A Study on Survive Quality and Passenger Satisfaction on Air India Services

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Abstract: This study examines the underlying forces of service quality influences on passengers" satisfaction in aircraft transport. The study examines which dimensions have a positive influence on service quality. The findings of this study are based on the analysis of a sample of 100 respondents. The results suggest that there are different factors of in-flight service quality that are important according to the customer seat class. The dimensionality of perceived service quality in Domestic air travel was explored and dimensions were identified. These dimensions include in-flight service, in-flight digital service, and back-office operations. The findings reveal that these dimensions are positively related to perceiving service quality in international air travel and of these dimensions, Cuisines provided, seat comfort safety is the most important dimension in in-flight service quality. Personal entertainment is the most important dimension as perceived by airline passengers in In-flight digital service quality. Online ticket booking is another dimension in back-office operations. In addition, the findings indicate that passengers" satisfaction on different airline companies on basis of the services delivered.

Keywords: Service Quality, Passenger Satisfaction, In-Flight Services, In-Flight Digital Services, Back-Office Operations, Class of Journey, Airline Industry.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of services quality its importance has grown in recent years for years for two main reasons. Firstly, we are starting to understand the total concept of service more and are now better able to define what is meant by quality of service. Secondly, researchers are determining ways that service quality can actually be quantified or measured.

Measuring service quality gives marketers, a tangible tool to use when developing strategies for marketing services.

The service quality can be measured on the following five dimensions:

- ➢ Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably in addition, accurately.
- ➢ Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, Personnel and communication materials.
- ➢ Responsive-:   The willingness to help passengers and provide Promptness service.
- ➢ Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their Ability to convey trust and confidence.
- ➢ Empathy: The caring, individualized attention provided to the passenger.
- ➢ The gaps model position the key concepts, strategies and decisions in services marketing in a manner that begins with the passenger and builds the organization's tasks around what is needed to close the gap between passenger expectation and perceptions. The integrated gaps model of service quality, which was first overviewed in the part 1 opener, is shown in fig.
- ➢ The central focus of the gaps model is the passenger gap, the difference between passenger expectation and perceptions. Firms need to close this gap between what passengers expect and receive-in order to satisfy their passenger and build long-term relationships with them. To close this all-important passenger gap, the model suggests that four other gaps-the providers gaps-need be closed.
- ➢ The following four provider gaps, shown below the horizontal line in fig. are the underlying causes behind the passenger gap:

- ➢ **Gap 1:**   **Between management perception and passenger's expect**
- ➢ **Gap 2:**   **Between Passenger-driven service design, standards, and perceptions of passenger expectation**
- ➢ **Gap 3:**   **Between service delivery and external communications**
- ➢ **Gap 4:**   **Between perceived service and expected service**

➢ **Gap 5: Between Service delivery and Passenger-driven service design and standards.**

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

➢ In the Civil Aeronautics Board (Douglas & Miller, 2004; Jordan, 2005) developed the initial tools of service quality measurement in the airline industry in the U.S.A. These studies were based on economic variables, and pre-deregulation developed as service quality assessments from the perspective of the airline consumer. Kearney was the first one to conduct service quality assessments from the perspective of the airline consumer in his doctoral dissertation work, which examined service quality from the perspective of industry-based economic and marketing measures.

➢ Many researchers and marketers have focused their attention on customer evaluations of services in an effort to find ways to improve service quality (Fisk, Brown, & Bitner, 2010). Extensive research has been conducted in the field of service quality. Parasuraman et al. (Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 2008) developed a service quality measure, called SERVQUAL, which states that the customer's assessment of overall service quality is determined by the degree and direction of the gap between their expectations and perceptions of actual performance levels. They also identified five essentials for service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. They proposed that perceived service quality could be estimated by calculating the difference between expectations and perceptions of actual service performance. The SERVQUAL scale has been criticized for its validity and reliability. Buttle (2006) pointed out that including all 44 items (22 items of service expectations and a duplicate of 22 items of service performance) in one study often makes the survey task too difficult for respondents. Cronin and Taylor (2009) have empirically proved that the measures of service performance or SERVPERF, is more effective than SERVQUAL, which includes expectations as well as performance. SERVPERF is now widely used in measuring customer evaluations of service quality.

