

Examining The Relationship Between Services Reliability And Customer Satisfaction In The Aviation Sector At Entebbe Airport In Uganda.

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Abstract : This study examined the relationship between services reliability and customer satisfaction in the aviation sector at Entebbe Airport in Uganda. Using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study adopted the cross-sectional and correlational research designs on a sample of 300 participants. Data were collected using a questionnaire survey and an interview guide. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive analysis involved frequencies, percentages and means. Inferential analysis involved correlation and regression analyses. Descriptive results revealed that, services reliability was fair. Inferential analyses revealed that services reliability had a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction. It was concluded that services reliability is imperative for customer satisfaction for customer satisfaction. Therefore, it was recommended that managers and staff of airports should ensure that services for travellers are reliable.

Key words: services reliability, customer satisfaction and aviation.

1 Introduction

Customer satisfaction is a prime determinant of the performance of a business entity participating in the airline industry (Archana & Subha, 2012). Efforts must be taken to ensure the customer is always satisfied with the service package rendered because airline business operated in a very competitive environment (Archana & Subha, 2012). Customer experience with the services rendered on board experience has supersede what a customer anticipated before choosing to identify with an airline service provider lest they would not buy again and switch to competitors in the event of a successive flight (Namukasa, 2013). This study investigated services reliability at Entebbe Airport and how it related to customer satisfaction.

2 Theoretical Review

The study used the Affect Social Exchange Theory postulated by Lawler (2001). The Affect Social Exchange theory developed from Homans' (1958) and Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory (SET). The core issue espoused by SET is social behaviour that arises out the social exchanges emerging from relationships. According to SET, social exchanges involve costs and benefits. A rational individual will always vie to maximize the benefits while minimizing the associated costs. The affect Theory of Social Exchange borrowing from the tenets of SET posits that social relationships are a source of emotions. It further states that, the basis of this relationship should guide the characterization of the distinct emotional effects that arise out of the social exchange.

3 Review of Related Literature

Services reliability and customer satisfaction

Different scholars had related customer satisfaction to services reliability. For example, Naik et al. (2010) investigated the dimensions of service quality that were dominant in influencing customer satisfaction and established a positive significant relationship between services reliability and customer satisfaction. Gambo

(2016) examined the effect of airlines service quality on the levels of customer satisfaction in Nigeria using the domestic air passengers as a unit of analysis. analysis indicated that services, reliability had a positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Ruhayat et al. (2017) investigated passengers' perceptions of satisfaction at Halim Perdanakusuma International Airport, Jakarta, Indonesia. Regression findings showed that service quality including reliability positively influenced on customer satisfaction. While examining the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty among customers of Piraeus bank in Greece Kampakaki and Papathanasiou (2016) established that services reliability affected customer satisfaction. Kim (2013) assessed service quality in the airline industry. His focus was on passengers in the Asian region who had travelled with the international airline during a 12-month period. The results of the study established a significant positive relationship between services reliability and customer satisfaction. Raza et al. (2015) studied the effects of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction of customers of banks located in Karachi city, Pakistan using SERVQUAL model. The findings revealed a positive relationship between services reliability and customer satisfaction. Tharanikaran, Sriharan and Thusyanthy (2017) assessed relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in banks Batticaloa District in Sri Lanka. They established that reliability of services had a positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction. In sum, the studies reviewed above have indicated that customer satisfaction is greatly affected by services reliability. However, the contexts of all the studied were outside Uganda hence contextual gaps. In addition, other studies such as Kampakaki and Papathanasiou (2016) and Tharanikaran et al. (2017) were carried outside the aviation sector hence leaving subject gaps. These contextual and subject gaps made it imperative for this study to be carried out to fill the void in the realm of Uganda's aviation sector.

