques: pilot testing, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis. Since it was obvious that all the data collected were conclusive, the conclusions drawn based on numbers could be used in this case of the study.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

8.1 Respondents' Demographic Information Analysis.

Table (2) Respondents' Demographic Information

	Gender	Age group	Country of origin	Marital status	Purpose of travel	Occupation	income
Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200	200

8.1.1 Gender Analysis

Table (3) Gender Analysis

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	125	62.50	62.50	62.5
	Female	75	37.50	37.50	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

Table (3) shows that male respondents dominated the study at 62.5%, while the remaining were female respondents at 37.5%.

8.1.2 Age Group Analysis

Table (4) Age Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15 to 25	10	5	5	5
	26 to 35	42	21	21	26
	36 to 45	66	33	33	59
	46 to 55	50	25	25	84
	56 and above	32	1	16	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

Table (4) shows that the majority of respondents were in the age group of 36-45 years, while the smallest fraction of respondents fell in the age group of 15-25 years at 5%.

8.1.3 Country of Origin Analysis

Table (5) Country of Origin

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Malaysian	53	26.50	26.50	26.50
	Middle Eastern	70	35	35	61. 50
	African	31	15. 50	15. 50	77
	European	19	9. 50	9. 50	86. 50
	Others	27	13. 50	13. 50	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

The data analysis results show that the majority of respondents were from the Middle East representing 35.0% of the sample, while the smallest fraction of respondents was of European decent (9.5%).

8.1.4 Marital Status Analysis

Table (6) Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	131	65. 50	65. 50	65.50
	Single	69	34. 50	34. 50	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

Table (6) shows that the majority of respondents were married (65.5%) while the remaining were single (34.5%)

8.1.5   Purpose of Travel Analysis

Table (7) Purpose of Travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business	50	25	25	25
	Education	27	13.50	13.50	38.50
	Medical	25	12.50	12.50	51
	Tourism	81	40.50	40.50	91.50
	Others	17	8.50	8.50	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

In terms of travel purpose, Table (7) shows that most respondents were traveling as tourist (40.5%) while the smallest fraction of respondents (8.5%) were travelling for other reasons.

8.1.6   Occupation Analysis

Table (8) Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	21	21	10.50	10.50
	House Wife	28	28	14	24.50
	Businessman	56	56	28	52.50
	Professional	29	29	14.50	67
	Other	66	66	33	100
	Total	200	200	100	---

As can be observed in Table (8), majority of interviewees chose "other" (33.0%) as their occupation, while the smallest percentage of respondents stated that they were housewives (14.0%).

8.1.7   Income Analysis

Table (9) Income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MYR1499 or less	31	15.50	15.50	15.50
	MYR1500-2499	42	21	21	36.50
	MYR2500-4499	64	32	32	68.50
	MYR4500- 6499	27	13.50	13.50	82
	MYR6500 or more	36	18	18	100
	Total	200	100	100	---

In terms of income earned, most respondents (32.0%) were earning between MYR2500 and MYR4499 while the smallest percentage of respondents (13.5%) were earning between MYR4500 and MYR6499.

8.2 Reliability Test

The test of durability is used to make a determination of the overall stability and reliability of the research findings in relation to error. In this regard, the coefficient alpha has been a very common method in consistency and reliability testing. Generally, the variables have to score 0.60 at least, in

the reliability test because scores smaller than 0.60 would mean that the variables have weak association.

Table (10) Reliability Test

Variable	Cornbrash's Alpha	Number of items
Responsiveness	0.753	5
Reliability	0.607	5
Assurance	0.686	5
Tangibility	0.866	7
Empathy	0.728	5
Services quality	0.760	4

From Table 10 above, all constructs scored a value greater than 0.60, denoting a fairly strong association.

