

## A STUDY IN TURKEY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS AT THE AIRWAY TRANSPORT

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### ABSTRACT

**M**anagement means the whole process of organizing the employees with the aim of achieving the enterprise's targets and the actions in line with the targets. Recently, the enterprises have certain needs such as right planning and management in order to keep high their market share and be more active in the market. At this point, one of the most important processes has turned out to be feedback. The enterprises could differentiate from their rivals with feedbacks of their target customers and right planning by use of these feedbacks. Currently, the whole of these concepts are called as customer satisfaction.

In this study, a research has been carried out on some concepts of aviation sector such as internal customers, external customers and customer satisfaction. It has been aimed to research the reasons for recently rising demand for aviation airway transport and evaluating the expectations and satisfaction of the customers. The data acquired from the results of the applied questionnaire have been examined by use of the analysis methods in the program "SPSS Statics". As a result of the research, it has been determined that the airway transport is preferred today more than the past and these preferences differentiate according to age, education, gender and marital status.

**Key Words:** Airway Transport, Business Management, Business Environment, Customer Satisfaction

## Introduction

Since the early ages of mankind, there has been always the wish for change of location or moving from one place to another. In consequence of the developing world and constant wish and expectation of humans, the transportation has always been a sector dynamic and open to improvement. In order to meet this demand of people, related enterprises have been founded and rival enterprises have needed management planning.

The investments costs on the rapidly growing business life, developing technology and to meet demands of people to catch up with this fast life have gradually increased. Maybe in the past as there were so few enterprises in the field of transportation especially aviation, the expectations of the customers did not have much importance. However, nowadays it is necessary for the enterprises to undertake various operations and to start taking actions inside and outside of the enterprises in order to enlarge their market share. Especially at this point, the enterprises realized that they depend first on the organizational structure and then on the customers who have the main support for the durability of the enterprises in this hard competition. The most important value in this globalizing world is the customer satisfaction. The value of employee satisfaction has gained more importance as it is inner customer of the airway transport. For the purpose of finding out the airway transport enterprises and the expectations of the external customers, some researches and analyses are carried out frequently. In our country, the airway transport has made a great progress over the last two decades. The domestic customer, who did not have many choices, has made clear their expectations in the sector during the following years, and thus they have created a demand in the market. The first airline of Turkey is the General Directorate of State Airlines Authority which was founded in 1933 and currently names as Turkish Airlines. In the 1990s, the customer expectations and increasing demands resulted in foundation of new private companies. With the foundation of Pegasus, diversity in services has created a rivalry in the market. Afterwards some other private companies have been founded such as Onur Air, Anadolu Jet, Borajet, MNG Airlines and Sun Express. The presence of different companies in this sector has enhanced the rivalry. At this point, the airlines started to pay more importance to customer satisfaction for the sake of their sustainability and market share. A number of various researched have been carried out with the aim of determining the factors affecting the preference reasons of customers and their satisfaction for the supplied service in airway transport. The airlines have developed especially some special programs for their special customers in order to provide their preferences during their frequent flights. These efforts considerably shape the decisions of the customers. As it is at many firms in the service sector, the most accurate method to determine the factors affecting the satisfaction of the target customer group in the airway transport is questionnaire. To evaluate the service quality of airlines is not easy because of some sectoral factors.

In this study, a questionnaire study has been executed and analyzed as it is the most appropriate method for evaluating customer satisfaction. Due to the importance of the questionnaire, the questions were searched from various sources and divided into two parts. The first phrase is about determination of the demographic features and their way of using the airway transport. The second phrase is composed of evaluating the expectation of the customers and the service quality provided by the airlines.

## Literature

### Management Concept

Regarding the definition of management, there are several definitions in various sources. These definitions vary according to the different science fields. Some of these definitions which vary according to various science fields are as below:

Management is the process of organizing the methods to achieve the goals and orienting towards a common aim in an enterprise (Elif 1999). It is science and art of using all the available resources and possibilities in the best way possible for the aim of achieving the goals of a firm (Erdoğan 2004). In addition, management is the activity of conducting the operations of planning, organization, staffing, orienting and supervision which are the management functions (Genç 2007).