4 Methodology

This study adopted cross-sectional research survey design using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The cross-sectional research design is a research by which

the whole population or its subset is studied by seeking information about a study problem on what is going on at only one point in time. The cross sectional design is used because cross sectional studies are generally quick, easy, and cheap to perform because limited time is spent in the field. With the cross-sectional design, the researcher will collect appropriate data quickly and cheaply (Moule & Goodman, 2009). Besides, the cross-sectional research design allows collection of data using multiple tools such as the questionnaire and interviewee guide. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The quantitative approach enabled the testing of the hypotheses for purposes of drawing statistical inferences while the qualitative approach supplemented the quantitative one by providing detailed information. Therefore, the researcher was able to draw statistical inferences and carry out a detailed analysis. The qualitative component was included in order to provide a holistic overview of the nature and magnitude of the relationship between service reliability and customer satisfaction.

Sample size determination and sampling method.

Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table of Sample size determination the sample size for this study was 399 respondents. Of this number, 375 were passengers for the questionnaire survey while 19 were staff of CAA selected purposively for interviews. The sample was as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of respondents by department

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling techniques
Passengers	37,741	375	Convenience
Aviation Security	5	5	Purposive
Immigration Department	8	8	Purposive
Handlers	6	6	Purposive
Total	37,779	399	

Data Analysis.

Quantitative data analysis involved univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses. Univariate analysis involved the use of frequency-percentage tables for response rate and background characteristics of the respondents. It also involved use of mean and standard deviation for the statements measuring service reliability and customer satisfaction. At bivariate level of analysis, correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between the dimensions of service reliability and customer satisfaction. At the multivariate level of analysis, regression analysis done and this helped to establish how the independent variables predicted the dependent variable.

Qualitative data analysis

Processing of qualitative data involves coding and grouping following the study objectives and emerging themes (Blair, 2015). Therefore, data were coded and grouped according to emerging themes. Content analysis was used to come up with a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Narrative text and verbatim quotations were used in presenting the findings. The qualitative findings supplemented quantitative findings providing a holistic overview of service reliability and customer satisfaction.

5 Results and discussion

To establish whether services reliability had a relationship with customer satisfaction, a correlation analysis was carried out. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation of Services Reliability and Customer Satisfaction

	Customer Satisfaction	Services Reliability
Customer Satisfaction	1	0.760** 0.000
Services Reliability	0.760** 0.000	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The study findings in Table 2 suggest that there is a positive significant relationship between services reliability and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.760$, $p < 0.000$). The critical value was significant at below 0.05 implying the acceptance of the research hypothesis stating that services quality has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction is accepted.

Linear Regression Model for Prediction of Customer Satisfaction using Services Reliability

At the confirmatory level, to ascertain whether services reliability has a significant influence on customer satisfaction, the dependent variable namely, customer satisfaction was regressed on services reliability the independent variable. The results are represented Table 3

Table 3 Regression of Customer Satisfaction on Services Reliability

Model	Standardised (β)	Significance (p)
Services Reliability	0.760	0.000

Adjusted R² = 0.577
F = 393.389, p = 0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The study findings in Table 3 show that, services reliability explained 76.0% of the variation in customer satisfaction (adjusted R² = 0.760). This means that 24.0% was accounted for by other factors not considered in this model. The regression model was significant (F = 393.389, p = 0.000 < 0.05). These results showed that services reliability ($\beta = 0.760$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) significantly predicted customer satisfaction. Therefore

the hypothesis that services reliability has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction was accepted.

6 Conclusion

Services reliability is imperative for customer satisfaction. This is especially so when there is staff fulfil the promises they make in time, the services offered provide customers value, services are problems free, staff meet deadlines, services are always functioning, whenever problems crop up in the provision of services are quickly handled and services offered are satisfying to customers.

Recommendations

Managers and staff of airports should ensure that services for travellers are reliable. This should involve staff fulfilling the promises they make in time, ensuring that the services offered provide customers value, services are problems free, staff meet deadlines, services are always functioning, whenever problems crop up in the provision of services are quickly handled and services offered are satisfying to customers.

7 References

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