

THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PASSENGER'S SATISFACTION TOWARDS MALAYSIA AIRLINES CATERING SERVICE

¹Chan Shin Roo and ²Cho Kim Han and ³Yeo Sock Hii

¹College of Art and Sciences, School of Science Quantitative,
University Utara Malaysia, 06010, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

²College of Business, School of Business Management,
University Utara Malaysia, 06010, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

³College of Business, School of Technology Management and Logistics,
University Utara Malaysia, 06010, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Service quality has become a centerpiece for airline companies in vying with one another and keeps their image in the minds of passengers. Many airlines have pushed service quality from the viewpoint of retaining satisfied passengers and attracting new ones. Besides those, in-flight catering is another important aspect of the airline operation. This study reports the outcomes of the investigation on in-flight meals/food attributes toward passengers' level of satisfaction and re-flying intention. Taste, freshness, appearance of in-flight meals served and menu choices are important to the airlines passengers especially for the long haul flight.

Keywords

MAS, In-flight, catering, satisfaction, re-flying intention.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Recently, service quality has become the most important part of the airlines corporate in competing with one another and to give a good image to their passengers. Many airline companies have improved the service quality in both ground and on board services especially intended to retaining their passengers and attracting new ones. Other than entertainment, cabin facilities and cleanliness of the craft, in-flight meals service is also considered as another important element of the airline companies in satisfying their passengers. The in-flight meals have now been seen as a marketing strategy to attract passengers. In extending the body of knowledge in this field, this study is therefore investigating in-flight catering attributes toward passengers' level of satisfaction and re-flying intention.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The meals can be ranged from a simple beverage in short-haul economy class to a seven-course gourmet meal in long-haul first class. The type of food varies depending on the Airline Company and class of travel. In-flight meals may be served on one tray or in multiple courses with no tray and even with a tablecloth, metal cutlery, and glassware. However, this is just normally will be done in first class and business class travel. Food safety is always paramount in the airline catering industry as a case of mass food poisoning amongst the passengers on an airliner could have disastrous consequences. For example, a case happened on February 20, 1992 whereby shrimp tainted with cholera was served on Aerolineas Argentinas Flight 386. As elderly passenger passed away and other passengers fell ill in that incident. For this reason, quality of in-flight meals should be control with a standard in order to make sure that the safety of passengers is protected.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools are used. Data collection method included questionnaire, referring documentation and discussion.

3.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a primary method where a series of question designed to get information from respondents. In this research, questionnaire will be given out to 50 respondents which is UUM students and online questionnaire also will be done. Questionnaire given out face to face can make sure that there are responses

from consumers whereas online questionnaire is an effective way to collect data from a large population.

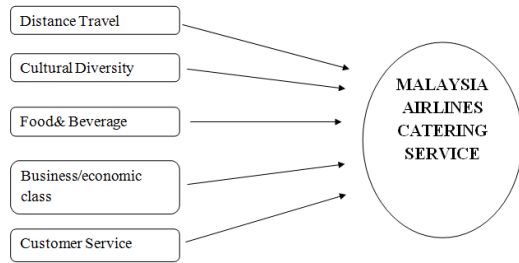


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

4.0 FINDINGS

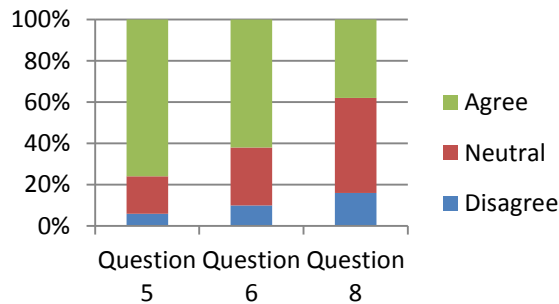


Figure 2: Customer and their needs

Figure 2 above shows that 76% of the respondents agree that understand customer needs is the key for MAS to serve them better. 62% agree that customer needs should be the priority when MAS preparing the in-flight meal. 38% of the customer claimed that catering service is the first thing to consider when choosing an airline.