Although the definition of management varies according to science fields and goals of the organization, it becomes identical at some points. These points are as below:

- Management is the sequence of actions which will realize the determined goal or goals.
- These actions are conducted by the people who undertake the goal or goals.
- People who share the responsibilities in order to realize the goals should collaborate and cooperate.

Management is a process composed of phenomena directing towards goals.

Administratorship is about obtaining results by making the employees execute the works in a framework limited by regulations, rules and authority regulations. In summary, administratorship is related to “ability to cope with complexity” (Kotter, 1999).

Management has a crucial importance for the organizations. It is possible to state that there is linear relationship between management understanding and practices at the organizations of a society and the development level of that society. For that reason, the management quality affects the whole society (Güçlü, 2003). The quality of the management is defined by the employees and managers altogether. The obtained process and results are shared with markets, institutions and foundations. In this way, this method serves to the target groups as well. Another focus point of management science is to take various decisions and to be able to practice these decisions without ne doubt in an ambiguous environment and vague conditions (Ghoshal and the others, 1999). At this stage, it will be beneficial to explain this concept with more details for enterprises and profit-oriented organizations. The enterprise managements have strict rules but they can show an alteration in this flexible market conditions. Ambiguity at the targets and projections undertaken by the managers and employees of enterprises is always misleading about the targets.

### Management for Enterprises

In Turkish, the word enterprise (işletme) is derived from the word work (iş). Work is the activities done for the aim of obtaining a result. Enterprise is a place where economic activities are conducted. In other words, enterprises are the organizations which produce economic products or service and/or commercialize them and aim to make financial or moral profits by uniting the production factors in order to meet the needs of individuals or institutions (Özveren 1988). Management is multidimensional concept. While some people define the management as “art of having the works done by employees” (Lewis vd. 1994:5), others define it as “ uniting and coordinating the resources (manpower, money, time, equipment and localization elements) in a effective and adequate manner in order to achieve the desired targets” (Hitt vd. 1989:15).

Management is a function necessary at all the organizations from the smallest ones (such as families and enterprises) to the biggest (such as state and international communities). Management is an obligatory function for the organizations to reach to their targets in an effective and efficient way (Tortop and other,

1993:20). Business management is a process enabling the planning, organizing, managing, coordinating and controlling the resources of enterprises in an effective and efficient way to realize the targets of the enterprise (Saruhan and Yıldız 2009). We can divide the business management functions into two groups as static and dynamic functions. The functions which are static during the foundation of the enterprise (planning, organizing) become dynamic by gaining sustainable characteristics after the launching of the enterprise. Planning and organizing are static functions as they require mostly mental activities. Dynamic functions have sustainability. In management, managing, coordination and control are dynamic functions.

### **Customer and Customer Satisfaction**

Customer is the institution; person or people who buy (accept) a product or service. Customers are the most valuable assets that an enterprise has even if it is not shown in the asset and equities. Customers can be classified in two classes in terms of the differentiation at those purchasing behaviors. Consumer customers are the ones who buy products and service to meet their own or their families' needs. This kind of customers consumes the products and service that they buy immediately or in a certain period of time. Commercial customers are the ones who buy products and service for consumption, investment, production and commercial aims in their own enterprises. Decisions and behavior manners of those two groups while buying product and service are different. The customer concept covers not only the product buyers but also the ones affected by the products and service produced by the enterprise. Therefore people, organizations, systems or processes who use some outputs of the enterprise or affected by those outputs are also customers (Eroğlu 2005). Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction was determined by examining the difference between the expectations of the customers and the real result obtained after consumption or usage. Comparing their own expectations and the obtained result in their mental process, customers evaluate the effects of the presented product or service on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In this study, beyond the subject about operation method of customer satisfaction, it is handled the sub-dimensions of customer satisfaction and the relation degrees of these dimensions with customer satisfaction. In this context, Naumann's (Naumann, 1995) customer satisfaction model in which exist some factors determining the customer satisfaction and calculation of customer satisfaction for the industrial customer (INDSAT) (Homburg and Rudolph, 2001; p:15-33). To create model about customer satisfaction is always right, but not enough. The market and financial visibility of enterprises in sector can support the established model at the processes, which will decrease the risk. Internal customers are the employees of the organization.