➢ Cunningham and Young (2011) used SERVPERF in measuring the airline service quality. Their literature review suggests that initial publications on Airline service quality appeared in 2010 (Gourdin, 2008). Fick & Ritchie and Gourdin & Kloppenburg were the first to apply the service quality gap model to the airline industry in 2008. Fick and Ritchie (2006) used the SERVQUAL scale to measure perceived service quality within several service industries including the airline industry. They found the mean scores of consumer expectation and perception of service performance measures and failed to determine the relative impact of various SERVQUAL items on overall service quality and satisfaction (Cunningham etal 2004).

➢ Measurement and management of service quality are the fundamental issue for the survival and growth of airline companies (Cunningham, Young, and Lee 2002). Cunningham, Young, and Lee (2002) conducted studies on perceptions of airline service quality of U.S. and Korean customers based on SERVPERF and industry-based measures, as well as their perceptions of risks involved in the airline choice. The results suggested that U.S. customers consider service reliability, in-flight comfort, and connections as the key factors determining satisfaction with airline service, whereas Korean passengers generally regard reliability, assurance, and risk factors as predictors of satisfaction. This study conducted by Cunningham, Young, and Lee (2002) is interesting as it has measured service quality based on SERVPERF which is a set of multi-dimensional measures of customer evaluations of service quality (Cunningham, Young, and Lee 2002).

➢ Wen Li and Chen (2010) propose three quality categories with ten identified variables and service quality of domestic airline is quantified accordingly. Taguchi loss function requires industry measures to measure airline service quality.

➢ As stated earlier, airline traffic in India has picked up only recently. However, competition has brought to surface, industry issues such as an insufficient number of pilots, airport facilities, and trained personnel. When the objective of low-cost carriers is to convert railway passengers to airline travelers at a very low-fare, the focus of the service provider may not be on the service quality but in providing the basic service product. In comparison, America's budget airlines have started to increase service quality in spite of the low fare offers. Southwest and Jet Blue have a strong brand presence and offer well-defined service rather than just low prices (Economist, 2004). On the other hand, airline service quality across the world have reached new heights where in international airlines such as Virgin Atlantic Airways have introduced double suites, in-flight beauty therapy treatments and massages, free limousines to and from the airport and much more.

➢ Because of low fares, there is an expected increase in the volume of domestic airline travelers in India, which has accelerated competition in the air travel market. While certain segments in choosing an airline, consider price advantages, service quality cannot be absent. According to Zeithaml and Bitner, the concept of satisfaction is influenced by five variables viz. 1) service quality 2) product quality 3) price 4) situation and 5) personality.

➢ In short, service quality of airlines has been studied based on industry measures, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, Taguchi loss function, Zeithaml, and Bitner Model. Our study attempts to examine the satisfaction level of service quality of domestic airline travelers in India across fourteen airline travel process variables suggested by Wen Li and Chen (1998) which are modified to suit the Indian standards. Some of these variables can also be included as the reliability and responsiveness Variables of SERVPERF. The flying experience has been divided into **pre-flight, in- flight and postflight experiences.**

1.4 Research Design:
A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection measurement and analysis of data. Research design includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implication to the final analysis of data.

It is a strategy specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analyzing the data. It also includes the time and cost budget since most studies are done under these two constraints. The research design is needed because it facilitates the smooth sailing of various research operations thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. Research design stands for advance planning of methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data & the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objective of research and the availability of staff, time and money. **Here Research Design used is Descriptive Research Design.**

UNIVERSE AND SURVEY POPULATION
The universe can be **finite or infinite**. In a finite universe, the member of items is certain so in this project studied the universe population is **finite** as only current passengers are taken for the study regarding service Quality.

1.5 Sample Design:
The respondents selected should be as representative of the total population as possible in order to produce a miniature cross-section. The selected respondent constitute what is technically called a '**sample**' & the selection process is called '**sampling technique**'. The survey so conducted, is known as a **sample survey.**
The sample chosen must be representative of the universe to be studied & therefore, every care must be taken in size may give better results the constraints like time and money comes to limit the size of the sample. So, besides, being care representative of the universe, a sample should be convenient in terms of size. It should be neither too small nor too big. It should be manageable.