8.3 Pearson Correlations Analysis

Correlation is a vital statistical estimate that is commonly applied in researches like the current one. In essence, correlation entails a statistical measurement of relation involving two variables that can lead to a change of one variable to the next. Perhaps, correlation in itself cannot be said to be a causal relationship, rather, it is more of a statistical estimate that is required when it comes to establishing causality among variables.

Table (11) Pearson Correlations

Model	Perception of Services quality of Emirates Airline			
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)	N	Relationship
Responsiveness	.566++	.000	200	Strong
Reliability	.573++	.000	200	Relationship
Assurance	.643++	.000	200	Strong
Tangibility	.593++	.000	200	Relationship
Empathy	.532++	.000	200	Strong

- In Table 11, it is observed that Responsiveness scored 0.566 in correlation value at significance level of 0.000. This demonstrates a positive linkage between Responsiveness and Service Quality at Emirates.

- Table 11 shows that Reliability scored 0.573 in correlation value at a significance level of 0.000. This shows a positive linkage between Reliability and Service quality at Emirates.

- Table 11 shows Assurance scored 0.643 in correlation value at a significance level of 0.000. This means that Assurance and Service quality at Emirates have positive relation.

- Table 11 shows that Tangibility scored 0.593 in correlation value at a significance level of 0.000. This proves a positive linkage between Tangibility and Service Quality at Emirates.

- Table 11 shows that Empathy scored 0.532 in correlation value at a significance level of 0.000, which means that Empathy and Service Quality at Emirates have positive association.

8.4 Multiple Regressions Analysis

Multiple regressions analysis was carried out in this study to analyze the relation between both dependent and independent variables. This analysis made it possible to discover which of the independent variables would affect service quality at Emirates most significantly. Accordingly, Table 4 provides the regression analysis result in summarized form. The R-squared value determines the frequency of association between the five independent variables and the dependent variable. As can be observed in the table, the R-squared regression is 42.2% positive for all five independent variables - this impacts the dependent variable.

Table (12) Multiple Regressions

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
1	.422	.439	42.322	.000***

The above model is important because of the 2 statistical estimates specifically the R-squared and the adjusted R-squared. The difference between the R-squared and the adjusted R-squared is said to be critical when making a statement about multiple variation. Both values show close relation as follows: 0.750 for the R-squared and 0.741 for the adjusted R-squared.

8.5 ANOVA

Table (13) Anova Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12.864	5	2.573	42.322	.000b
Residual	11.378	194	.084		
Total	24.242	199			

a. Dependent Variable: SQ
b. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Responsiveness, Assurance, Reliability, Tangibility

Analysis of variance is very important for estimating multiple regressions. The F-value must be noted here, and if it is positive as shown above, then, the model can be construed to be valid and have high predictive power. From the analysis, it appears that the independent variables are predicted positively by the dependent variable.

8.6 Coefficients of this study

Table (14) Coefficients

Model	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	Beta		
(Constant)		2.239	.017
Responsiveness	.236	4.790	.000**
Reliability	.187	3.434	.000**
Assurance	.218	4.338	.000**
Tangibility	.213	4.735	.000**
Empathy	.225	4.438	.000**

*** 1% Significance level

** 5% Significance level

$O = \alpha + \beta1B + \beta2P + \beta3F + \beta4S$

O= 2.239+ (0.236) Responsiveness + (0.187) Reliability + (0.218) Assurance + (0.213) Tangibility+ (0.225) Empathy

Where:

α = Dependent variable (Service Quality)

$\beta1R$ = Independent variable 1 (Responsiveness)

$\beta2R$ = Independent variable 2 (Reliability)

$\beta3A$= Independent variable 3 (Assurance)

$\beta4T$ = Independent variable 4 (Tangibility)

$\beta5E$ = Independent variable 5 (Empathy)

As displayed in Table 14, for the independent variables, the beta values among the standardized coefficients are positive. In other words, the independent variables are signifying positive coefficients for the dependent variable. The coefficient measures the relationship between the variables. Table 15 is showing that all five independent variables (responsiveness, reliability, safety, understandability and empathy) are linked to the dependent variable (service quality) positively.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