Internal customer concept has a significant part from the point of improving the production and service process of an organization. Every unit in an organization is a customer of the previous degree (Demirel ve Yavuz 2006). Internal employees are the ones working in the enterprises and institutions. Satisfaction of a flexible customer creates multiplier effect to the external customer and as two customer factors works on the same time together, it will be more beneficiary to the enterprise. Customers defined as external customers are the individuals who want to take the maximum profit and equipped with purchasing power on the condition of having quality at the purchased product or service. On other words, they are the customers consuming what is produced by internal customers. Speak the same language, to be listener and compromise, it is necessary to have the required flexibility to, to calculate the obtained results, to do the required regulation and have zero error level (Demirel ve Yavuz 2006). According to the studies, it is four or five times more costly to gain a new customer than keeping an already gained customer (Berry, 1991; s:9). To measure the customer satisfaction, it is important to know who customer is and what satisfaction means. We need to state that there are some customers who have a different perspective about quality, so dissatisfaction of a customer does not mean that every other customer will be satisfied (Yoshio, 2001; s.871). Generally, customer satisfaction can be calculated theoretically. Customer satisfaction is measured

by means of questionnaires prepared according to the market, sector and target groups and by means of assessment of the results after being examined through the statistic programs. Customer satisfaction concept is not a single-variable concept. There are lots of factors affecting the customer satisfaction. It is possible to pattern some of these quite clearly. Additionally, to measure the customer satisfaction, it is not enough to measure the previous satisfaction and experiences of a customer. It is also essential to examine the outcomes of satisfaction. The NCSI does not only evaluate the contentment of customers for a product but also evaluate the situation formed or supposed to be formed with this contentment, which means that the model does not only proceed from the reasons to results, but also assess the effects of the result on the general situation as a bidirectional (back forwards) system. In this way, the model functions on a cause and effect system. This poly- cause and effect system enables that the model is directly connected to its all elements as a whole. In this regard, the first systematic national customer satisfaction model has been formed in Sweden and practiced. (SCSB, Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer) (Fornell 1992). A questionnaire study is generally applied for the evaluation of customer satisfaction. Customers are questioned about their expectations about the product and service, the result they received in return to the value they give, their complaints, aspects which are open to improvement. Customers are requested to respond to these questions using a certain scale (Jaccard and Wan, 1996). Customers are a complement of values. Evaluating and assessing customers are important to prevent complaints. For a harmonious work between the inner customers and external customers of an enterprise and increasing the performance of this enterprise, it is quite significant for profitability to form and apply models for evaluation of the complaints.

### **Customer Relations Management**

Customer relationship management is a concept composed of activities of an enterprises for the aim of progressively having more loyal and profitable customers, qualifying, gaining, developing and keeping them by supplying the right product or service to the right customer at the right time through the right channel at the right price. Customer relationship management, shortly named as CRM in English, is called shortly "MİY" in Turkish (Müşteri İlişkileri Yönetimi). For the aim of raising each customer relationship to the highest level, CRM unites the functions of sales, marketing, service, initiative, resource planning and supply chain management through automatisations of the business processes, technologic solutions and information sources. CRM regulates the relationship between entrepreneurs, customers, business partners, salesmen and employers (Gökşen ve Kılıç 2011). CRM is seen as one-to-one, relational marketing application which bases on the remarks on customers and knowledge of enterprise about customers and who responds to customer individually. At the applications of marketing strategies, CRM requires the usage of the current information technology in accordance with the targets (Ergunda 2002). In the past, the customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction were determined through the analysis of difference between expectations of customers and the real result following the consumption. Customers were evaluating their satisfaction or dissatisfaction about the presented product or service by means of comparing their expectations and the presented or obtained results through their ideal process. In this study, beyond the process of customer satisfaction, the sub-dimensions of customer satisfaction and the relation degrees of these dimensions with customer satisfaction are studied. In this framework, it has been tested the convenience of the model shaped with the use of the customer satisfaction model of Naumann (Naumann 2001, s.37-46) explaining the factors determining customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction measure model for industrial customers (INDSAT) (HomburgandRudolph, 2001). A customer buying a product has some expectations about this product. On condition that the product provides the expected results and the customer is satisfied, the customer is supposed to do the next purchase at the same firm (brand). Public relations used for marketing aims at ensuring the satisfaction after the purchase process (especially emotionally). At the high rivalry and