There are various steps in Sampling Design:
The researcher must pay attention to following points:
a)   Sampling Area: Sampling area may be a geographical one as in this project Renigunta, Tirupati (Tirupati International Airport) is taken into consideration.
b)   Source Unit: In this project, Air India Ltd. is the sample unit.
c)   The size of Sample: It refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. It is accepted that the bigger the size of the sample, the greater the representatives of the whole universe. A balance is to be maintained between sample size and time cost trade off. Sample size has been restricted to **100** passengers. However, it has been tried that all socioeconomic perspectives are well considered in the samples.

d) Sampling Technique: The sampling technique used is the random sampling technique.
1.6   Analysis And Interpretations:
Analysis can be defined as getting some information from collected data i.e. get information from raw data. Collected data is of no use until some results have not been found out. In addition, analysis serves this purpose. Analysis can be done in many ways like graphs, charts, tables, and statistical analysis etc. The data thus collected were **analyzed and interpreted** to make study meaningful
The objectives of the study analysis of service quality are as follow:
  ➢ To study the passenger perceptions of service quality of airlines under study.
  ➢ To study awareness of services provided to passengers.
  ➢ To identify the service quality available to the passengers.
  ➢ To analyze the extents to which the passengers utilize the facilities.
  ➢ To assess the level of satisfaction of passengers on existing passengers' facilities provided by Airlines.
  ➢ To explore the profound impact of technology on service.
  ➢ To explain the need for special service marketing concept and practices and why the need has developed and accelerated over the last several decades.
  ➢ To overview the generic difference in passenger behavior between services and goods.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATIONS

TABLE 6.1 Are you satisfied that Air India flights are on time

Response Collected

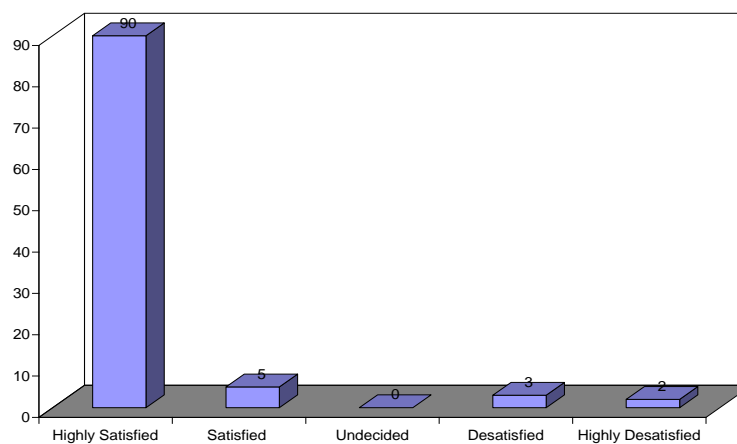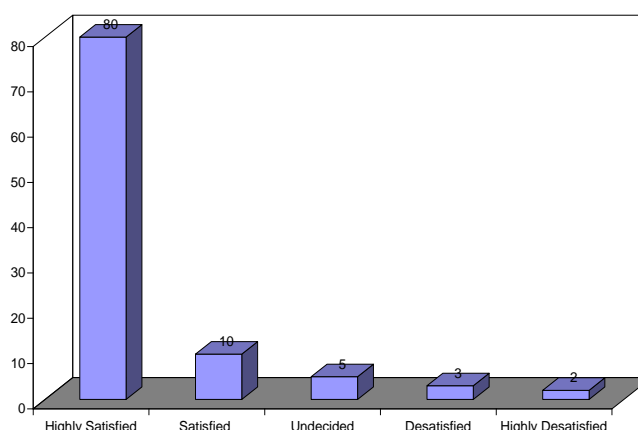| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	90
Satisfied	5
Undecided	0
Dissatisfied	3
Highly Dissatisfied	2

Table 6.2 Are you satisfied that Air India informs you in advance if there is a delay (through SMS or call)?

