

**RESEARCH ON A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION IN SRILANKAN AIRLINES**

K. B Gonagala

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RESEARCH ON A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING CUSTOMER
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K.B Gonagala

613291909

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fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Management Studies degree

2017

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the dissertation on RESEARCH ON A STUDY ON FACTORS AFFECTING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SRILANKAN AIRLINES by K.B Gonagala has been accepted by the Department of Management Studies in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences of the Open University of Sri Lanka in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Management Studies degree.

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Supervisor

.....

Head of the Department

DECLARATION

I certify that this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and to the best of my knowledge and understanding it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

.....

Name and signature

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to analyse factors affecting the customers' satisfaction in SriLankan Airlines. The specific objectives of the study were: to study the concept of customer satisfaction, to examine the factors affecting the customer satisfaction and to analyse the most crucial factors on customer satisfaction. As per the reviews left by the SriLankan Airlines passengers, the level of satisfaction achieved is moderate. Aviation as a competitive industry, SriLankan Airlines has to compete with the other airlines and maintain a reputation as a better airline fulfilling customer satisfaction. Hence it is important for the airline to meet factors that supports yielding all the customers' expectations and identify that they are satisfied customer.

The academic literature is used to build up a customer satisfaction model, which is tested taking consideration of inflight service quality, inflight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment to find out most important factor affect customer satisfaction. A total of 100 respondents were sampled by using multistage sampling technique, and data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire. Data on demographic and general information of the customers was analysed by using descriptive analysis. Correlation and regression analysis were used to identify the factors affecting customer satisfaction and the most critical factors affecting customer satisfaction. Results show that the most affecting factors are the cabin environment and the inflight service quality while the inflight entertainment facilities and the reservation and ticketing services are not affecting customer satisfaction positively. It also figures out that the more the airline satisfied the passengers' expectations, the higher the loyalty the airline absorbs.

Basing on the findings of the study it is recommended that the management must pay attention on the basic aspect of customer satisfaction: the ability to perform the promised service accurately. It also depicts that even though advanced technology is used, the most critical factor, the customers get satisfied is a pleasant physical environment with filled humanity of the crew such as knowledge, courtesy, ability of crew to ensure the passengers confidence, and help the passengers.

Key words: customer satisfaction, service quality, cabin environment, SriLankan Airlines

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

LIST OF FIGURES v

LIST OF TABLESvi

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS viii

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION..... 1

1.1 Background of the study2

1.1.1 The Organization.....2

1.1.2 Problem Identification.....2

1.2 Significance of the Study3

1.3 Problem Statement3

1.4 Objectives of the Study4

1.5 Research Questions4

1.6 Chapter Layout.....5

CHAPTER 02

LITERATURE REVIEW 7

2.0 Introduction.....7

2.1 Customer Satisfaction 7

2.1.1 Defining Customer Satisfaction7

2.1.2 Satisfaction as A Multi-Dimensional Concept.....8

2.1.3 Satisfaction with Item-Specific and Overall Performance9

2.1.4 Levels of Satisfaction9

2.1.5 Significance of Customer Satisfaction and its Measurement.....9

2.1.6 Dimensions of Customer Satisfaction 11

2.2 Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction 12

2.3 In Flight Service Quality.....	15
2.3.1 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality.....	16
2.3.2 Determinants of Service Quality	17
2.4 In-flight Entertainment Facilities	19
2.4.1 Determinants of In Flight Entertainment System.....	20
2.5 Reservation and Ticketing	20
2.5.1 Ticketing, Reservation and Customer Satisfaction	21
2.5.2 Determinants of Ticketing and Reservation.....	22
2.6 Cabin Environment	26
2.6.1 Customer Satisfaction and Cabin Environment	27
2.6.2 Determinants of Cabin Environment.....	27
CHAPTER 03	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
3.0 Introduction.....	32
3.1 Background to the Concepts and Process	32
3.1.1 Background of Study.....	32
3.1.2 Conceptual Framework	33
3.1.3 Hypotheses of the Study.....	34
3.2 Variables of Research Concepts	35
3.2.1 Operational Variable	35
3.2.1.1 Independent Variable.....	35
3.2.1.2 Dependent Variable	35
3.3 Variable Measurement	35
3.3.1 Dimensions for Service Quality	36
3.3.2 Dimension of In Flight Entertainment System.....	37
3.3.3 Dimensions of Ticketing and Reservation	38
3.3.4 Dimensions of Cabin Environment	39

3.4 Population and Sample	40
3.4.1 Population.....	40
3.4.2 Sample.....	40
3.4.2.1 Sample Size	40
3.4.2.2 Sampling Technique	40
3.5 Type of Data Collection.....	41
3.6 Research Instrument.....	41
3.6.1 Design of the Questionnaire	41
3.6.1.1 Origin of Construction of Questionnaire	43
3.6.2 Pilot Test	43
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	44
3.8 Data Analysis Technique	45
3.8.1 Validity and Reliability Test	45
3.8.1.1 Validity Test	45
3.8.1.2 Reliability Test	45
3.8.2 Correlation Analysis.....	46
CHAPTER 04	
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	47
4.0 Introduction.....	47
4.1 Descriptive Analysis	47
4.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents	47
4.1.2 General Information	48
4.2 Scale Measurement	51
4.2.1 Reliability Analysis	51
4.2.2 Validity Test.....	51
4.3 Inferential Analysis	54
4.3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis	54

4.3.1.1 Correlation between service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment and customer satisfaction	54
4.3.1.2 Correlation between Customer Expectation and Satisfaction	55
4.3.1.3 Correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	56
4.3.2 Simple Regression Analysis	56
4.3.2.1 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	56
4.3.2.2 In-Flight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction	57
4.3.2.3 Reservation, Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction.....	58
4.3.2.4 Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction.....	59
4.3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis	60
4.3.3.1 Multiple Regression Analysis on Service Quality, In-Flight Entertainment System, Reservation and Ticketing, Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction	60
4.3.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Service Quality.....	63
4.3.3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Cabin Environment	63
4.4 Conclusion	64
CHAPTER 05	
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	65
5.0 Introduction.....	65
5.1 Conclusion	66
5.2 Managerial Recommendations.....	68
5.3 Limitations and Further Research	69
REFERENCES	70
APPENDIX I	80
APPENDIX II	89

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality	17
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework	34
Figure 3. Gender of Respondents.....	47
Figure 4. Age level of Respondents	48
Figure 5. Purpose of Travel	49
Figure 6. Class of Travel.....	50

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Dimension of service quality and indicators.....	36
Table 2. Dimension of Inflight Entertainment System and Indicators	37
Table 3. Dimensions of Ticketing and Reservation and indicators	38
Table 4. Distribution of Questionnaire Items	39
Table 5. Distribution of Questionnaire Items	42
Table 6. Linkert Scale Category	42
Table 7. Origin of Construction of Questionnaire	43
Table 8. Result of Pilot Test	44
Table 9. Reliability High and Low Categorization.....	46
Table 10. Correlation variable and the Strength of Correlation.....	46
Table 11. Percentage of Gender of the respondents	47
Table 12. Percentage of Age Level of Respondents	48
Table 13. Percentage of Purpose of Travel of Passengers	49
Table 14. Percentage of Class of Travel of Passengers	50
Table 15. Reliability Test Result	51
Table 16. Validity Test Result	52
Table 17. Pearson Correlation Analysis.....	54
Table 18. Correlation between Customer Expectation and Satisfaction.....	57
Table 19. Correlations analysis for Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty	57
Table 20. Model Summary for Linear Regression Analysis of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	58
Table 21. Coefficients for Linear Regression Analysis of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction	58
Table 22. Model Summary for Linear Regression Analysis of Inflight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction.....	59
Table 23. Coefficients for Simple Regression Analysis for Inflight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction.....	59
Table 24. Model Summary for Simple Regression Analysis for Reservation and Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction	58
Table 25. Coefficients for Simple Regression Analysis for Reservation and Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction	59

Table 26. Model Summary for Simple Regression Analysis for Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction	59
Table 27. Coefficient Relationship Between Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction.....	62
Table 28. Model Summary of Regression Analysis	61
Table 29. ANOVA ^a Table for Regression Analysis.....	61
Table 30. Multiple Regression Analysis Coefficient Relation	62
Table 31. Coefficient Values for Multiple Regression Analysis of Service Quality Dimensions	63
Table 32. Coefficient Values for Multiple Regression Analysis of Cabin Environment	63
Table 33. Conclusion of the Hypotheses	64

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IFE	In-flight Entertainment System
DF	Degree of Freedom
N	Sample Size
SERVQUAL	Service Quality Scale
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists Computer Software for Data Analysis

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION

The aviation sector is one of the major economic drivers for prosperity, development and employment in any country. In services, airline sector plays a predominant role. It promotes tourism, international investments and globalisation which contribute to the economic growth of a country. As the national carrier of Sri Lanka SriLankan Airlines handles about 13 billion passengers across the world in a year and moves above 21,743 metric tons of cargo according to the annual report of SriLankan Airlines (2014/2015). Flying to 44 countries, SriLankan Airlines has a fleet of 21 Airbus aircrafts.

Excellent passenger satisfaction is one of the greatest assets for air business in today's competitive environment. Passenger satisfaction service arises when a company can provide passengers with benefits that exceed expectations of the passengers which is considered value-added. If customers are satisfied with the product or service which the company is providing then they will buy more, and do so more often. The on-board experience is still something special for the customer. The customers have a wide choice to select the suitable airline product according to their requirements. Therefore, Airlines Companies are continuously working on the in-flight product development and innovation to differentiate themselves from their competitors. There are many factors that can help an Airlines Company to build its customer base, and passenger service and satisfaction can be a determining factor in the success of an entire operation.

To identify the factors which lead to customer satisfaction in SriLankan Airlines is within the study discussing how the customer satisfaction can be increased and the problems which creates dis-satisfaction among customers.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 The Organization

SriLankan Airlines which is marketed as SriLankan is the national carrier of Sri Lanka. The vision being to be the most preferred airline in Asia with the mission of providing their customers with a reliable and pleasant travel experience and a variety of innovative, professional and mutually profitable services. Also, it meets shareholder expectations of profitably marketing Sri Lanka and contributing towards the well-being of society. Their mission includes they being a competent, proactive and diligent team with their contribution is recognized and rewarded. It was launched as Air Ceylon and was terminated its operations branding as Air Lanka in 1979. In 1998 by Emirates, it was re-branded and introduced the current livery. After ending the Emirates partnership, it has continued using its re-branded name and logo. The airline operates to 94 destinations in 44 countries from its main hub located at Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake. On 1 May 2014 SriLankan Airlines joined the One world airline alliance providing FlySmiles program. SriLankan Airlines provides business and economic class and according to SKYTRAX, SriLankan Airline is a 3-star airline, which normally awarded for the fair quality performance. The flight fleet of SriLankan Airlines comprised of seven A330 -300, six 330 -320, six 320 and two 321 air crafts (SriLankan Airlines, n.d.). SriLankan Airlines operates several cargo flights to Male, the Middle East, and India, using a McDonnell Douglas MD-80 of FitsAir. SriLankan Airlines began domestic air taxi service using two Canadian-built DHC-6-100 aircraft to increase tourism in the southern and central cities of Sri Lanka. It currently flies to Ampara, Bentota, Castlereagh, Dandugama, Dikwella, Hambantota, Kandy, Koggala, Nuwara Eliya, Tissamaharama, and Trincomalee, all from Colombo. Other subsidiaries include catering, engineering, ground handling and IT services.

1.1.2 Problem Identification

Identify the factors those leads to customer satisfaction connected with inflight services and back office operations in SriLankan Airlines

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research aims to examine the factors that will influence customer satisfaction. This research may provide better understanding and insight for airline carriers on what drive customer satisfaction determining which variable has the most significant relationship with them.