dynamic market, customer satisfaction is accepted as the most important part of contemporary marketing concept, not the traditional marketing. Decisions are made in the light of determined satisfaction parameters of customers. Taking these decisions is only possible through having knowledge about the customer behaviors. Price is an important issue at customer behaviors in the sense of both perceiving the marketing activities and enabling the customer has the highest benefit from his limited budget.

The value of a customer in lifecycle defines the life concept of the customer. In an undefined lifecycle, the life value of the customer can be measured. Customer's lifelong value of each customer is measured by calculating keeping cost of a customer, orders given along a year, total income, direct costs, customer gaining costs, discount rates and many other criteria. Obtained profit from a customer, profit to be obtained in the future from this customer with its current value and the potential provided to the enterprise from the same customer are the extra values for the enterprise (Infomag, 2002:65-69). Finding new customers is now much more costly than the past. In this sense, it is necessary to keep the current customers and to prolong their lifetime. It is not always possible to have a harmony between market lifetime of a customer and the lifetime of a product and service. To balance this two factors depend on the knowledge and experience of managers. Recently many organizations have accepted that they need to contact with more customers in this global rivalry. In consequence of that, CRM constitute the rising agenda of many organization strategies. While CRM definitions and CRM systems are broad enough for detailed study, it focuses on consumer-oriented information systems. The precondition for a successful CRM project is to get prepared to be customer oriented at the whole institution and to found the corporate structure on this management philosophy (Bull, 2003:592). To communicate and contact with customer are related to the corporate structure of the enterprise with its products and service. Management of customer relationship changes according to supply and demand in the national and global markets. The general and sectoral policies of the country have great influence on CRM which must be customer-oriented.

The CRM technologies are needed at the customer relations management in order to know customers, classify them, contact with them and to be in interaction with them. Considering that the current enterprises have many customers at different locations and with many different need and desires, having a contact without the help of technology can not be possible. Enterprises need three types of technology to be able to establish relationships with customers based on "knowing each other": data base, interactive media and order-oriented mass production technology (Peppers, 2001:16). Customers do not like being lectured but they become so happy by learning and getting information. When the price of products and service is appropriate, sales have no problem, in contrast they increase. Customer multiplier effect supported by technology and experience affect other customers positively.

Communication activities of an enterprise serve more than contacting with target groups in the market environment. It is necessary to consider the other target groups and shareholders, as well. During the next union process, the messages sent to all the target groups are harmonized. Through the properly unified contact efforts, shareholder and marketing relations are completely unified at the collective identity recognition, corporate reputation and image creation environments. The unification of marketing relations in an international firm cannot be accepted as completed as long as they are not realized beyond the national and international borders. The unification concept must be beyond the marketing function of the enterprise. This approach contains also relations between employees and workers, investor relations, government matters, crisis and risk management, customer service and the other management areas where effective communication is an important success factor (Drobis, 1998: 5). Enterprise policies and harmonized working among the workers should give right information and messages to customers in both inner and external markets. And this can be achieved by the unified marketing efforts.

