A Research on Measuring the Quality Perception of Inflight Services in a Low Cost Airline

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Extensive Summary

1. Introduction

With the increasing importance of service enterprises and growing share in the economy, quality service provision has become important in terms of businesses and there have been many studies in the literature aimed at increasing, improving and measuring service quality.

Tourism has a labor-intensive structure and is at the forefront of the products it offers. High service quality; is very important for the tourism industry and its sub-sectors in terms of ensuring competitiveness and sustainability.

Accessibility is one of the most important features for a place to become a tourism destination. Air transport is the type of travel that contributes most to the development of tourism among the transportation types. As the speed, technology, comfort, and costs associated with this type of travel increased, both demand for air transport increased and there was a significant increase in the number of passengers traveling worldwide (Worlbank, 2017).

In-flight services are one of the most basic marketing elements of airline operators, making travel a pleasure. Many factors, including food and beverages on board, TV and video display, internet access, entertainment systems, the width of the seats and the distance between the knees, the cleanliness of the planes, the attitude and behavior of the cabin crew, and the materials placed on the toilet are among the topics of inflight services.

Low cost airline operators have competitive advantages in many countries due to low tarifs and similar service quality compared to traditional airline operators. The needs of all customers are not the same (Kim and Lee, 2011).

Low-cost airlines can't cut down on safety-related issues if they interrupt service costs. Safety is a top priority for all conventional or low-cost airlines, even if service quality is an important issue for airlines (Rhoden, Ralston, and Ineson, 2008).

2. Method

The survey was conducted using X Airlines, which uses Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport as its main base, and the survey method with passengers who have experienced flight experience. Companies operating in Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen Airport have been researched and it has been revealed that there are three different low cost airlines operating in this square. Taking cost-time factors into account, it was found appropriate to work with the passengers of Turkey's largest (number of airplanes, number of seats and passengers) low-cost airline operator.

The universe of the research is composed of people who traveled with X Airlines operating in Sabiha Gökçen Airport in Istanbul. Sampling was chosen by non-random sampling methods. The universe of the research is the passengers of Turkish Republic citizens. The number of samples required at 5% certainty level was found to be 384 (Coşkun et al., 2015, p. 137). The number of samples used in the study is 465.

In the study, sampling method was used easily from non-random sampling methods. The data obtained from the survey were analyzed using SPSS statistical package program. Frequency analysis, factor analysis, independent bivariate t-test, one-way ANOVA and correlation test results were interpreted by tabulation.

3. Findings

It is possible to say that there is a highly positive correlation between the levels of significance of 0.01 among all components of service quality. The lowest correlation between the factors is between 0.488 and the physical property factor and reliability. The highest correlation is between 0.794 and responsiveness and reliability. Accordingly, it can be said that there is a moderate correlation between the two lowest correlated factors of service quality components. This shows that there is a high correlation between the factors, and explains why some of the factors in different factors cause loads in other factors. As a result of the analysis, any increase in the quality of service components will affect other components and increase overall satisfaction.

One way analysis of variance was conducted to determine the relationship between participants' income level and quality component perception. According to the analysis results, there is a significant difference between the income levels of the participants and the perceptions of trust and reliability and it can be said that there is no significant difference between the level of income of the participants and the physical features, responsiveness and empathy perceptions.

A Games-Howell analysis was conducted to understand which subgroups the significant differences are made from. There is a meaningful difference between the participants with income level between 0- 1500 TL and the income level between 1501-2500 TL with respect to the confidence sense. It can be said that the participants with a level of income between 0-1500 TL had a higher level of confidence perceptions than those between 1501-2500 TL. There was no significant difference between the income levels of the other income groups and the participants.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

As mentioned in many studies in the literature, it is not possible to try to compete only with price in terms of sustainability. For this reason, airline operators have to pay attention to quality studies. The quality of in-flight services is important in terms of preference in traditional airline companies.

When the findings obtained from the research are evaluated, it can be seen that in the analysis of the correlation between the components, the five components have a positive correlation with each other at a moderate and high level, and the development that the operator shows in any of these components may lead to an increase in the perception of other quality components and an increase in overall satisfaction

A significant difference was found between the income levels and the quality components perception between the ones between TL 0-1.500 and TL 1.500-2.500 only in the trust dimension and this difference did not occur in other income groups. Considering that the test is a nonparametric test, which is considered to be less reliable, it can be said that the level of income in general does not change the perception of service quality. Given the fact that income is an important variable, the possibility of personalizing the services offered by the company may be the result of this.

Low-cost airline operators are able to personalize their services in order to be able to stay on the market, so they can meet different preferences and improve perceptions of service quality by satisfying people in different education, income and age groups. The price adjustment to be made to the products sold on the other side or the changes in the menu may provide the catering quality sense. Considering the correlation between the components of the service quality, it can be said that the general quality perception will increase because it is thought that the increase in satisfaction in refreshment may cause a rise in the perception of other quality components. Since the scale used is a general quality of service scale, changes have been made to inflight services. But a scale to be developed for inflight services due to its own structure of airline operators can help to achieve more meaningful results.