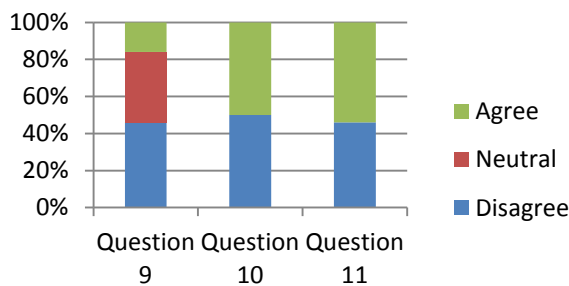


Figure 3: Religion and Cultural

Figure 3 above shows that only 16% of the respondents take the religious and cultural factor as their priority while choosing MAS. Around 56% of the customer would prefer to have local food in flight. 54%

of MAS customer requested for special meals due to religious and cultural factor.

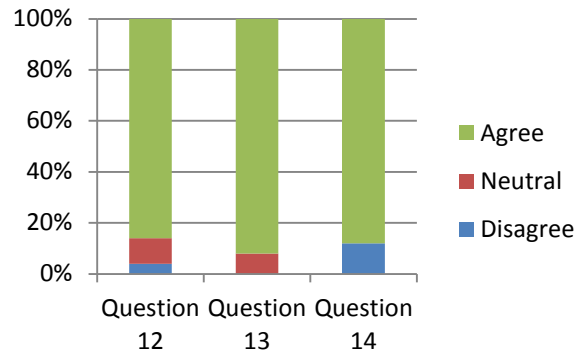


Figure 4: Food Safety and Hygiene

Figure 4 above shows that 86% of the respondents highly emphasize on hygiene factor while choosing in-flight meal. Almost the entire customer, which is 92%, agrees that caterers have the responsible to make sure the hygiene of the meal. 88% of the respondent claimed that they will only take the in-flight meal after they make sure that the meal is clean.

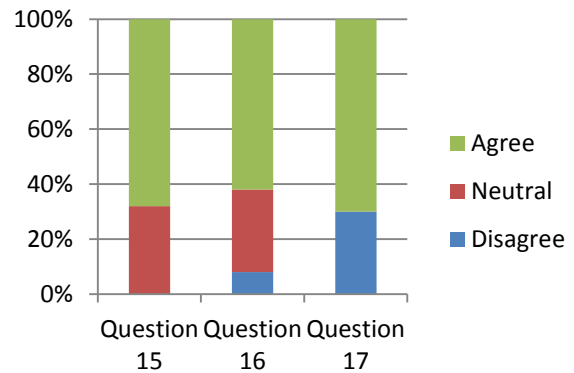


Figure 5: Customer Service

Figure 5 shows that 68% of the respondent claimed that the customer service provided by cabin crew is their first consideration while choosing MAS in-flight catering. Around 62% of the customer agreed that reputation of MAS is an important factor for them to consider while choosing to or not to have the in-flight meal. 70% of the respondent agreed that the way MAS serve food is one of the consideration factors for the customer to choose the in-flight catering.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Impact of Bad Catering Service

5.1.1 Negative Reputation

Reputation can be said as an asset of a company in retaining their customers. A company with a bad reputation is considered as failed in doing business. They won't be able in attracting new customer or even retaining their existing customer.

5.1.2 Loss of Revenue

As the number of passengers taking Malaysia Airlines' flight reduces, the revenue of the company will decline as well. This is because passengers are the main income of an airline company. An airline company with bad catering service will not be able to retain their passengers,

5.1.3 Loss of Customer Loyalty

If Malaysia Airlines offer a bad catering service to their customer, their existing customer will feel disappointed on them and will lose their loyalty to them. Once after that, the customer will never ever choose their airlines anymore.

5.1.4 Loss of Customer

As mentioned earlier in the findings, customer emphasize on reputation of an airline company. Once Malaysia Airlines leave a bad image to their customer, they will not be able to attract any new passengers.

6.0 CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, it is hoped that the information from this research will facilitate Malaysia Airlines to better understand the passengers' needs. By being alerted to these matters, Malaysia Airline can position themselves well and be more competitive in the fast growing airline industry. Better understanding of the airline passengers' expectation would also make the airline company more sensitive and effective in operation management techniques in order to improve passengers' satisfaction and retaining passengers other than attracting new passengers. In fact, Yuksel and Rimmington (1998) indicated that increasing customer satisfaction is a critical factor in competing in today's service industry.

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