Response Collected

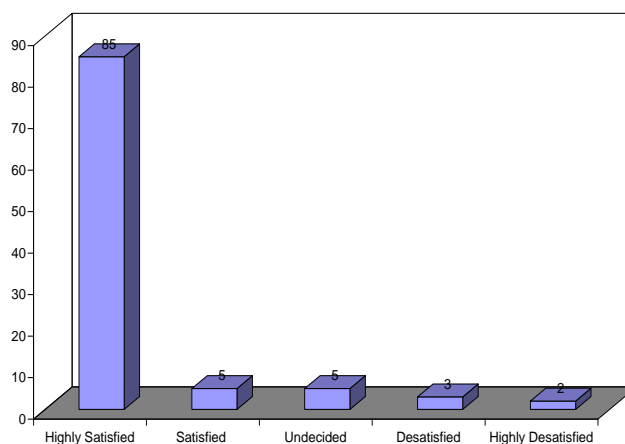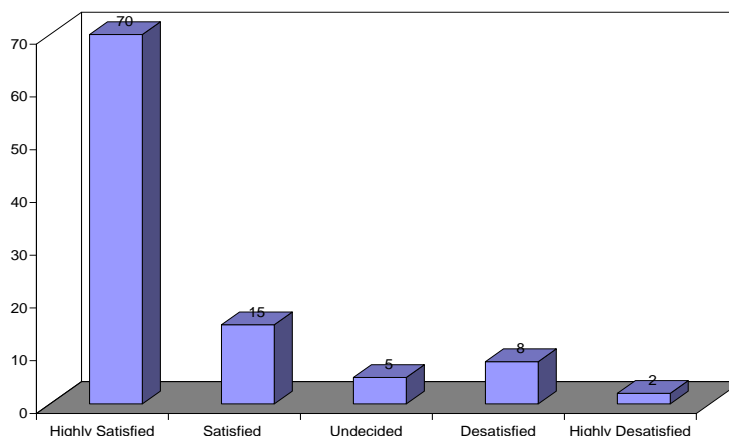| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	80
Satisfied	10
Undecided	5
Dissatisfied	3
Highly Dissatisfied	2

➢ **On the basis of this Graph, 80% passengers are highly satisfied, 10 % are satisfied, 5% passengers said it is undecided, 3% are Dissatisfied and 2% are Highly Dissatisfied with Air India are informing you in advance if there is delay (through SMS or call)**

Table6.3   Are you satisfied that if the flight is delayed, regular announcements are made?
Response Collected

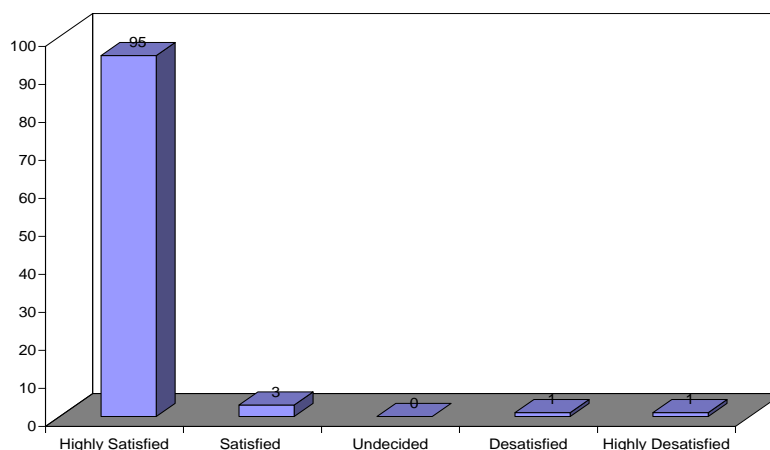| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	85
Satisfied	5
Undecided	5
Dissatisfied	3
Highly Dissatisfied	2

- On the basis of this Graph, 85% passengers are highly satisfied, 5 % are satisfied, 5% passengers said it is undecided, 3% are Dissatisfied and 2% Highly Dissatisfied with if the flight is delayed and regular announcements are made.

Q6.4 Are you satisfied with Air India In-flight services?