From the company perspective, this study may provide better understanding and knowledge on the customer satisfaction to them. Airline industry is considered as a competitive market as well as high operational cost business due to fuel price increases has lowered the profit margin of airline industry. Thus, better understanding on what drives customer satisfaction will help the SriLankan Airlines to increase their customer retention as well as profit.

In addition, there is no study has investigated on the factors that affect the customer satisfaction in SriLankan Airlines inflight services and back office services, so the complicated interrelationships among these constructs have not been fully uncovered and understood. Hence, this study will allow researchers to study these constructs in a single framework and allow SriLankan Airlines to consider the most significant factor that influence customer satisfaction.

1.3 Problem Statement

According to the passenger reviews left on airline rating web sites, SKYTRAX (SKYTRAX, n.d.) and AirlineRatings (airlineratings.com, n.d.) and the travelling web site, TripAdvisor (tripadvisor, n.d.), on customer satisfaction reflects a moderate level of satisfaction while most of the reviews state that the customer satisfaction is poor. The service what they are really served is deviated from the service quality expected by the passengers. This service quality includes the services provides by the Airline and the airport. Therefore, it may lead to generate a negative impact on the air travellers wish to select SriLankan Airlines and the Bandaranayke International Airport which cause passengers to reject the airline and the airport ultimately the both will suffer from financially loss.

Not confining only to the review made by the passengers online, the researcher also had the interviews with the passengers and they also in agreement with the reviews made by the passengers mentioning that the on-board services are not up to the level they

expected. They have expected that flight attendants with the smiling faces would serve them efficiently. It was the passengers' comment that the entertainment system and the seat facilities are not sufficient to fulfil their satisfaction. Also, it was checked that the delays in the flights have occurred making embarrassing situations for the passengers, but those delays were found to have occurred due to unavoidable circumstances such as flight safety checking and assuring the safety, which is a much sound factor that has developed the loyalty upon the passengers. Further the researcher found that SriLankan Airlines ticket prices are expensive compared to some airlines operating in Bandaranayake International Airport, a factor why the passengers prefer some other airlines with the same quality of service quality. These factors cause the researcher to undertake a proper research study on this area.

It appears that Airlines services are the crucial factors that determine the customer satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher decided to narrow down the research area around the back office and inflight services by the airlines and how they affect the customer satisfaction.

Therefore, the final problem to be further researched through this exercise is: 'If the available inflight services and back office operations by the airlines is not sufficient whether it will affect the customer satisfaction and whether they get the expected customer satisfactions to the money being paid'.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

To study the concept of customer satisfaction.

To examine the factors affecting the customer satisfaction.

To analyse the most crucial factors on customer satisfaction.

1.5 Research Questions

What is customer satisfaction concept?

What are the factors affecting customer satisfaction?

What are the most crucial factors affecting customer satisfaction?

1.6 Chapter Layout

The body of this research project consists of five chapters. Each of the chapters link to one another to complete the whole research. The chapters concerned are shown as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one is the introductory chapter which provides a brief overview of the entire research project and clear information on what the research is all about. This chapter outlines the research background, significance of the research as well as the problem statement of the study. Hereby, it also discusses the research objective to be achieved and the research questions to be answered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two consists of comprehensive review of information from previous researches that are available on the study topics. This chapter is to build a theoretical foundation for the research by recovering relevant journals and articles to identify research issues which are worth researching. Hence, this chapter also provides the foundation to developing a good theoretical or conceptual framework to proceed with further investigation and hypotheses testing.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter is the description of methodology which addressed how the research is carried out in term of research design, data collection method, sampling design, measurement scales, and methods of data analysis.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and Analysis

The patterns of the results and analyses of the results which are relevant to the research questions and hypotheses is presented in this chapter. All information collected from respondents are examined, processed and interpreted through a sequence of analysis that includes descriptive analysis, scale measurement and inferential analysis.

Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations

Chapter five concludes the whole research study context. This chapter includes the summary of statistical analyses, discussion on the major findings to validate the research objective and hypotheses. The limitation of the study will be discussed and provide the appropriate recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 02

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The study of customer satisfaction is important as it associates with an organization's current and future performance and is an important source of sustainable competitive advantage. Hence, in this chapter it discusses about the customer satisfaction, possible factors that could affect customer satisfaction and filters the most significant factors out of them, together with the relationship with customer satisfaction referring to the available sources that could provide the study the necessary background.

2.1 Customer Satisfaction

2.1.1 Defining Customer Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1996) satisfaction is the fulfilment depending on a person's desires or expectations made before an experience which is subsequently being compared with the sentiment derived from the experience. It considered as the best judgment and evaluation method on the basis of consumption experience. Meanwhile, Ranaweera *et al* (2003) affirmed that customer satisfaction is mainly important in the service operations due to the benefits it brings to organizations and it will directly affect the performance of the organizations. According to Deng, *et al* (2009) customer satisfaction is becomes the most important part in the business field because when the customer is satisfied then it will provide the profitable business to the industry. Basically, customer's satisfaction is term which means that how customers predict about your product after the use of a specific product or service and how they evaluate the product or service in single manner and compare with the competitors' products. The customer satisfaction is customer's evaluation of goods and services in term of whether it is according to the customer's requirements or it is dissatisfied the customer's needs and wants. According to Kotler *et al* (2012) actually customer's satisfaction is the customer's evaluation of goods and services in term of whether it is according to the customer's needs and wants or customers dissatisfied with the product services or the dissatisfied with the performance of the products and not according to expectation of customers and sometime customers more satisfied if products performance is beyond

with their expectations and if one aspect of product and services is not meets the customer's satisfaction then they can be dissatisfied with the overall performance. So, for the food variable, it involves the price, quality, and value of money. For the service variable, it includes the staff quality, behaviour, and attitude and for the restaurants it also involves the decoration and atmosphere. According to Gustafsson *et al* (2005) customer satisfaction is the present performance of the product or services which are providing to it on a specific time or on that time when customers are using to it. Some of the research said that customer satisfaction is key element to build the brand for the long time as well as develop the brand image of the company with in short time. According to Eshghi *et al* (2007) it can be long term and costly process to satisfy the customer but if companies gain it then it will provide the long-term relationship between customers and company brand as well as provide the more profitability.

Satisfaction is a complex concept in itself which makes it difficult to describe and quantify. As described by Oliver (1997), satisfaction is a complex concept making it challenging to come up with a common definition. However, studies on the topic of “customer satisfaction”, as critically reviewed by marketers as well as scholars and practitioners have expressed several relevant dimensions of the concept.

2.1.2 Satisfaction as A Multi-Dimensional Concept

Customer satisfaction is a multifaceted concept relating to diverse magnitudes of numerous involvements with a product/service provider. In most studies, the definition of customer satisfaction relates to the quality of a service or a product offering (Brady et al 2001; Kotler *et al*, 2006); however, Garland (1989) associate the meaning of customer satisfaction with other non-quality dimensions. These involve an on-going business relationship or with price-performance, satisfaction with the time or service delivery or the service experience, service context and overall satisfaction of an organization's performance (Gronroos, 2000; Edvardsson *et al*, 2005). With a product or service there can be numerous dimensions, for example; what the product offers, product or service reliability, timeliness, and friendliness of the organization providing a service and so on. In relation to the purpose of what a customer wants to achieve, one can relate satisfaction to any item of interest.

2.1.3 Satisfaction with Item-Specific and Overall Performance

Satisfaction is related to a specific aspect of a product or a service (Cronin *et al* 1992). For instance, in an airline company, satisfaction can be related to the following specific attributes such as the checking-in process, boarding call, cabin crew performance, or on-board services. Customer satisfaction can also be related to the overall performance of a product/service or overall performance of an organization's product or service. Considering satisfaction as an attribute specific or overall performance depends on what one is interested in, if the interest is more of achieving market value, then attribute-specific would provide more useful insights to practitioners to an extent that a specific dimension of a service meets customer expectations or desires. In contrast, if the interest is to accomplish academic value, then the measure has to focus on the provision of useful information to academics and other stakeholders for the purpose of generalizations which may result in further research.

2.1.4 Levels of Satisfaction

Satisfaction can be characterized on different levels as per a customer's evaluation. For instance, some customers may express a negative feeling towards a service or a product while others may express a positive feeling towards it. Different customers evaluate a product or a service differently making them either highly satisfied (positive feeling) while others may feel highly dissatisfied (negative feeling). Kossman (2006), defined customer satisfaction as preventing complaints from customers by trying to meet or exceed their expectations. Nevertheless, the lack of complaints does not mean that customers are fully satisfied with the service or product provided but rather agree with what they receive based on intrinsic merit. Therefore, in this study satisfaction is defined in both negative and positive terms.

2.1.5 Significance of Customer Satisfaction and its Measurement

Many firms have utilized the customer satisfaction measurement as a means of improving business intelligence, better decision making, enhanced customer relations, and an improved quality of service and product offerings (Grigorousdis, 2010). Customer satisfaction measurement is paramount in any type of business organizations. The measurement of customer satisfaction is also contained in the main principles of continuous improvement of contemporary innovation (Doole, 2008). In fact,

measurement is part of the five main functions of management science in relation to the understanding, analysis and the improvement of contemporary innovation. According to one philosophy, if you cannot measure something, you cannot understand it. Actually, customer satisfaction needs to be measured and translated into a number of quantifiable parameters (Grigorousdis ,2010), which helps an organization to better understand its customers and be in a better position to offer a superior quality of service. Recently, many researchers have commented on an increase of the significance of customer satisfaction among other theories, which lead to the knowledge that customer satisfaction dimensions are the most reliable feedback for the enhancement of a firm's performance to raise satisfaction levels among customers. Customer satisfaction is the most dependable feedback, taking into account the fact that it provides an effective, direct, meaningful and impartial approach to customers' preferences and expectations. In this way, it supports the perspective that customer satisfaction is considered as the standard of performance and a standard of excellence for any business organization (Kossmann, 2006).

Additionally, in Smith (2007), customer satisfaction is the measurement of how well the company's products or services meet or exceed customer expectations. It is stated that the Customer satisfaction measurements are the overall psychological evaluation that is based on the customer's lifespan of merchandise. Measurements of customer satisfaction is a strong forecaster of customer retention, loyalty and repeat purchase and is therefore critical to any product or service a company can provide. The quantification of satisfaction involves three psychological elements for assessment of the product or service experience: cognitive (thinking/evaluation), affective (emotional-feeling/like-dislike) and behavior (current/future actions). Such validation is associated with Oliver's (1993) analysis that consumer satisfaction was first viewed as the consumer's accomplishment response. Conversely, Oliver further interprets that satisfaction also involves situations that are not restricted to simple profligacy and can also be considered as a process as well as an outcome. In recent studies Oliver empirically presents a validated model of customer satisfaction which clearly explains the specified interpretation. With that authenticated model of customer satisfaction, it was revealed that determinants of satisfaction are subject to both positive and negative affective (emotional) responses and cognitive disconformities (Vavra, 1997).

Customer Satisfaction needs to be clearly defined and endorsed as a process or an outcome and the issue has led to substantial debate in customer satisfaction literature.

Comprehensive studies conducted by Parasuraman (1988) and in Oliver (1980) mentioned that satisfaction is conceptualized as a process and was held up to classical scrutiny by most scholars at that time. In this conceptualization, it is assumed that customer satisfaction is a result of satisfaction from the process of comparing perceived performance and expectations or desires Khalifa *et al* (2002). This perception has been grounded by the expectancy disconfirmation theory suggested by Oliver (1980), where “customer is satisfied if the performance of a product/service is equal to his/her expectations regarded as positive disconfirmation and he/she is dissatisfied if the product/service performance is perceived to be below his/her expectation regarded as negative disconfirmation.” Therefore, recommending satisfaction as a process, satisfaction is not engrossed in this case but rather the qualifications to satisfaction, which occur primarily during the service delivery process (Grigorousdis *et al*, 2010).