9.1 Result Findings

From the data and information collected, it is known that are several factors affecting the consumer's evaluation of business performance in the market. A positive customer perception can help a given company to determine the success of its services and itself as an organization. On the other hand, the negative perception of consumers gives companies guidance on how it can improve its services and quality in order to attract customers and form a positive marketing image in the mind of customer. In order to build a positive customer perception about the service quality, marketing strategies play an important role. Through supportive marketing strategies, companies are able to identify customers' preferences, needs and wishes. With this help, companies are able to develop programs and services that provide customers with greater satisfaction.

The analysis also found that the five independent variables utilized in this study namely responsiveness, consistency, performance, tangibility and empathy, help service companies to develop positive consumer expectations of service quality and lead companies to attract customers to the markets. These independent variables are also useful for customers to determine the effectiveness of the organization in different departments. Customer perception of responsiveness indicates the willingness of employees to provide the customers with answers to their queries and problems. In this regard, it was found that Emirates Airline provides personal attention, refreshment, and accommodation on delay, and the company is continuously ready to assist the customers. This

helps customers in forming a positive impression of the company.

Alternatively, the customers' perception of the services provided provides a platform for companies to deliver the promised services precisely to customers. In this analysis, Emirates Airline provides safety records and effective services, and maintains an effective relationship with its customers by offering seats according to passenger preferences. Another variable namely assurance refers to airline staff's ability to build customer trust and trust in the quality of service. It helps staff to build a positive customer view of the services. As for the variable of tangibility, the focus of the customers is mainly on the physical facilities and they form perception about the quality of services. In the airline industry, physical facilities include the working conditions of aircraft, in-flight entertainment services, ground services and the accuracy of booking and ticketing facilities, etc. Improved facilities give customers a positive perception of the quality of service.

It can also be concluded that the independent variable empathy improves the level of customer satisfaction by the customers' receipt of personal attention during the consumption of services. Empathy is a crucial factor that influences consumer experience. This is because customers determine the effectiveness of the offers and programs provided by the company through this factor. It also provides detailed understanding to the customers about future performance of the company, and this plays a significant role in increasing the market image and customer base of the firm.

9.2 Recommendations

9.2.1 Responsiveness

Management is recommended to provide the company with a more focused approach to customer problems and issues. Having said that, management should employ highly qualified personnel and experts who are able to solve customer issues and provide them with successful assistance at the airport and during flights. In addition, management should also motivate employees by conducting training sessions. In these training sessions, management can develop the understanding of employees about the strategies to effectively connect with the customers and provide solutions to their complaints efficiently. Emirates Airline is highly recommended to reduce the fee amount charged on overweight baggage to improve the consumers' positive view of the quality in the company. In order to improve the customer's perception of reliability, it is suggested that the company performs its tasks and works on schedule. This can help attract customers to the services and change their perception in a positive way. Airline management should also broaden the facilities in order to provide more customer support. In this sense, management should enhance its transportation facilities along with hiring very highly qualified and experienced staff to ensure a positive successful communication with loyal customers. In this manner, the company could change the view of consumers and can encourage them to use its business products again.

9.2.2 Reliability

In order to improve the customers' perception of reliability, it is suggested that Emirates Airline accomplishes its tasks and works according to the schedule. This can increase the attraction of

customers towards the services and change their perception in a positive way. Also, the airline management should expand its facilities to provide more support to the customers. For instance, management can improve its transportation facilities as well as appoint highly skilled and experienced employees to maintain the effective co-ordination with loyal customers. Through this, the company may influence customer perception and motivate them to reuse the services of the company.

9.2.3   Assurance

Emirates Airline should implement some new and innovative safety and security tools and techniques at the airport and on flights in order to assure passenger safety and hygiene. Also, management of the company should strengthen its partnership strategy with customers. Through the implementation of a partnership plan, the company can provide data on deals and promotions in a more comprehensive and effective manner. That can assist Emirates Airline in achieving a substantial customer attraction.