Response Collected

Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	70
Satisfied	15
Undecided	5
Dissatisfied	8
Highly Dissatisfied	2

- On the basis of this Graph, 70% passengers are highly satisfied, 15 % are satisfied, 5% passengers said it is undecided, 8% are Dissatisfied and 2% Highly Dissatisfied with Air India In-flight services.

Q6.5 Are you satisfied that the waiting time for baggage arrival is minimum?

Response Collected

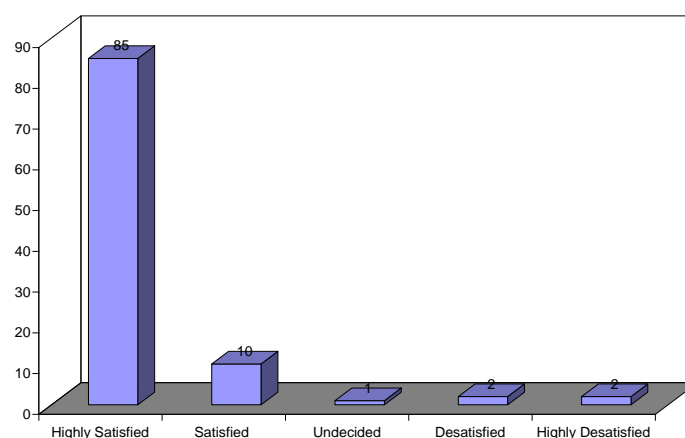| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	95
Satisfied	3
Undecided	0
Dissatisfied	1
Highly Dissatisfied	1

➢ **On the basis of this Graph 95% passengers are highly satisfied, 3% are satisfied, 1% are dissatisfied and 1% Highly Dissatisfied with the waiting time for baggage arrival is smallest.**

Q6.6   Are you satisfied that Baggage loss is not a problem with Air India?

Response Collected

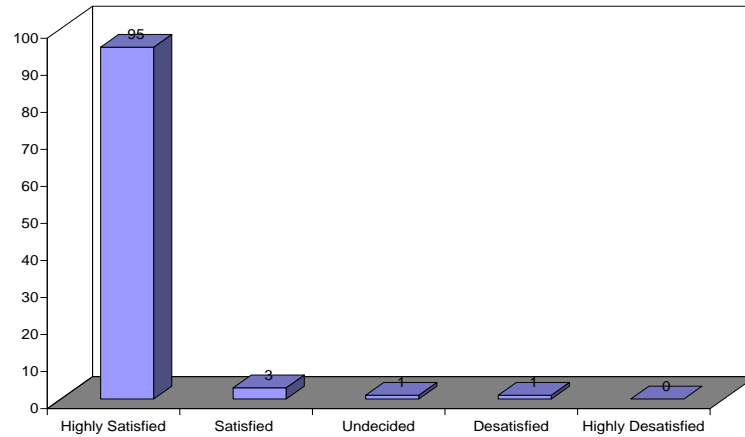| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	**85**
Satisfied	**10**
Undecided	**1**
Dissatisfied	**2**
Highly Dissatisfied	**2**

➢ **On the basis of this Graph, 85% passengers are highly satisfied, 10% are satisfied, 1% passengers said it is undecided, 2% are Dissatisfied and 2% Highly Dissatisfied that Baggage loss is not a problem with Air India.**

Q6.7   Are you satisfied that Air India compensates for lost baggage if such a situation arises?

Response Collected

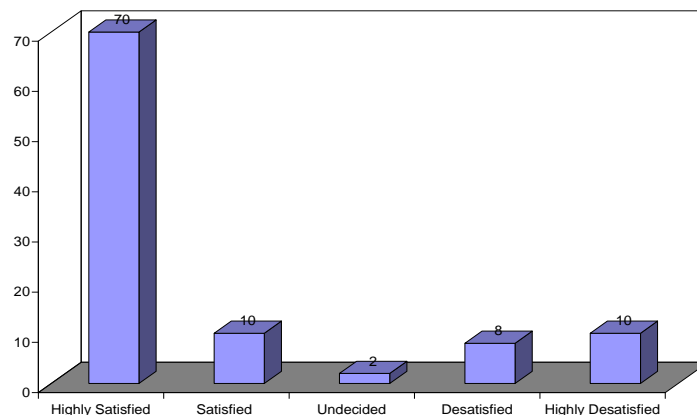| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	**95**
Satisfied	**3**
Undecided	**1**
Dissatisfied	**1**
Highly Dissatisfied	**0**

> ➤ **On the basis of this Graph 95% passengers are Highly Satisfied, 3% are satisfied, 1% passengers said it is undecided, 1% are Dissatisfied with Air India compensating for lost baggage if such a situation arises.**

Q6.8   Are you satisfied that Air India provides good check-in services?