Customer satisfaction as a cognitive and affective response is another debatable issue in customer satisfaction literature; hence a clear definition needs to be reached as to whether customer satisfaction is a cognitive response or an effective response. Although satisfaction has been widely conceptualized as a process by many scholars its nature remains unclear. While some authors maintain satisfaction as a cognitive response which encompasses an evaluation of product/service offerings from a provider against expectations, others believe satisfaction as an emotional or affective state of mind that is formed through the progress of service delivery at which customers encounter service experiences that affect their emotions. Nevertheless, the following authors; Oliver, 1993; Gronroos, 2001; Edvardsson *et al*, 2005; believe that satisfaction is both cognitive and affective. This belief depicts that customers do not only consume an offering which they cognitively appraise, but their participation in the service production and delivery process allows them to emotionally assess the service quality. Consequently, this study conceptualizes customer satisfaction as cognitive and affective since we believe customers express their satisfaction with the service quality cognitively and emotionally.

2.1.6 Dimensions of Customer Satisfaction

Extensive studies on customer satisfaction have led to the development of many models which explain the components of customer satisfaction. Some authors perceived satisfaction as an overall component while others conceptualize satisfaction as a product of customers’ comparison of the perceived performance of the product/service

with some cognitive or affective standards such as desire, expectation, perceived value or perceived service quality (Oliver, 1980).

However, for this study the components of satisfaction measured are satisfaction with the services offered by SriLankan Airlines and satisfaction with staff performance and overall satisfaction among air travelers. These components are considered important in this study as each of them is empirically validated to have a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Parasuraman. *et al*, 1988).

2.2 Factors Affecting Customer Satisfaction

In order for airlines to cover the cost of their production and services and create additional profit the passengers must be willing to pay. This willingness to pay can be seen from the passengers' choice of airline to their choice of in-flight services and differs between low cost carriers (LCC), such as Spirit Airlines, and legacy carriers (LC), such as Delta Airlines (Balcombe *et al* 2009). Balcome *et al.* (2009) found that while additional on board services to increase comfort level did increase the customers' willingness to pay, the price differences reflected those of the price of the flight. This conveys the idea that passengers are willing to pay for extra services on low cost carriers because they originally paid less for their ticket, but those on legacy carriers need more of an attraction in order for these companies to see a profit. LCs that focus more on the quality of the in-flight service creates an increase of profitability (Balcome *et al.*, 2009).

Research on the effect of airline service on passengers' behavioural intentions Park (2004) had declared that perceived service quality of the airline industry has a positive effect on passenger satisfaction with the airline image and service value, although the relative importance of service quality was not investigated. Mohd *et al* (2011) have stated that the service quality is the essence of airline companies which makes their image differentiate from others and keep their image in the minds of passengers. Many airlines followed the route of higher service quality through on ground and off ground service. Inboard meal is one of the important aspect of the airline operation. Now days it became a marketing strategy. This research depicts the reaction of customers through in-flight meals to see the satisfying level and re flying intention. Food not only sacrifices the inboard customers but also have an effect on flying intention.

According to Jayaraman *et al* (2011) they have found that the factors such as the pre-flight services which they are providing, customer relationship management and cabin

environment and in-flight services that customers are getting influence customer satisfaction. If these are very good, then customer gets satisfied. The customers will be satisfied if the cabin facilities, baggage systems are well maintained. Customer satisfaction also depends on how they are maintaining relationship with the customers. How the staffs are behaving with customer, entertainment facilities, timing plays a key role in customer satisfaction in Airlines Industry. According to Archana *et al* (2012), they have studied the factors which influences on passenger satisfaction. They have identified that Cuisines provided, seat comfort, safety these factors have an important role in customer satisfaction. They have also found that customer satisfaction depends on personal entertainment, which is an important factor in flying decisions of passenger. According to their study online seat booking, call centre facilities and reservation/cancellation is highest influencing factor in flying decisions of the passengers.

Past researches have indicated that the brand image has significant impact on customer perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. Hence according to Ryu (2008) it is an important task for an organization to maintain the uniqueness of brand image compared to competitors.

Satisfaction is closely associated to repurchase of the services intentions. According to Fornell (1992) customer satisfaction has always been considered as an essential business goal because it was assumed that satisfied customers would repurchase the services again. Referring to Blodgett *et al* (1995) the researchers have concluded that it costs more to gain a new customer than it does to retain an existing one. Furthermore, Han *et al* (2009) found a significant association between customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, such as repurchase and word-of-mouth communication. Next Appiah-Adu(1999) has mentioned that the increase of retention rate implied greater positive word of mouth and it could lead to a better business performance of an airline industry Meanwhile Kim *et al* (2009) had posited that customer satisfaction is positively related to return intention and positive word-of-mouth endorsement in university foodservice dining operations.

Research paper by Gour *et al* (n.d.) they have focused that flight schedules, flight attendant and the service quality are the key factors of customer satisfaction. They have said that customer satisfaction depends on the price of the airlines services. They have

focused on the services like comfort, food, and other in – flight services. These leads to customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction also depends on how they are handling the complaints and flights are running in time.

Abbas *et al* (2014) has mentioned that the effect of in-flight services, reservation and ticketing, in-flight availability, and reliability have marginal effects on the passenger's overall satisfaction. Moreover, the image has a marginal effect on the perceived value. It is concluded that in-flight services and reservation and ticketing, airport services and employee services, reliability and flight availability, affect passenger's satisfaction; while value, and image affect the passenger's overall satisfaction. In addition, overall passenger satisfaction affects the cognitive loyalty; while airport service, employee service, perceived value, and image have a positive effect on passenger's satisfaction. Moreover, passenger satisfaction and image have a positive effect on cognitive loyalty. Also, service quality (Airport- Employee) has a significant, positive effect on the perceived value. Finally, reliability, flight availability have negligible effects on passenger satisfaction. The image has significant positive effects on passenger's satisfaction, perceived value, and behavioural loyalty. Moreover, perceived value and price have significant positive effects on the passenger's satisfaction. Further, passenger perceptions of the airline's service recovery performance are positively related to passenger satisfaction and behavioural loyalty.

According to the literature review, the factors affecting the customer satisfaction, identified as

- In-flight services
- Reservation and ticketing
- Flight schedules
- Flight attendant
- Service quality
- Behavioural intentions
- Repurchase of the services intentions
- Brand image
- Customer relationship management
- Cabin environment
- In-flight Entertainment facilities

2.3 In Flight Service Quality

In the early 1980s the significance of service quality in goods and services were completely understood by several companies. The term Service quality is a vital tool in gauging customer satisfaction. Quality of goods and services may be simply ascertained by customer on the other hand it is often believed that Service quality is much more complex. According to Lewis *et al* (1983), Service quality is an evaluation of how good the product or service offered by the firm matches customer anticipations. Offering excellent service quality means being conventional to customer expectations on a regular basis. To ensure excellent customer satisfaction every company should focus on rendering best customer service which may make the customer contented and cheerful. Therefore, many authors believed that the concept of customer satisfaction is often associated with service quality. The word service quality may be cited as the focus on reaching the customer's desires and needs and how well the service provided is received by the customers. Berry *et al* (1994) argued that concept of service quality has been associated to costs, effectiveness, better customer satisfaction, sustaining existing customers.

The concept of Service Quality has been termed as a tool of customer satisfaction. Customer happiness is a feeling or mindset of a client towards a particular product or service after it is being consumed. A satisfied buyer helps in promotion of sales of goods, hence customer satisfaction acts as an inter-link between several stages of behaviour of prospective clients. For instance, a customer may repurchase a product if he is more satisfied with that. The brand or image of an organisation is often improved based on the number of satisfied customers because a satisfied customer may bring in new customers. Customer satisfaction may be measured by significant customer perceptions of service quality, fondness and prospects (Udo *et al* 2010). To be precise satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the difference between how a customer expects to be concerned and how he or she thinks being cared for. According to Ayob (2005) states service quality as "the level to which the service, the service procedure and the service establishment can meet the outlook of the user. Some popular definitions include "suitability to utilize" or "one that pleases the customer" (Kandampully, 2008)

Firm's produces goods and offer services to its customers such as space storage, distribution, product insurance, customer service and promotion. A production unit has

both tangible and intangible aspects. According to Anthony (2005) service quality has more intangible factors than produced goods. The term service quality may be distinctive as the focal point on meeting the customer's wants and desires, and how well the service delivered reaches the customers. As per Udo *et al* (2010) service quality may be stated as customer perception of how better a service reaches or go beyond their expectations. The service activities are really critical for the financial system to function and to improve the quality of our life. The author James Fitzsimmons defines service as "unpreserved, subtle experience carried out for a customer performing in the role of co-producer". Services are often described as ideas and concepts; goods as products or commodities. Consumers experience physical products such as talcum powder and leather goods which is different than intangible service such as air travel. Buyers may physically experience the features of talcum powder and leather products whereas the services are generally subtle. Services are widely carried out openly for buyers. The study of Service Quality concept is more complex as it often deals with intangible and consumable elements. Every firm expect their Motivated and dedicated personnel to make their consumers happy by offering excellent service. This will result in bringing in new customers.

2.3.1 Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality

According to Cronin *et al* (1992) since customer satisfaction has been considered to be based on the customer's experience on a particular service encounter, it is in line with the fact that service quality is a determinant of customer satisfaction because service quality comes from outcome of the services from service providers in organizations. Another author stated in his theory that "definitions of consumer satisfaction relate to a specific transaction (the difference between predicted service and perceived service) in contrast with 'attitudes', which are more enduring and less situational-oriented," (Lewis, 1993). This is in line with the idea of Zeithaml *et al* (2006).

Regarding the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, Oliver (1993) first suggested that service quality would be antecedent to customer satisfaction regardless of whether these constructs were cumulative or transaction-specific. Some researchers have found empirical supports for the view of the point mentioned above (Fornell *et al* 1996, Spreng *et al* 1996) where customer satisfaction came as a result of service quality.

In relating customer satisfaction and service quality, researchers have been more precise about the meaning and measurements of satisfaction and service quality. Although it is stated that other factors such as price and product quality can affect customer satisfaction, perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml *et al.* 2006). This theory complies with the idea of Wilson *et al* (2008) and has been confirmed by the definition of customer satisfaction presented by other researchers.

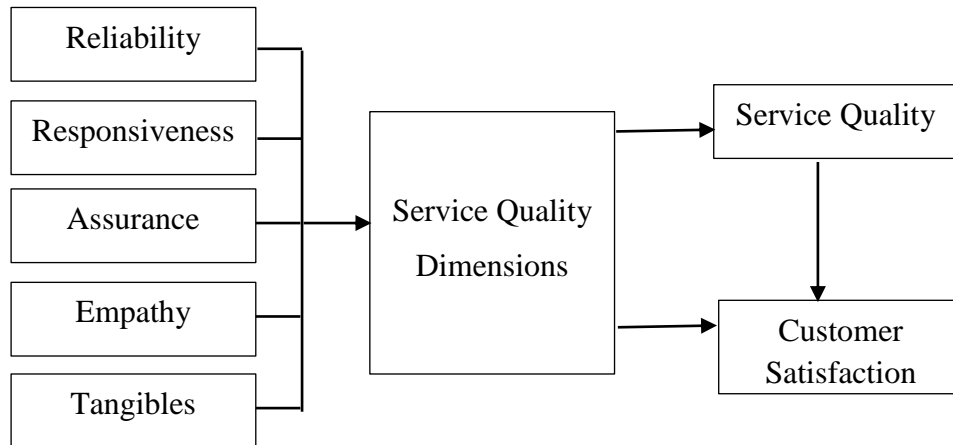


Figure 1. Relationship between Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality (Agbor, 2011)

As studying the literature, it has been understood that customers exercise similar criteria in gauging service quality in service industry. These measures fall fewer than 10 key groups branded as dimensions of service quality:

1. Consistency: It means steadiness in performance and reliability
2. Approachable: This may be explained as the eagerness and friendly nature of personnel to offer excellent service.
3. Competencies: Implies term of the requisite skills and information to carry out the service
4. Convenience: This represents convenience and affability
5. Consideration: This may be explained as the admiration, politeness, compassion and sociable nature of staff
6. Transparent: Indicate to communicate with passengers in language they can easily understand to attract diverse customers
7. Reliability: denotes integrity and loyalty
8. Safety: means free from risk, danger or threat

9. Know your customer: It's an attempt to identify with the needs and desires of the consumers
10. Tangible: It deals with the physical circumstances and image of the product or service.