## Methodology

In this study, questionnaire method has been applied and questionnaire forms have been prepared in order to determine the expectations and satisfaction of internal and external customers at the airway transport from the passenger transportation service sector. Through the analysis techniques applied to the gathered data by the conducted questionnaire method, it has been aimed to determine the preferences, reasons and satisfaction of customers about aviation sector. In this study, questionnaire method has been applied and questionnaire forms have been prepared in order to determine the expectations and satisfaction of internal and external customers at the airway transport from the passenger transportation service sector. Through the analysis techniques applied to the gathered data by the conducted questionnaire method, it has been aimed to determine the preferences, reasons and satisfaction of customers about aviation sector. In this application, in accordance with the scaling showed in the Table-1 (Cronbach Alpha values), reliability analyses have been executed. The calculated reliability value is 0.897(>0.80-1). In case that reliability value turns out to be more than 0.80, the model is accepted to be highly reliable and effective. 202 people attending to the questionnaire, 50.5% are male, 49.5% are female, so the percentage of men and women attending to the questionnaire is almost the same.

**Table-1. Participation Rates on Gender Basis**

Gender	Number of Participants	Participation Rates	p <sup>a</sup>
Male	102	50,5	0,944
Female	100	49,5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100</b>	

a. Chi-Square Test

There is not a significant difference between the gender distributions of the participants in terms of statistics ( $p=0,944>0,05$ ). It has been seen that the number of male and female participants to the questionnaire is almost equal. The fact that the gender rate at the participant number is almost equal shows that expectations and satisfaction are no longer uniform due to the developing technology, changing business life, changing family structure from past to present. Today we see different ideas and expectations both for women and men. Regarding the questions at the second part of the questionnaire, the almost equal gender rate at the participants has brought about different comments about the analysis of service expectation and satisfaction.

For evaluation of the services provided during the airway transport, participation people from different genders have turned out to be beneficial.

**Table-2. Mann Whitney-u Analysis between Gender and Questionnaire Questions**

GENDER	Male		Female		p <sup>a</sup>
	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	
Question-1	4,65	0,804	4,74	0,705	0,263
Question -2	4,68	0,846	4,77	0,694	0,307
Question -3	4,23	0,974	4,38	0,93	0,183
Question -4	3,91	0,955	4,06	0,919	0,255
Question -5	3,85	1,066	4,26	1,011	<b>0,002</b>
Question -6	3,7	0,931	3,87	1,031	0,103
Question -7	3,59	0,905	3,48	1,049	0,659
Question -8	3,84	0,876	3,77	1,053	0,868
Question -9	4,08	0,78	4,12	0,946	0,318
Question -10	3,88	0,812	4,05	0,857	0,088
Question-11	4,37	1,052	4,5	0,835	0,607
Question-12	4,24	0,956	4,35	0,914	0,309
Question-13	4,11	0,659	4,02	0,864	0,78
Question-14	4,45	0,863	4,39	0,852	0,479
Question-15	4,06	0,953	4,17	0,888	0,431
Question-16	4,31	1,062	4,38	0,838	0,739
Question-17	3,69	0,933	3,58	0,923	0,35
Question-18	4,14	0,845	4,15	0,869	0,841
Question-19	3,52	1,078	3,91	0,9	<b>0,006</b>
Question-20	3,51	1,233	3,42	1,319	0,707
Question-21	3,03	1,147	3,25	1,29	0,199
Question-22	4,12	0,787	4,43	0,856	<b>0,0001</b>
Question-23	3,76	0,956	4,32	0,839	<b>0,0001</b>
Question-24	3,79	1,047	4,01	1,068	0,07
Questionnaire Average	3,98	0,505	4,1	0,56	<b>0,048</b>

a. Mann Whitney U Test

Question-5: (frequency of using airway transport) there is not a significant difference at the age distribution averages ( $p=0,032 < 0,05$ ). That also reveals clearly the preferences of today's people. Travelling mainly by plane both save time and money.