Response Collected

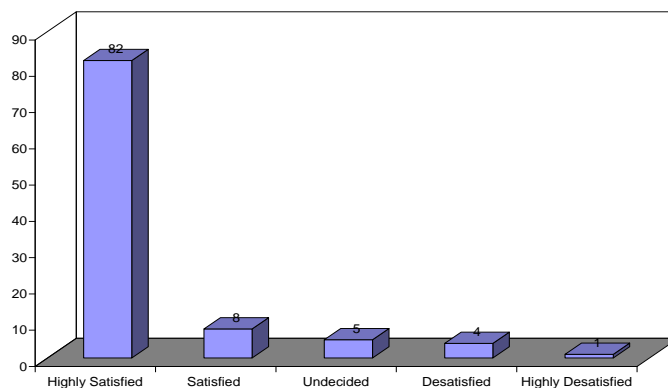| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	70
Satisfied	10
Undecided	2
Dissatisfied	8
Highly Dissatisfied	10

> ➤ **On the basis of this Graph, 70% passengers are highly satisfied, 10% are satisfied, 2% passengers said it is undecided, 8% are Dissatisfied and 10% Highly Dissatisfied that Air India is providing good check-in services.**

Q6.9   Are you satisfied that Air India provides refreshments whenever there is a delay?

Response Collected

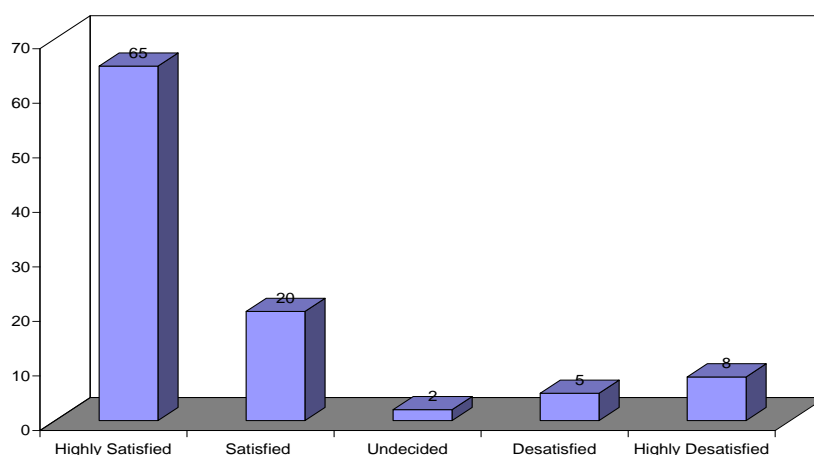| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	82
Satisfied	8
Undecided	5
Dissatisfied	4
Highly Dissatisfied	1

➢ **On the basis of this Graph, 82% passengers are highly satisfied, 8% are satisfied, 5% passengers said it is undecided, 4% are Dissatisfied and 1% Highly Dissatisfied that Air India is providing refreshments whenever there is a delay.**

Q6.10   Are you satisfied that Air India provides accommodation if there is a very long delay?