It is often argued that there are ten determinants to gauge service quality but author Savitz, (2009) classified these determinants into five.

1. Reliability
2. Responsiveness
3. Assurance
4. Empathy
5. Tangibility

Firstly Reliability, this entails the stability in performance and fairness. In simple words, it may be described as acting as per the customer demands and delivering what is promised by the firm, for example, delivering services to the customer within the stipulated time. Secondly, Responsiveness means optimistic and enthusiastic personnel in the organisation ready to provide quick and prompt service to customers. If a passenger has a problem, how the customer service department staffs attend to his queries and take necessary action and resolve them with the turnaround time. Here in airline industry the ability to respond well to the customer is assessed. Thirdly Assurance, it implies that every organisation should try to attract the customer by its brand value/image; on the contrary it should win consumers by its honesty and creditability. Next determinant may be explained as Empathy meaning being polite, thoughtful and friendly to the clients. Every firm expects its workforce to give respect to its customers. In service industry, especially in airline sector every company expects its staff to be soft-spoken, polite and courteous. Lastly Tangibles as it incorporates the proof of the service physically in terms of facilities, outer appearance of the staff, the tools and machinery used to render the service. These five dimensions are called as SERVQUAL dimensions and the relationship of these dimensions with the customer satisfaction is given in a model, called as SERVQUAL model (Agbor, 2011).

2.4 In-flight Entertainment Facilities

In-flight entertainment equipment is often touch screen sensitive, allowing interaction between each seat on the aircraft and the flight attendants, which are wireless in some systems. In-flight entertainment (IFE) refers to the entertainment available to aircraft passengers during a flight. Various varieties of in-flight entertainment are Audio entertainment, encoding standards, Video entertainment, Closed-captioning like In-flight movies and Personal televisions, In-flight games, Moving-map systems, Islamic prayers and directions to Mecca, In-flight connectivity like Satellite and internal telephony, Data communication, Wi-Fi and Mobile phone.

In recent years, one of the areas for product differentiation has been the development of in-flight entertainment, in which airlines are investing a huge sum of money. The increase in the IFE expenditure has been due to airlines moving away from the old overhead distributed services to video and audio systems which are installed in the back or the armrest of individual seats (Alamdari, 1999). Doyle *et al* (1998) argue that successful companies have a competitive advantage in overall company reputation and communicate it as quality to their customers. In the last 40 years, in-flight entertainment (IFE) system has evolved from communal screen to individual seat-back screens, and from linear broadcast of content to audio and video on demand. Screen size has grown, picture quality improved, and as content storage capability increases, airlines race to increase the volume of content stored, often offering hundreds of hours of diverse content to passengers. All this tremendously benefited the passenger who was required to remain more or less fastened to his/her seat, and whose attention was now occupied as time passed on-board an aircraft.

According to Garcia (2015) selection of newspapers and magazines, selection of movies, audio visual quality of in-flight entertainment system (IFE) sees as third priority factor for both business and economy class cabins. It depicts that important are the ease of operation of the IFE, the size of the screen, the availability of in-flight Wi-Fi, the variety of TV shows and series available, and IFE overall while when they are not delivered, they have a limited effect on dissatisfaction.

According to JetBlue Airways (2009) it could win as the best airline with the best customer satisfaction in USA by delivering unlimited complimentary in-flight snacks, and a live in-flight entertainment system boasting 36 channels of free DIRECTV

programming and more than 100 channels of free XM Satellite Radio at every comfortable leather seat. Customers can kick back and enjoy the live entertainment in JetBlue's spacious aircraft cabins, which offer the most legroom in coach of any U.S. airline.

There is evidence to show that music is a way to reduce flight-related stress amongst travellers. Additionally, games are a way to improve comfort level with fun, depending on the genre. One example of emerging technology is single and multi-player gaming during flights. Gaming systems can be networked to allow interactive playing by multiple passengers. However, the challenge in creating a system such as this lies in the engineering. The expectation of players is that the game will run smoothly and exhibit fast response times, which is a challenge of currently installed systems.

2.4.1 Determinants of In Flight Entertainment System

According to the literature review the factors, affecting in-flight entertainment system are identified as follow.

1. Ease of operation of the IFE
2. The size of the screen
3. The availability of in-flight Wi-Fi
4. The variety of TV shows and series available

2.5 Reservation and Ticketing

Airline systems absolutely fascinating, especially the way they are synced with the airlines' websites, flight information display systems, mobile apps, etc. Also, how airline integration works is a super cool subject, just seeing how various airlines partner with each other and how their systems are set up is something amazing. Confirmed ticketing or the reservation, means the reservation has been created, all of passenger's information has been stored in the system and a Record Locator/Confirmation Number or PNR (Passenger Name Record) has been issued and the flights are being held for passenger. For example, SriLankan Airlines allows passenger to hold an award reservation for a few days, basically the reservation is created, the flights are reserved for the passenger and the space is being held, meaning no one else can have his or her space when the passenger has a reservation on hold.

When a reservation is purchased, the confirmed reservation goes into the ticketing queue, with most airlines, the reservation gets ticketed a few minutes after passenger purchases and confirms it. Some airlines take longer to ticket a reservation. e-ticket is the latest mean of use of ticketing in Airline industry and the research discusses the e-ticketing and online reservation in SriLankan Airlines. As if any changes are made to the reservation, the tickets attached to that reservation need to be reissued. It can be a bit confusing and misleading to many people because airline systems usually only display the confirmed reservation to the passenger (on their app or website), and not the actual ticketed reservation. Therefore, the discussion is focused on online reservation and e-ticketing.

Definitions of e-ticketing that have been reported demonstrates efforts to explicate the full spectrum of e-ticketing for both the consumer and the organization. For instance, according to alfawaer *et al* (2011) define an e-ticket as “a paperless electronic document used for ticketing travelers, mainly in the commercial airline industry”. Sorooshian *et al* (2013) further define e-ticketing as “a procedure of keeping record of sales, usage tracking and accounting for a passenger’s transport with no requirement for a paper ‘value document’. This definition clearly indicates that the e-ticket includes more than just a paperless document for the passenger: rather the e-ticket represents an extensive architecture within the organization that provides a wealth of information about the consumer.

The definitions of e-tickets and e-ticketing provided in the literature clearly suggest that e-ticketing has a host of implications. According to lubeck *et al* (2012) they were able to examine these issues by tracing the evolution of e-tickets and efforts by the organization to improve efficiency in ticketing operations. According to these authors, e-tickets have evolved to address concerns associated with “inefficiency in information management and control of operations”. E-tickets, as noted by Lubeck and co-workers, require the creation of a comprehensive technological platform that controls almost every aspect of the customer relationship within the organization. As such, the roots of e-ticketing go much further than the interface with the customer.

2.5.1 Ticketing, Reservation and Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction with e-ticketing indicates that satisfaction has been measured through two components: customer satisfaction and customer retention. Patterns of

loyalty in e-ticketing and e-service have been reviewed (Chang *et al* 2009). These authors argue that patterns of customer satisfaction in e-service are similar to those that develop in face-to-face transactions and interactions. Specifically, these authors assert that: “when perceived value is low, the customer will be inclined to switch to competing businesses in order to increase perceived value, thus contributing to a decline in loyalty”. Satisfaction develops over time as a response to the way in which customers are treated by the organization.

In the context of e-ticketing, satisfaction is thus influenced by a wide range of variables focused on the quality of service provided to the customer. Bernardo *et al* (2013) illustrate this point by noting the loyalty in e-services is shaped by services provided to customers before and after a sale, as well as the general environment in which the transaction takes place. If the environment meets customer expectations for security and support, loyalty with the customer will often be established, leading to the ability of the organization to retain the customer over the long-term. Thus, loyalty and customer retention are integrally related when it comes to the development of e-services (Enzmann *et al* 2005).

The relationship between loyalty and customer retention for e-services and e-ticketing appears to stem from commitment, trust, involvement of the organization, and the perceived value of the service provided (Chen, 2012). As such, companies offering e-ticketing services must carefully consider elements of customer support and service to build strong relationships with consumers. Noor *et al* (2012) argue that in order to achieve this outcome, companies offering any type of e-service must be able to build comprehensive relationships with customers. This insight effectively supports what kolsaker *et al* (2004) note about the need for customer support and service in e-ticketing. Even though many organizations believe that customer service and support is not needed with e-ticketing, in actuality there is a definitive impetus to develop customer service and support that targets customer needs for e-ticketing to ensure the development of commitment and trust leading to increased loyalty and customer retention.

2.5.2 Determinants of Ticketing and Reservation

Evaluation of the factors which contribute to customer adoption of e-ticketing clearly indicates that customer and technical support are critical issues of concern. Buhalis

(2004) asserts that customer perceptions of service quality will play a significant role in shaping decision-making for the individual to utilize e-ticketing services. As argued by these authors, customer perception influenced by the level of support provided to the customer, especially when problems arise in e-ticketing service. Sureshkumar (2011) delves further into this issue arguing that perceptions of the customer regarding customer service have direct ramifications for customer behavior. If the customer believes that the organization will provide customer service and support through the purchase of e-tickets, customers will be more likely to purchase these products.

Infrastructure to support e-ticketing operations may also play a role in developing customer satisfaction for these services. As noted in the introduction of this investigation, e-ticketing services typically developed in an ad hoc manner within the organization (Curbera, *et al.*, 2002). As a result, e-ticketing was not initially integrated with other operations, leading to problems when customers required additional service or support (Curbera, *et al.*, 2002). Jakubauskas (2006) considers these issues, noting that e-ticketing systems have undergone notable changes since their inception. In order to ensure effective and efficient use of e-tickets, Jakubauskas maintains that organizations have had to establish network architectures to support e-ticketing services. These infrastructures have been essential to creating a comprehensive system that simultaneously addresses customer needs while creating the supports needed to streamline operations within the organization (Jakubauskas, 2006). Without the infrastructure to support e-ticketing, organizations would not be able to utilize these services to achieve cost reductions and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Data security is also an issue of concern impacting consumer behavior and decision-making with regard to e-ticketing. Mut-Puigserver *et al* (2012) consider the security concerns associated with e-ticketing, noting that security breaches remain a significant barrier for the adoption of e-ticketing services in many transportation organizations and agencies. The scope and extent of security issues related to e-ticketing is highlighted by Mut-Puigserver and co-workers who argue that “the use of ET systems enables various privacy abuses both in real-time and retrospect since the anonymity of users is not always guaranteed and, therefore, users can be traced and their profiles of usual movements can be created”.

E-ticketing services must also be user-friendly for the customer. Dekkers *et al* (2007) consider the issue of user-friendliness, noting that customers, depending on their willingness to use mobile technology, will view this issue differently. Specifically, these researchers examined the use of e-ticketing systems in the public transportation system of the Netherlands. Tracking usage patterns and customer preferences, Dekkers *et al* (2007) found that e-ticketing services were convenient for regular and semi-regular customers using the transportation system. These individuals found the e-ticketing system easy to use and navigate. For less regular users, the system was viewed as difficult to utilize, resulting in a decline of e-ticket use among this group.