In the framework of demographic features, as the participation on the gender basis is almost fifty fifty, in the second part "Mann Whitney- U" has been applied independently at the common subjects comparison on gender basis regarding the expectations, preferences and satisfaction about the airway transport. The Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value in the Test statistics Table in the study indicates the "P" value.  $P < 0,05$  means there is a significant difference, but  $p > 0,05$  means there is not a significant difference.

In this study, the average of men is  $4,65 \pm 0,804$  and the average of women is  $4,74 \pm 0,705$ . There is not a significant statistic difference between the averages of people, on gender basis, telling that "I prefer airway transport as it is ease of transportation." ( $p=0,263 > 0,05$ ). When we analyze the responses given to the question, on gender basis, telling that "I prefer the airway transport as it is fast travelling and saves time.", we see that the average of men is  $4,68 \pm 0,846$ , the average of women is  $4,77 \pm 0,694$ . So there is not a significant statistic difference ( $p=0,307 > 0,05$ ). When we analyze the responses given to the question, on gender basis, telling that "I prefer the airway transport because of its travelling comfort .", we see that the average of men is  $4,23 \pm 0,974$ , the average of women is  $4,38 \pm 0,93$ . So there is not a significant statistic difference ( $p=0,183 > 0,05$ ).

## Conclusion and Discussion

In the globalizing world and sectors, the increase at rivalry in line with the increase at numbers of firms, needs, expectations and changes have created needs to the firms for different concepts and different interrogations. For an enterprise management means an art of right planning all the available strategic method and sources, healthy organization, long-term orientation, constant inspection and positioning its managers in the most efficient way with the aim of achieving its targets. Enterprises must focus more attentively on planning and organization especially due to rivalry, the most difficult problem of today. However this organization can only succeed with right coordination at the internal and external environment and this can be achieved through a constant information flow between works and management. So, how can enterprise implement this information flow in the best way? The answer is to catch up with today's advancing technology and establish the systems in accordance with the enterprise's goals and target groups. On condition that the firm can manage healthily the process of the system and can comment correctly the external information, the quality of its products and loyalty of its customers will be long.

Enterprises that follow up their competitors, question the expectations of their target groups can be permanent in the market with their analysis. Enterprises should always update themselves not only by following their rivals in a close environment but also observing the same or related sectors in the international platforms. Enterprises can carry out their data flow and strategies through the systems in the most proper way. While waiting for the systems, they should not forget about that the most important point is the customer feedback. Systems must be used for analysis and data accumulation. The most crucial points that enterprises should know are characteristic features of their customers and the possible activities to satisfy their expectations and needs. These points are the most healthy and accurate data sources at customer satisfaction measurement.

Ensuring the customer satisfaction is the biggest reason of increase at customer loyalty. Especially if it is service in question, it is described in many researches and all the results what customer satisfaction and expectations are.

In this study, through 24 questions asked to the participants, it has been tried to understand because of which reasons that choose airlines. It is seen that the biggest topic is comfort and reliability. Participation of some airline workers and people from different institutions and sectors has assured a more accurate measurement for the analysis. As different participant groups have different needs and expectations, this has caused differentiation at satisfaction criteria while analyzing the questionnaire questions. As the participants' education level is high, it has been concluded that especially comfort and time limitation have had great importance at expectations and participants travel by a number of airlines in a year.

Especially married participants indicate that they are highly satisfied by the service provided by the airlines before and during the flight. It has been seen from the female participants that about expectation and satisfaction of these expectations women pay great importance to the suggestions of their surroundings and that women are more likely to share their satisfaction or dissatisfaction feelings about their previous experiences with their surroundings.

In the light of the questionnaire, it can be stated that airway transport is among the first choices for travelling. One of the most important reasons of this situation is that the airlines analyze correctly the outcomes of their researches done to know better their customers and manage correctly the outputs of the analysis. It is seen that well managed outputs have great success at satisfying customers' expectations. Consequently, different target groups have different expectations and satisfaction levels. Airlines can achieve great success at their service quality by providing special promotions and programs for high educated people, especially for high educated and married women. For this reason, more importance should be given to the questionnaire studies.

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