Response Collected

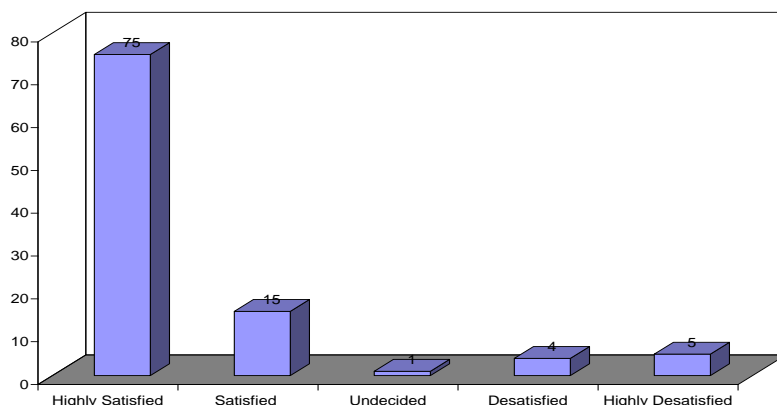| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	65
Satisfied	20
Undecided	2
Dissatisfied	5
Highly Dissatisfied	8

On the basis of this Graph 65% passengers are highly satisfied, 20% are satisfied, 2% passengers said it is undecided, 5% are Dissatisfied and 8% Highly Dissatisfied with Air India are providing accommodation if there is a very long delay.
Q6.11   Are you satisfied that Air India provides online booking service

Response Collected

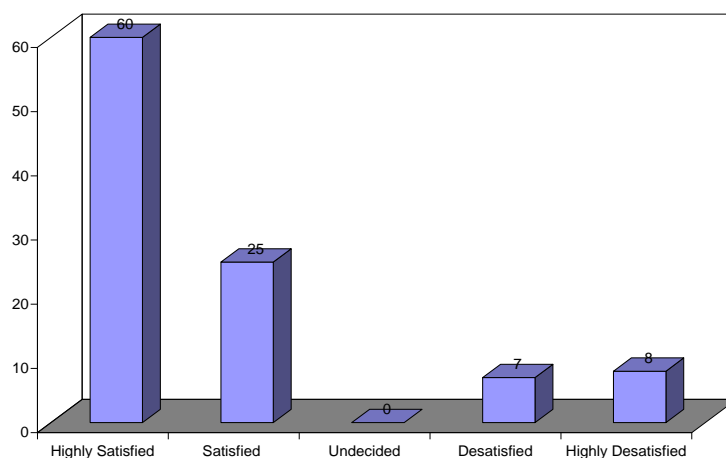| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	75
Satisfied	15
Undecided	1
Dissatisfied	4
Highly Dissatisfied	5

- ➢ **On the basis of this Graph 75% passengers are highly satisfied, 15% are satisfied, 1% passengers said it is undecided, 4% are Dissatisfied and 5% Highly Dissatisfied with Air India are providing online booking services.**

Q6.12   Are you satisfied that Air India offers discounted fare schemes?

Response Collected

| Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	**60**
Satisfied	**25**
Undecided	**0**
Dissatisfied	**7**
Highly Dissatisfied	**8**

- ➢ **On the basis of this Graph 60% passengers are highly satisfied, 25 % are satisfied, 7% are Dissatisfied and 8% Highly Dissatisfied that Air India is offering discounted fare schemes.**

Q6.13   Are you satisfied that Air India offers real benefits to frequent fliers?

Response Collected

Scale	% of Respondents
Highly Satisfied	**70**
Satisfied	**20**
Undecided	**2**
Dissatisfied	**5**
Highly Dissatisfied	**3**
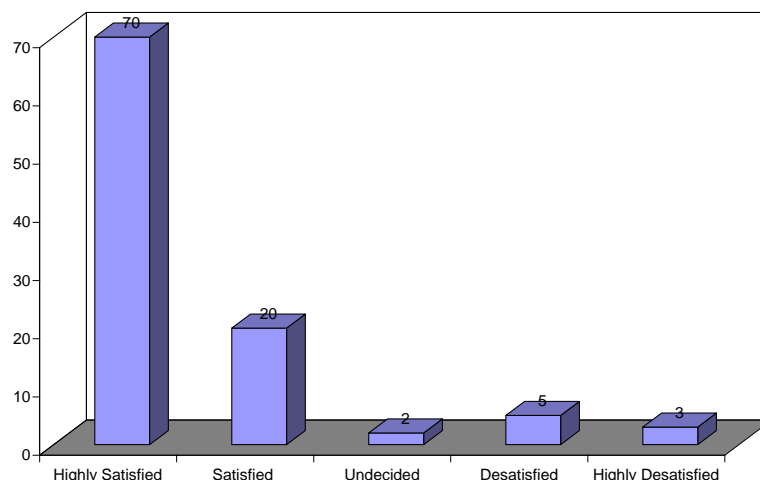
- On the basis of this Graph, 70% passengers are highly satisfied, 20% are satisfied, 2% passengers said it is undecided, 5% are Dissatisfied and 3% Highly Dissatisfied with Air India are offering real benefits to frequent fliers.