A great way to build customer satisfaction through marketing is to promotion, company need to give away a few things. Product or service promotions are a great way to build relationships with customers because everyone is out to find a good deal. Use the holidays to run some product promotions as most people have the day off and they will spend time in your store if company offer them something valuable.

Many researchers have hinted at a feelings-based route through which promotions may impact consumer's satisfaction. Scott (1976) was the first to suggest that the effectiveness of a deal might be explainable by the affect generated by that promotional offer. Promotions are shown to reduce feelings of guilt associated with consumption of certain products that can result to customer satisfaction (Strahilevitz, 1998) and the outcome of promotional purchases is predicted to result in specific pride-related responses such feeling like a "smart shopper" (Schindler, 1989). Despite indications of affect based reactions to promotions, there has not been a systematic delineation of the dimensions of affect as they pertain to promotional response. The important factor which drives customer satisfaction is the ability of the promotion with website to provide ability of the user to control the medium. To satisfy all level of competence among consumer and their different requirements, tasted and preferences a site must offer a vast array of features and function which will inevitably make it slower to load and more complicated to use (Reicheld, 2000). Information such as discounted product and compiling special offers from several different companies selling the same product and displaying them to the public could increase customer satisfaction. Potential customers have an opportunity to make a detailed comparison of the offering on the website's promotion before making an informed choice. Consistency is an important

condition because when people use the internet for the first times they form an opinion and remember each stage of the transaction (Khatibi *et al* 2007).

According to Kurniawan (2010) customer satisfaction based on experiences in the interpretation of the exchange relationship in the marketplace. The ongoing buyer seller relationships take many different forms. The buyer's perception of the effectiveness of the exchange relationship is a significant mobility barrier and potential competitive advantage for the seller that insulates from price competition.

Brand affects how a company is remembered, and how customer describes the company to other. Brand building takes consistency, and commitment, to ensure that the brand communicate the desired message to the consumer. Brand are also an effective marketing strategy since companies with a positive brand presence can use the leverage developed from the bricks and mortar structure in using all the benefit of branding (Didier., 2003).

Grasse (1999) states that it has been recognized that brand are often the most valuable corporate assets, exceeding less dominate product both in term of consumer awareness and of financial valuation. There are theories that recognize brand as being anchored in consumer awareness as intangible assets of companies or as a theoretical construct, which is functionally depend on brand management. Consumer use brand to identify the source of market of a product and to assign responsibility to the particular manufacturer or distributor for delivery of the product in the manner describe. The brand is a promise to the consumer that product will be deliver to them with all of the features described, and commutated. Branding is a relationship that is built on understanding and satisfaction (Higgins, 1999). The evolution of branding in the bricks and mortal structure has created a value structure that becomes even more important in the online sales. The value of branding emerged in the tangible consumer product market, in an environment where the customer was able to capture, and experience the product through sensory perception. The online space provides a challenge for marketer to adapt the notion of branding in a new environment where product are distributed and advertised, but consumers do not experience the same concept of branding. Branding can provide opportunities for differentiation and customer satisfaction (Sharon, 2003).

According to the literature review the factors, affecting reservation and ticketing are identified as follow.

1. Customer Technical Support
2. Infrastructure
3. Data Security
4. User Friendliness
5. Promotion
6. Customer Experience
7. Brand

2.6 Cabin Environment

There is a growing importance in regards to the physical environment for the services of service-centric companies. Therefore, there is a need for the studies related thereto. In particular, the competition between airlines is getting more intense. Thus, it is imperative to have differentiated points for the physical environment by meeting the expectations of passengers. Kotler (1973) defined atmosphere (physical environment) as an effort to design purchase environment to increase purchase possibility and generate specific effects of purchases. He also defined this atmosphere as something that included vision, audition, olfaction and tactile sense. He argued that the atmosphere of the airline industry included modern elements and the efficiency of the airport terminal, music, colour and the number of attractive restaurants and bars, the attractiveness of the interior and the exterior appearance of airplanes, the offering of movies and music and even the appearance and clothes of airline staff. He said that the aforementioned things were designed to remove the fear of passengers who were strained due to flight. Davis (1984) argued that the physical environment inside an organization consisted of a physical structure, physical stimuli, symbolic artefacts, etc. He defined physical structure as architectural design to influence or control social interactions and the physical placement of furniture. He also defined physical stimuli as those to obstruct the awareness of executive managers and organizational members and influence their behaviours. In contrast, Baker (1987) defined the physical environment as a combination of ambient factors, design factors, and social factors. Bitner (1992) named the physical environment of the service industry “servicescape”. Also, he defined it as an objective and physical factor controlled by a company, which

could influence consumers and employees. To easily describe the concept of physical environment, he expressed “built environment” or the physical environment of the service industry as servicescape. Moreover, he defined the physical environment as a man-made artificial environment as something that was differentiated from the natural and social environment.

2.6.1 Customer Satisfaction and Cabin Environment

During the researches, it was found that the in-flight physical environment would have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It was found that spatial relationship between seats, between passageways and between facility components such as storage space for carry-on baggage, seat arrangement and convenience of movement in the cabin and spatiality representing seating comfort were the most important factors for customer satisfaction, followed by aesthetics representing the aesthetic attractiveness of the airplane, in-flight air influencing the freshness of the cabin, temperature and light, amenity of cleanliness and in-flight entertainingness including movies and music. (Hye *et al*, 2015)

Further it was found that the perceived quality of the in-flight physical environment would have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. That impact was absolute. Further satisfaction as to the in-flight physical environment would have a positive impact on customer loyalty and image. It was also found that satisfaction had a greater impact on image than loyalty. It was highlighted the importance of the in-flight physical environment by examining the satisfaction. (Kim, 2008). Moreover, the studies have confirmed which physical environment factors would influence customer satisfaction by deducting the determinants of the physical environment. As a result, it was found that the in-flight physical environment would influence perceived quality and perceived quality would have an absolute impact on satisfaction. (Hye *et al*, 2015)

2.6.2 Determinants of Cabin Environment

The physical environment of airlines can be limited to the aircraft cabin and airport terminal. Many scholars have a different way of defining the configuration of physical environment. Kotler (1973) classified it according to vision, audition, olfaction and tactile sense. He argued that the physical stimuli related to vision included colour, light, size and shape while audition included sound pitch, speed, frequency, etc. He also

argued that olfaction included smell, freshness, etc. while tactile sense included tenderness, softness, temperature, etc. Davis (1984) reported that the physical environment of an organization consisted of physical structure, physical stimuli, symbolic artefacts, etc. Physical structure refers to such things as wall, hallway, doorway, furniture and seating arrangement, etc., which had the tendency of regulating physical movement and limiting social interactions. Physical stimuli could be as diverse as including phone ringer sound that would disturb the attention of organizational members, the sound of a clock, the sound of an interphone, coffee or cigarette smell, computer printing sound, etc. Symbolic artefacts refer to office design, furniture arrangement, wall colour, exhibition photos, etc.

Baker (1987) classified the physical environment into ambient factors, design factors and social factors. Ambient factors are the background conditions that cannot be immediately recognized. For instance, inside temperature and light that attract attention only in an insufficient or uncomfortable situation are some examples of ambient factors. These are deemed as mandatory elements. Thus, customers tend to avoid the physical environment of that service when they recognize such an ambient factor. Design factors consist of such aesthetic factors as architectural beauty and colour and such functional factors as layout and stability. Thus, it is the visual factors, which customers can clearly recognize, compared to the ambient factors. It forms more positive vision as to services as compared with ambient factor. In contrast, social factors refer to customers and employees that are human components. It is argued that the number, appearance and behaviour of customers and employees who are in the physical environment of a service provided to customers may lead to approach behaviour or avoidance behaviour.

Kim (1999) classified the components of the physical environment into the following six dimensions: amenity, spatiality, aesthetics, entertainingness, cleanliness and convenience. They are frequently utilized as the measurement factor of various studies on physical environment. Amenity refers to physical and psychological states felt when one feels very good because the spirit and body of a human are integrated. It can also be said as a very personal and subjective thing. Such factors as noise, temperature, air, light and colour in a specific place are important determinants of the comfort of a given place. The psychological state and behaviour of humans vary in accordance with the aforementioned factors. Spatiality refers to the spatial relationship between office furniture, supplies, equipment, service place, passageway placement method and the

components hereof. It will be easier for customers to enter when the physical environment is designed to have spatiality. Also, they will be able to access complementary services such as the washroom, restroom, and snack bar. Those aesthetic factors provided by such complementary tools as staff uniform, pen and paper perform a critical role in increasing the attractiveness of the physical service environment in addition to service facilities. Furthermore, they may have a significant impact on the positive awareness of customers for the quality of services provided to them. Entertainingness is the property related to pleasure. Hereupon, it is related to stimulating entertainment by providing pleasant shopping experience to customers. The components of entertainingness include comfortable fragrance, nice background music, sufficiency of entertainment facilities or cultural space for pleasure, sufficiency of rest places for short breaks and pleasure caused by natural or artificial decorations, just to name a few. Cleanliness is very important for the physical service environment. A majority of customers have a strong tendency to relate service quality to the cleanliness of the physical service environment. That is to say, they tend to deduct or perceive the degree of service quality through whether washrooms are clean, staff uniforms, furniture or supplies are clean, the floors are clean, the restrooms are well organized, and whether passageways or doorways are clean. Convenience is the word referring to convenience and easiness. It varies with changes in living conditions, motives and attitude of consumers. The factors forming convenience include identifiability of guide signs, convenience of parking facilities, convenience of additional facilities, convenience of passage, easiness of searching services to purchase and convenience of use for the restroom or waiting room.

Bitner (1992) reported that the physical environment had a significant impact on the positive inner reaction of the physical environment leads to approach behaviour. This approach behaviour is something friendly to staff, whereas it refers to such approaches as re-visit, increased expenses, length of visit and loyalty. Wakefield *et al* (1996) revealed what impact the environment of a leisure service had on perceived service quality and purchase intention. According to this research, leisure service is generally consumed for a long time in a physical environment; thus, perceived quality as to the physical service environment can have a significant impact on the studies of satisfaction and purchase of customers. This study conducted empirical research on the effect of such physical service environment factors as spatial arrangement, accessibility,

aesthetic factors and cleanliness of facilities, comfort of chairs, electronic devices and displays on customer satisfaction and purchase intention for leisure service companies such as sports stadiums and casinos. As a result, it revealed that the physical service environment variables would have a positive impact on not only perception of service quality but also service satisfaction, the chances of re-visit and intention for staying longer. Lucas (2003) deducted the five physical environment components (cooperation condition, layout and design, interior decoration, seat comfortability and cleanliness) that could be applied to casinos through reviewing the previous studies including the one of Wakefield *et al* (1996). He presented the result that the behavioural intention of customers would increase with a higher level of satisfaction regarding the physical environment. Harris (2008) identified that the physical environment factors for the nine areas would have a positive impact on customer loyalty through ambient factors and design factors for the restaurants. Kim (1999) sub-divided the physical environment factors into spatiality, amenity, convenience, entertainingness, cleanliness and aesthetics for the customers of department stores, restaurants, banks and hospitals. Then, he studied the impact thereof on the perception of service quality, service satisfaction, intention of staying longer, word-of-mouth and re-purchase intention and preference. As a result, he revealed through the empirical analysis that the physical service environment was one of the important influencing factors for customers to evaluate service quality. As a result of the analysis, the important factors of the physical environment for the four service industries commonly included the factors related to the cleanliness of the physical environment, the factors facilitating the adaptation to an environment and the factors facilitating the name of the space. It was also proved that the factors forming the physical service environment had a different degree of importance for each service industry. Kim (2006) studied the role and importance of the physical environment. Also, he studied the determinants of the physical environment including renovation. Hereupon, he aimed to identify the impact of the determinants of the physical service environment on satisfaction, relationship quality and customer loyalty. As a result, it was found that such physical environment factors as amenity, aesthetics, renovation and service staff had a positive impact on satisfaction. It was also found that the overall satisfaction of the physical environment would have a significant impact on relationship quality and customer loyalty. Kim (2008) studied the impact of the four in-flight physical environment components (amenity, cabin crew appearance, seating arrangement and aesthetics) on airline service trust, satisfaction and

preference with the customers of airlines. As a result, they responded that amenity was the most important factor for them. Also, they said that the in-flight physical environment would have a significant impact on service trust and customer satisfaction for airlines. Therefore, they said that it would be possible to make customers have favourable attitudes for re-visit by improving trust and maximizing customer satisfaction.