9.2.4   Tangibility

In order to improve the customers' perception of tangibility, it is recommended that management focuses on the in-ground facilities such as providing more efficient ticket counters, check-in facilities, global lounge services and award-winning in-flight entertainment services. The development of these facilities and services can provide positive reorganization by the customers. Physical expansion of properties can also be important in changing the customers' perception of service quality.

9.2.5   Empathy

It is highly advisable for the management of Emirates Airline to actively look into providing individual assistance to the customers and develop different offers and discounts in accordance with consumers' needs and preferences. This can be achieved by developing supportive programs that attract customers towards the services. In today's competitive environment, the company can also maintain a customer supportive service center to provide customers with effective support. Through Research and Developments (R&D) activities, Emirates Airline can increase its understanding of the customers' preferences while also developing the marketing strategies that can create positive Customer perceptions about the services offered by Emirates Airline. Among the disadvantages of the present study was the language barrier, and it has in fact impacted the effective response of the study respondents to the questionnaire of this study. As the questionnaire survey was in English language only, the participants were required answer it in just English language. On the other hand, the use of questionnaires in local languages in Malaysia (e.g., Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Tamil) could generate more effective and accurate responses to the questions. Also, the study was limited by its sample size that the researcher was not able gather a wide-ranging of responses. The researcher has collected about 200 samples, which affected the responses' validation and reliability of the results.

9.3 Research Limitations

In order to conduct this research, the researcher faced several problems that limited the effectiveness of this research study. First and foremost, cultural differences created problems for the researcher in

accomplishing the research study effectively. Cultural differences of participants also impacted the responses of questionnaire. This consequently influenced the outcomes of the research study. Additionally, language barrier was another limitation of this research as it impacted the effective response of the study questionnaire. The reason is that the questionnaire survey was only available in English and participants had to answer the questionnaire only in English. On the other hand, questionnaires in local languages such as Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, and Tamil may increase the accurateness and effectiveness of the responses. The sample size was also a limitation for the researcher to collect a wide range of responses for the study. In the study, the researcher collected 200 samples that affected the responses with respect to validation and reliability of the results.

9.4 Practical Implication

The practical implications of this research are many, which provide benefits to the businesses in developing their understanding about customer perceptions and the quality of services. This research study will be helpful for the firms in aviation industry to effectively analyze the trends and preferences of customers through the use of the SERVQUAL method. The analysis of this method will encourage airline companies to identify the five independent variables namely tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy, all of which are essential to the development of customer loyalty. This research study will also benefit businesses through the identification of customer perception of the products and services offered by the organizations. The results of this research will enable the airline companies to develop an understanding of the quality of service required to attract customers and influence their perceptions in the market.

This research will also support other service companies or sectors such as hospitals, hotels and food industries in analyzing customer perception of individual service quality. Adequate data and customer knowledge may be developed with this research study to improve the quality of service, leading to the expansion of customer base and market share. This research study will help define the difference between customer expectations and the service offered by organizations in practice. This will help companies to dramatically improve their quality of operation.

9.5 Directions for Future Research

There are many opportunities for future researchers to further develop the content of the study and create an effective research study on customer perceptions of service quality. In doing so, future researches will use different organizations and apply the SERVQUAL method in them. Using this method, researchers will identify the most appropriate aspects to positively change customer perceptions. To improve the efficiency of the study, potential researches will use quantitative research for interviews. This will help the analysis of the data and information in a statistical manner and more accurate results on the topic could be attained. To obtain more reliable results, future researchers will also consider a large sample and send questionnaires to more participants to obtain more valid and reliable responses from them. In future studies, in addition to the independent factors, researchers will analyze other factors such as social attributes, choice attributes, and strategy attributes. This will help increase the credibility and reliability of the study by providing more effective and accurate results

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