1.7 The main findings of the study are as follows:

- I found that a maximum number of the passenger are satisfied with service quality of Air India Ltd and only a few of the passengers are not satisfied.
- Most of the passengers are having Indian platinum card.
- I also found that most of the passengers are using the marketing scheme of the Air India Ltd.
- Regarding satisfaction of fares, I found that most of the passengers are satisfied with fares of Air India Ltd.
- I found that most of the passengers are the frequent flier passenger.

Following table clarifies that all the objectives are achieved and the level of satisfaction in passengers

OBJECTIVES	SERVICES PROVIDED				
1.Study of Passengers perceptions on services provided by Airlines	Flight time [90:2]	In-flight services [70:2]	Check-In Services [70:10]	Refreshment [82:1]	Baggage Waiting Time [95:1]
2.To Analyze the Extent of facilities provided and Level of Satisfaction.	Delay Alert [80:2]	Announcements made[85:2]	Accommodation[65:8]	Loss of Baggage [85:2]	Compensation for Lost Baggage [99:1]
3. To Explore the profound impact of Technology on Service and Generic behavior of Passengers.	Online Booking Services [75:5]	Frequent Fliers Scheme [70:3]	Discounted Fare Schemes[60:8]		

Note: [X: Y] X=Highly Satisfied   Y=Highly Dissatisfied

1.8 Recommendations
- Some of the passengers felt that they are being charged heavily against the quality of food provided to them. Therefore, the company should charge the minimum money to the passengers.
- The company should see that the food which is given to the passengers should be tasty and of good quality.
- Air India flights should be on time.
- Air India should inform in advance if there is delay the flight.
- Air India should compensate for lost baggage if such a situation arises.
- Air India should provide online booking services.
- Air India should offer discounted fare schemes.
- Air India should offer real benefits to frequent fliers.
- The cleanliness of the aircraft should be very important.
- Air India should provide accommodation if there is a very long delay.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the company to provide the better services to passengers and the management, in particular, is very much responsible for this. The unsatisfactory of the passengers can raise the big difficulty to the company. The company cannot rise if the passengers are unhappy & unsatisfied. However, I found passengers are very much happy with the service Quality of Air India.

Here in this company, although the existing provision of the services measure are found satisfactory though the passengers have a high degree of expectations from the company. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the company to fulfill the expectation of the passengers.

As the company does the competitive companies offer already aware of the fact that the Air India passengers, who were engaged in the service of the airlines, left the company as they were with better facilities. So now, airlines should learn from the experiences and should avoid the mistakes. Only then, the company can make a profit and good relations with the passengers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the study----**"Analysis of Service Quality of Air India Ltd."** which I have taken as Research Project, is to find out the passengers are satisfied. Hence, I seek kind cooperation in filling up this Questionnaire.

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME:
AGE:
GENDER:
QUALIFICATION:

(Please √, which is appropriate)

1. Are you satisfied that Air India flights are on time?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

2. Are you satisfied that Air India informs you in advance if there is a delay (through SMS or call)?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

3. Are you satisfied that if the flight is delayed, regular announcements are made?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

4. Are you satisfied with Air India In-flight services?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

5. Are you satisfied that the waiting time for baggage arrival is smallest?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

6. Are you satisfied that Baggage loss is not a problem with Air India?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

7. Are you satisfied that Air India compensates for lost baggage if such a situation arises?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

8. Are you satisfied that Air India provides good check-in services?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

9. Are you satisfied that Air India provides refreshments whenever there is a delay?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

10. Are you satisfied that Air India provides accommodation if there is a very long delay?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

11. Are you satisfied that Air India provides online booking services?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

12. Are you satisfied that Air India offers discounted fare schemes?

Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	De-satisfied	Highly De- satisfied

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