Wakefield *et al* (1996) classified the physical environment factors into layout/accessibility, facility aesthetics, electronic equipment/displays, seating comfort and facility cleanliness. This study set the variable of entertainingness for the factor of electronic equipment/displays to improve the leisure experience and the variable of aesthetics for facility aesthetics that would increase the attractiveness of physical environment through customer perception as to such factors as indoor/outdoor facilities and functions of decorations. That is to say, this study set a total of four factors such as spatiality, amenity, aesthetics and entertainingness as a variable to measure the in-flight physical environment. In-flight spatiality refers to the spatial relationship between seats, between passageways and between facility components including storage space for carry-on baggage, seat arrangement and convenience of movement in the cabin. In-flight amenity refers to in-flight air, temperature, light, cleanliness of the cabin and the cabin crew uniforms, which would have an impact on the freshness of the in-flight environment.

According to the literature review the factors, affecting cabin environment are identified as follow.

1. Spatiality
2. Amenity
3. Aesthetics
4. Service Staff

CHAPTER 03

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, topics to be discussed are background to the concepts and process, variables of research concepts, variable measurements, population and sample, data types, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis. In this research study, researcher practiced primary data collection to get the findings of factors that will influence customer satisfaction.

3.1 Background to the Concepts and Process

3.1.1 Background of Study

The state of customer satisfaction with services delivered is not clear as there is little documentation on the issue. Since the establishment of Air Ceylon, which is now known as SriLankan Airlines, the ups and downs in the customer satisfaction could be seen. Despite this situation, the airline appears to be operating in a negative revenue situation resulting a burden on the economy of Sri Lanka. This could be an indication of poor services rendered discouraging customers from remaining loyal and continuously using the service offered by SriLankan Airlines.

Therefore, the airline needs to seek ground-breaking ways that would contribute towards the improvement of their services identifying the factors involves with them, and enable them to retain their customers and attract new ones. In doing so, it will facilitate new ways of generating additional streams of revenue. One possible avenue is to continuously monitor their performance through research and development which could allow them to recognize their shortcomings in customer service. In return, it will allow them to offer a high quality of service to its customers, providing them with satisfaction and encouraging them to use the service consistently increasing their customer loyalty.

In view of the above, the main focus of this study is to identify the most crucial factors that affect the customer satisfaction.

For the above focus, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate, analyses and compare the different factors affect customer satisfaction and identify the most critical ones through the research.

3.1.2 Conceptual Framework

The aim of this section is to summarise the idea the researcher got from past literature and to bring out the contributions he has for this study area. Thus, this part starts with the idea generated and the contribution follows.

The general idea from the past literature is that there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality, cabin environment, inflight entertainment system and reservation and ticketing. Also, that service quality could be evaluated with the use of five service quality dimensions and the most useable is the SERVQUAL scale.

The theoretical frame work treats customer satisfaction as dependent variable while the in-flight service quality, in-flight entertainment system, ticketing and reservation and cabin environment are considered as independent variables. Thus, customers in this paper are those who consume the services, satisfaction denotes customer's desire to maintain a business relationship with the organization and it is also the feelings of the customers towards the services provided to them by SriLankan Airlines. Hence the customer satisfaction in this study is the pleasures obtained by customers for the services provided to them by the employees of the organization. Based on these factors the conceptual framework was developed.

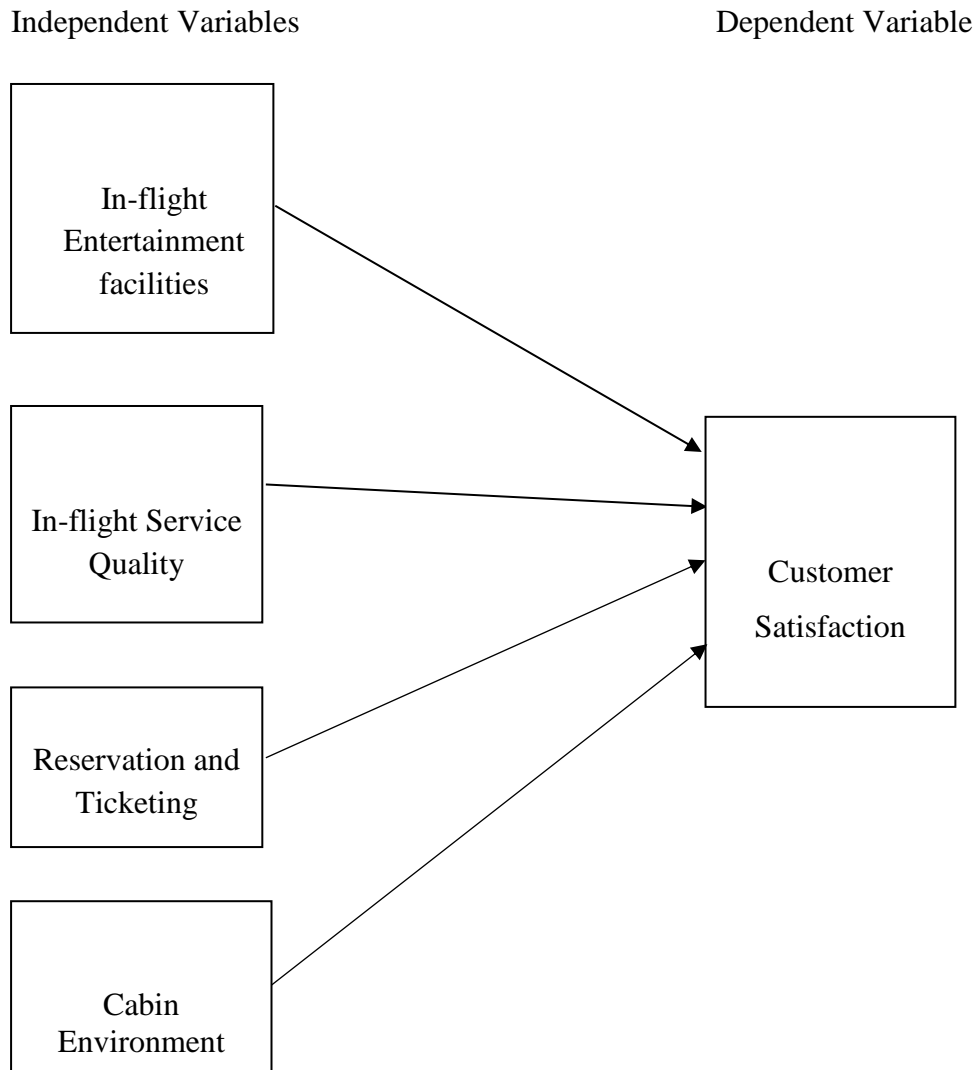


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

3.1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

If customers agree that they are satisfied and give the reasons for satisfaction as service quality, in-flight entertainment system, ticketing and reservation and cabin environment; all these factors have significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Then a conclusion could be drawn that service quality, in-flight entertainment system, ticketing and reservation and cabin environment have significant relationship with customer satisfaction. Based on these, the research hypotheses were on the fact that service quality, in-flight entertainment system, ticketing and reservation and cabin environment had significant relationship with customer satisfaction. The hypotheses tested were:

H1. In-flight service quality has a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.

H2. In-flight Entertainment facilities have a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.

H3. Reservation and ticketing have positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.

H4. Cabin environment has a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.

3.2 Variables of Research Concepts

3.2.1 Operational Variable

Operational variable is a statement of the specific dimensions and elements through which a concept will become measurable (Sekaran, 2006). There are two kinds of variable, which are independent variable and dependent variable, on these variables dimension and indicator can be defined.

3.2.1.1 Independent Variable

Independent variable is also known as the predictor variable. It is one that influence the dependent variable either in a positive or negative way (Sekaran, 2006). The independent variables studied in this research are service quality, cabin environment, ticketing and reservation and inflight entertainment system.

3.2.1.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the primary interest of this research, which is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be measured with service quality, cabin environment, ticketing and reservation and inflight entertainment system.

3.3 Variable Measurement

The variable in the questionnaire are categorized into the groups according to the framework of this research, the variable is measured in some ways that will be able to test the hypotheses, however in attempt to reduce the scale bias, Linkert Kind of scale are used to measure the dependent and independent variables (Sekaran, 2006). The questionnaire used is closed questions refer to the alternative that are mutually

exclusive and collectively exhaustive give to the respondent, it can make them quick and easy to interpret. Here are the indicators that measured from each dimension of variables.

3.3.1 Dimensions for Service Quality

In order for this study to prudently measure satisfaction level among air travellers in SriLankan Airlines on the in-flight service quality, the main dimensions and their indicators used in the collection of primary data in this study as depicted below.

Table 1. Dimension of Service Quality and Indicators

Tangibles	SriLankan Airline's facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials are visible
Assurance	Knowledge, courtesy and ability of employee can convey my trust and confidence.
Reliability	SriLankan Airlines able to perform the promised service accurately
Responsiveness	SriLankan Airline's crew or employee willingness to help customers
Empathy	The firm provides individualized attention to the customers

Source: Developed by Author

3.3.2 Dimension of In Flight Entertainment System

In order to measure satisfaction level among air travellers in SriLankan Airlines on in-flight entertainment system, causes the them being aware of the flight and associated data, avoid stress, user friendliness in e-Business and commerce are measured through the below dimensions and their indicators.

Table 2. Dimension of Inflight Entertainment System and Indicators

Ease of operation of the IFE	Touch Sensitivity of screen, aid of language(s) to operate, ease of understanding of the operating buttons
The size of the screen	Ample size for the display of various entertainment media
The availability of in-flight Wi-Fi	Availability of Wi-Fi, Speed, Usefulness
The variety of TV shows, games, e-documents,	Variety of TV shows, movies, Availability of different types of E-documents,

Source: Developed by Author

3.3.3 Dimensions of Ticketing and Reservation

Table 3. Dimensions of Ticketing and Reservation and indicators

User Friendliness	Ease of use of web site, ease of use of mobile app, Online check – in, Online seat booking, Choice of aircrafts, baggage allowance
Promotion	Discounts / offers, Tour packages / Holiday packages, method of promotion (TV, radio, internet)
Infrastructure	Updating airline website, Responsiveness of website and mobile apps, Availability of ticketing agents
Customer Support	call centre facilities, Responsiveness of agents, information delivering

Source: Developed by Author

3.3.4 Dimensions of Cabin Environment

To measure satisfaction level among air travellers in SriLankan Airlines on the cabin environment, the main dimensions and their indicators used in the collection of primary data in this study as given below.

Table 4. Distribution of Questionnaire Items

Spatiality	Enough space between seats, passage, space for baggage storage, ease of accessing doorways and lavatory, seat comfort
Amenity	Cabin air, humidity and temperature, cabin light, neatness of washroom and cabin
Aesthetics	Cabin colour, interior look, airplane appearance, model
Service Staff	communication skills, grooming and appearance of staff, cabin service efficiency, cabin presence throughout flight, friendliness of staff, staff interaction with passengers, staff enthusiasm and attitudes, standards of performance

Source: Developed by Author

3.4 Population and Sample

3.4.1 Population

The population of the current survey was comprised of those who have actually experienced the services offered by SriLankan Airline.

3.4.2 Sample

3.4.2.1 Sample Size

Out of the population of SriLankan air travellers, a total sample of 100 above the age of 20 was recruited based on the researcher's judgement due to cost and time constraints. Using a larger sample size in this survey was not permissible as it would require a large financial resource which was not available. Further, time constraints within which the research was to be completed would not permit the use of a larger sample size.

3.4.2.2 Sampling Technique

In selecting the sample of 100 respondents above age of 20, multistage sampling method was applied. The reason why this method is used to collect data as the passengers facilitated by SriLankan Airlines consists of all ages and it is needed to select passengers above 20 years old. First SriLankan Airline passengers over 20 years have to be selected and then select the 100 passengers randomly. This strategy was chosen due to time and budget constraints. With the sampling method, the respondents were identified regardless of the other demographic variables but age. The selection was carried out until the required sample size was attained. The visit to airport arrival terminal made the recruitment faster, easier and cheaper since a number of potential participants could be identified instantly. Choosing respondents readily available at this place has reflected the sampling method applied in this study. Due to the fact that there was no incentive offered to the respondents, their decision to participate was out of pure interest.

3.5 Type of Data Collection

Only primary data is collected in this research in order to provide a clearer and in-depth understanding. The collection of the primary data is done through presenting a questionnaire to the sample.

Primary data is data originating from the researcher for the purpose of addressing the research issue. It is what the researcher originally collects from the target sample or population. In this specific study primary data is that collected from the sample/respondents through the deployment of questionnaires.

3.6 Research Instrument

Questionnaire is a set of structure questions that have been selected after considerable testing with a view to eliciting reliable responses from a particular group (Collis & Hussey, 2009). In this study, questionnaires are distributed to gather primary data from respondents on the factors that trigger their satisfaction. In this research, self-administered questionnaires have been used which is defined as the survey in which respondent takes the responsibility for reading and answering the questions on the questionnaire papers.

3.6.1 Design of the Questionnaire

A self-completed questionnaire is used. In this questionnaire, only closed-ended questions are used, a number of alternative answers are provided which is easier for the respondents to complete the questionnaire.

As the layout of the questionnaire, a brief introduction and purpose of conducting this research are mentioned. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections, Part A and Part B: the part A is the respondent's demographic profile since consumer needs; preferences and characteristics are often associated with demographic factors (Kotler, 2006). The profile contains socio-demographic details of the respondents such as age, gender, purpose of travel and class of travel. These socio-demographic characteristics will allow the researcher to gain pertinent information that could assist the company in developing its strategies for improving customer satisfaction.

The second part is comprised of questions about passenger satisfaction with the in-flight service quality, the cabin environment, the IFE and reservation and ticketing offered by

SriLankan Airlines. In this section, respondents are requested to answer questions related to each variable using the five-point Likert scale such as 1= Strongly Dissatisfied, 2= Dissatisfied, 3=Neutral, 4= Satisfied, 5= Strongly Satisfied. The questions in this part concentrate mainly on the dimensions and indicators discussed in section 3.3. The Likert survey was the selected questionnaire type as this enabled the respondents to answer the survey easily. In addition, this research instrument allowed the researcher to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation.

Table 5. Distribution of Questionnaire Items

Part	Factor	No of Questions
A	Personal Background	05
B-Evaluation of Customer Satisfaction	In Flight Service Quality	14
	In Flight Entertainment System	10
	Reservation and ticketing	12
	Cabin Environment	12
	Customer Satisfaction	08

Source: Developed by Author

Table 6. Linkert Scale Category

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
SD	D	N	S	SS
1	2	3	4	5

Source: Developed by Author

There are 100 set of questionnaires distributed to the target respondents. Before the questionnaire is distributed, respondents are solicited on their willingness to take part

in the survey with the purpose of enhancing the validity and reliability of the data gathered.

3.6.1.1 Origin of Construction of Questionnaire

Table 7. Origin of Construction of Questionnaire

Factor	Source
In Flight Service Quality	Nonis <i>et al</i> , 2014 Kurniawan, 2010
In Flight Entertainment System	Archana <i>et al</i> , 2012 Khraim, 2013
Reservation and ticketing	Jallouqa, 2013 Wamucii, 2009
Cabin Environment	Maeng <i>et al</i> , 2015 Sabir <i>et al</i> , 2017
Customer Satisfaction	Khatib, 1998 Nonis <i>et al</i> , 2014

Source: Developed by Author

3.6.2 Pilot Test

Before the questionnaire is distributed to collect data, a pilot test of the questionnaire has been conducted. Pilot test is used to ensure that the questionnaire does not consist of any mistake or error so that respondents will be able in answering all the questions without any problem. Besides, researchers are given the opportunity to reveal and correct the potential problem that will occur in designing of the questionnaire before the actual survey is conducted (Pratt, 2008)

In this research, 20 sets of questionnaires were distributed online for the pilot testing on 24th May 2017. The feedback was gathered from respondents in order to enhance the quality of the questionnaire.

The reliability test was conducted with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0 after the data was collected. Cronbach's Alpha was adopted to examine the reliability of the pilot test and the result of pilot test is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 8. Result of Pilot Test

Variable	Total number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha	Outcome
Service Quality	14	0.951	Excellent
Inflight entertainment system	10	0.855	Good
Reservation and ticketing	12	0.912	Excellent
Cabin Environment	12	0.938	Excellent
Customer Satisfaction	08	0.977	Excellent

Source: Appendix II (4.3)

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The method of data collection for this study is quantitative. Questionnaire is used as primary data collection method refers to information that is developed or gathered for the research project at hand. Questionnaire was distributed to the passengers in Bandaranayake International Airport, Katunayake. The advantage of using questionnaire survey is that they are efficient and relative inexpensive (Chadwick, Chan & Price, 1984). Another advantage is easy to reach out, fast delivery and respondent can answer at their convenience. At these places, people were approached in a group to identify passenger above age of 20 those who have had prior experiences on the services offered by SriLankan Airlines. Once potential participants were identified they were then asked for consent to participate, and if agreed to take part they were given a questionnaire to fill out. The recruitment process continued until the sample size was obtained. Data collection was carried out from May, 29th 2017 to June, 4th 2017.

3.8 Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive Statistic is the statistical technique that being used in the analysis of this research. Frequency and percentage is the type of analysis that being used in this research. The data obtained from questionnaires are all facts. Statistical package the social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used to analyse the data collection in this study. For data processing, four statistical techniques were used for different purposes. These included frequency, descriptive statistics, validity and reliability test, correlation analysis, regression analysis and T test.

3.8.1 Validity and Reliability Test

In compiling the instrument to obtain the good instrument, there are several conditions must be filled. The good instrument must meet two important conditions, they are valid and reliable.

3.8.1.1 Validity Test

Validity represents how far the measurement can measure what that want to measure, are we measure the right thing or not. Thus, questionnaire that used as the tool to collect the data of study will test about validity. The validity test used in this study is the item validity test that is validity testing on items quality. The higher the validity of a valid tool, the higher the gauge concerning his target.

To know the level of item validity, hence r_{value} in correlation table compared with r_{test} from total score testing by formulating of product moment Pearson, if $r_{\text{test}} \geq r_{\text{value}}$ hence the item in the question to collect the data have construct validity, the other hand the item in the questionnaire are valid and can use to data collection.

3.8.1.2 Reliability Test

The reliability test is conducted to ensure the consistency or stability of the items (Sekaran, 2006). The measurement of reliability showed through Cronbach's Alpha (α) which is was used to analyse the reliability of the instruments. According to Maholtra (2007), the reliability acceptance level should be more than 0.60.

Table 9. Reliability High and Low Categorization

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 \geq \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 \geq \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 \geq \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 \geq \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 \geq \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: Andale (2017)

3.8.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 10. Correlation variable and the Strength of Correlation

Correlation Value	Strength of the Correlation
.00-.19	very weak
.20-.39	weak
.40-.59	moderate
.60-.79	strong
.80-1.0	very strong

Source: statstutor, (2017)

CHAPTER 04

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The results of the questionnaire surveyed is analysed in this chapter. 100 questionnaires were collected and used to analyse by using SPSS version 23.0. The chapter consists of three sections which are descriptive analysis, scale measurement and inferential analysis.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

This section will describe the sample characteristics of the typical respondents and disclose the general pattern of the responses.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Part A of the questionnaire is the demographic section which consists of two questions that were used to ask for the information about the respondent's gender and age.

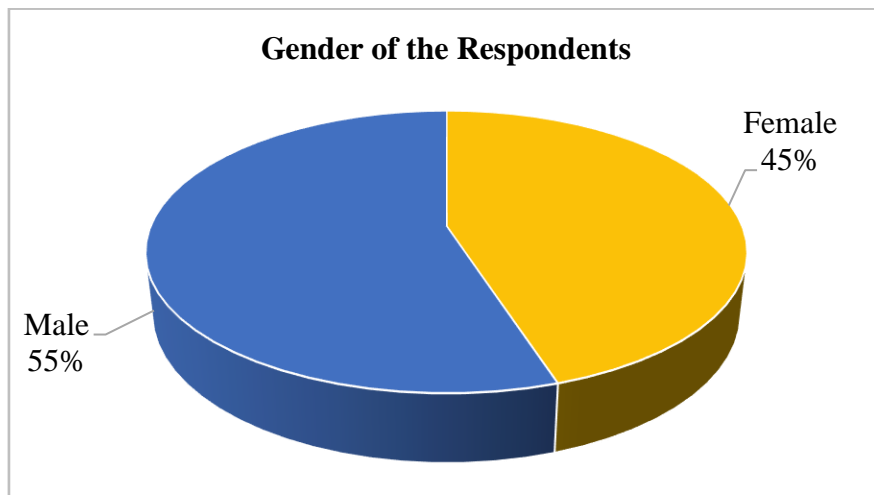


Figure 3. Gender of Respondents

Table 11. Percentage of Gender of the respondents

Gender	As a percentage
Male	55
Female	45

Source: Appendix II (4.1)

Figure 3 and Table 11 show the gender of the respondents who travelled with SriLankan Airlines. Out of 100 respondents, 55% of the respondents are male and 45% of the respondents are female.

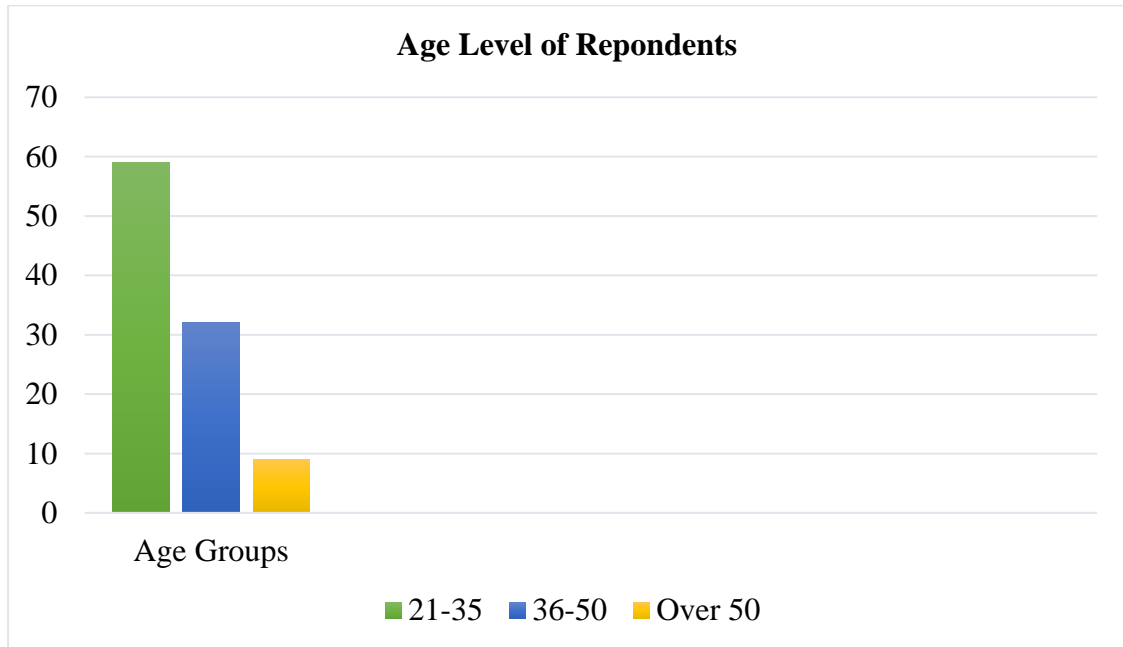


Figure 4. Age level of Respondents

Table 12. Percentage of Age Level of Respondents

Age Groups	Number of Respondents
21-35	59
36-50	32
Over 50	9

Source: Appendix II (4.2)

According to Figure 4 and Table 12, the age groups of respondents have been divided into three categories. The age group that carries the highest percentage range from 21-35 years old, which is 59%, followed by 32% for the age group between 36-50 years old. The age group that carries the least percentage which is 9% of respondents that falls in the age group of 50 years old and above.

4.1.2 General Information

Part A of the questionnaire consists of two questions that were used to ask respondents which class they travel and their travelling purposes.

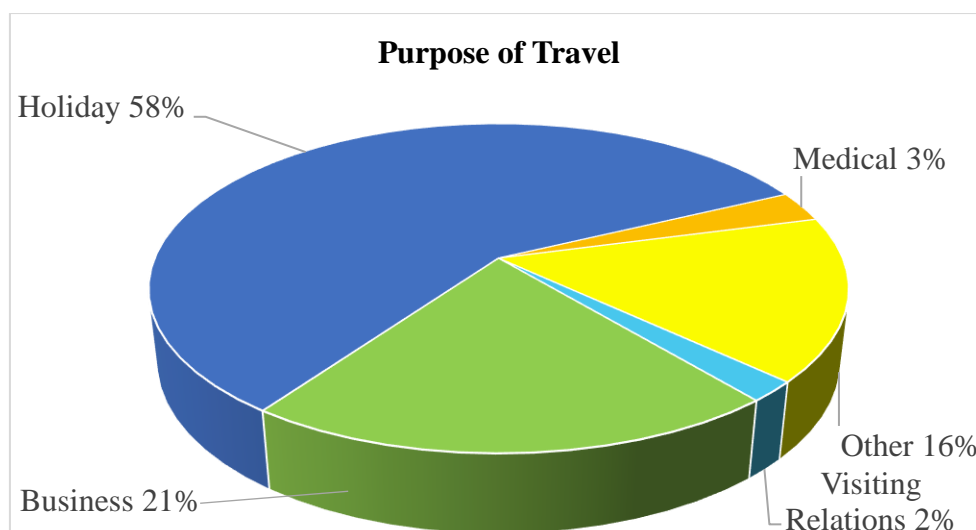


Figure 5. Purpose of Travel

Table 13. Percentage of Purpose of Travel of Passengers

Purpose of Travel	As a Percentage
Holiday	58
Business	21
Other	16
Medical	3
Visiting Relations	2

Source: Appendix II (4.3)

According to Figure 5 and Table 13, the purpose of travel has been divided into five categories. The category that carries the highest percentage is Holiday, which is 58%, followed by 21% for the business purposes, 16% for other purposes and 3% for medical purposes. The category that carries the least percentage which is 2% for the purpose of visiting relations.

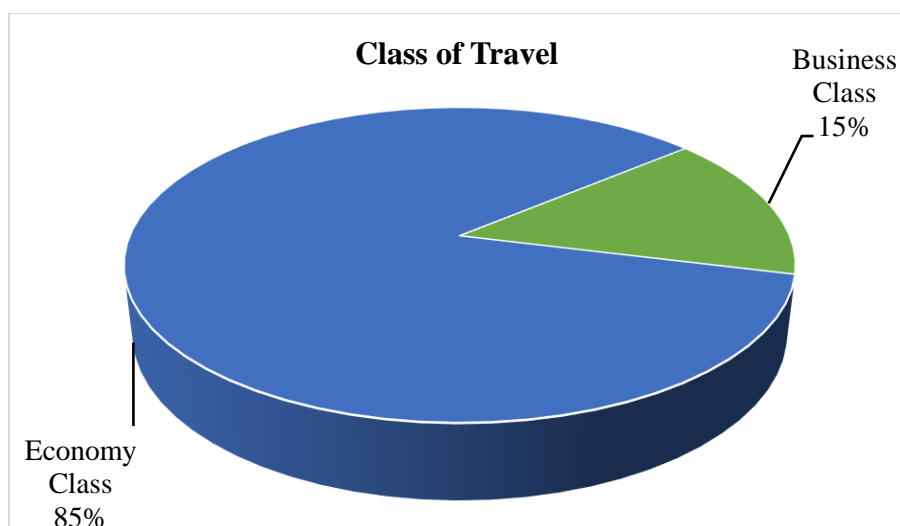


Figure 6. Class of Travel

Table 14. Percentage of Class of Travel of Passengers

Class	As a Percentage
Economy Class	85
Business Class	15

Source: Appendix II (4.4)

According to Figure 6 and Table 14, the class of travel has been divided into two categories. The business class occupies 15%, while that of the economy class is 85%.

4.2 Scale Measurement

The result of reliability analysis will be shown in this section. The reliability of the instrument is used to determine the possibility for adequate testing of hypotheses.

4.2.1 Reliability Analysis

Table 15. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Service Quality	0.947	14
In-flight Entertainment System	0.865	10
Reservation and Ticketing	0.905	12
Cabin Environment	0.927	12
Customer Satisfaction	0.973	8

Source: Appendix II (4.5)

Table 15 above, shows that alpha point of study instrument, every item is greater than 0.8. As shown in Table 9, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for service quality is 0.947 and 14 items were used to measure it. For In-flight Entertainment System, 10 items were used to measure it and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.865. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Reservation and Ticketing is 0.905 and the number of items used to measure it was 12. For Cabin Environment, 12 items were used to measure it and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.927. The values indicate that service quality, cabin environment, inflight entertainment system and ticketing and reservation have strong reliability in determining customer satisfaction. On the other hand, 8 items used to measure customer satisfaction shows the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.973. Overall, the measurement for the constructs indicated that they were reliable and internally consistent.

4.2.2 Validity Test

By using significant level (α) = 5% and N 100, so r_{value} table is 0.197. If r_{test} is more than r_{value} , means that there is a real correlation between variables. The result of validity testing is summarized in table 16.

Table 16. Validity Test Result

Variable	Item	r_{test}	r_{value}	Description
(X1) Tangibility	X1.1	.640	0.197	Valid
	X1.2	.511	0.197	Valid
	X1.3	.658	0.197	Valid
(X2) Assurance	X2.1	.738	0.197	Valid
	X2.2	.736	0.197	Valid
	X2.3	.715	0.197	Valid
(X3) Reliability	X3.1	.654	0.197	Valid
	X3.2	.720	0.197	Valid
	X3.3	.700	0.197	Valid
(X4) Responsiveness	X4.1	.570	0.197	Valid
	X4.2	.632	0.197	Valid
	X4.3	.698	0.197	Valid
(X5) Empathy	X5.1	.635	0.197	Valid
	X5.2	.696	0.197	Valid
(X6) Easiness	X6.1	.484	0.197	Valid
	X6.2	.447	0.197	Valid
	X6.3	.434	0.197	Valid
(X7) Connection	X7.1	.331	0.197	Valid
	X7.2	.291	0.197	Valid
	X7.3	.283	0.197	Valid
(X8) Variety	X8.1	.517	0.197	Valid
	X8.2	.422	0.197	Valid
	X8.3	.457	0.197	Valid
	X8.4	.402	0.197	Valid
(X9) User Friendliness	X9.1	.459	0.197	Valid
	X9.2	.491	0.197	Valid
	X9.3	.500	0.197	Valid
(X10) Promotion	X10.1	.543	0.197	Valid
	X10.2	.577	0.197	Valid
	X10.3	.510	0.197	Valid

(X11) Infrastructure	X11.1	.648	0.197	Valid
	X11.2	.607	0.197	Valid
	X11.3	.519	0.197	Valid
(X12) Customer Support	X12.1	.368	0.197	Valid
	X12.2	.427	0.197	Valid
	X12.3	.525	0.197	Valid
(X13) Spatiality	X13.1	.637	0.197	Valid
	X13.2	.677	0.197	Valid
	X13.3	.749	0.197	Valid
(X14) Amenity	X14.1	.652	0.197	Valid
	X14.2	.631	0.197	Valid
	X14.3	.529	0.197	Valid
(X15) Aesthetic	X15.1	.665	0.197	Valid
	X15.2	.688	0.197	Valid
	X15.3	.676	0.197	Valid
(X16) Service Staff	X16.1	.639	0.197	Valid
	X16.2	.761	0.197	Valid
	X16.3	.752	0.197	Valid
(X17) Customer Satisfaction	X17.1	.828	0.197	Valid
	X17.2	.817	0.197	Valid
	X17.3	.794	0.197	Valid
	X17.4	.779	0.197	Valid
	X17.5	.785	0.197	Valid
	X17.6	.841	0.197	Valid
	X17.7	.757	0.197	Valid
	X17.8	.814	0.197	Valid

Source: Appendix II (4.6)

The result of validity testing for the questionnaire of study as shown in table 10 above is valid ($r_{\text{test}} > r_{\text{score}}$)

4.3 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis provides the generation of conclusion regarding the characteristics of the population based on the sample data (Burns and Bush, 2000). Regression analysis, correlation analysis will be used to examine the individual variables and their relationships with other variables.

4.3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

4.3.1.1 Correlation between service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment and customer satisfaction

Table 17. Pearson Correlation Analysis

		service quality	IFE	reservation _and ticketing	cabin_ environm ent	customer_ satisfactio n
Service_ Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.416**	.563**	.738**	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
IFE	Pearson Correlation	.416**	1	.391**	.509**	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Reservation_ and_Ticketing	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.391**	1	.664**	.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Cabin_ Environment	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.509**	.664**	1	.820**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100
Customer_ Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.791**	.426**	.538**	.820**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 17, the p-value of all the independent variables (service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment) and dependent variable (customer satisfaction) are 0.000, which indicates that they are significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed). The strongest correlation coefficient is cabin environment at 0.820 towards customer satisfaction, followed by service quality at 0.791, reservation and ticketing at 0.538 and finally the in-flight entertainment system at 0.426. The values indicate that there are positive relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable.

4.3.1.2 Correlation between Customer Expectation and Satisfaction

Table 18. Correlation between Customer Expectation and Satisfaction.

		Satisfaction	Expectation
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.856**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Expectation	Pearson Correlation	.856**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data, 2017

It is clear from the study that a very strong correlation remains between the customer expectation fulfilment and the satisfaction, which is 0.856, greater than 0.8. that is to say the customers get satisfied with the service provided, which they actually anticipated to the expected level.

4.3.1.3 Correlation between Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Table 19. Correlations analysis for Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

		Loyalty	Customer_ Satisfaction
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.936**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Customer_ Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.936**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Survey Data, 2017

It is evident from the study that a very strong correlation remains between the customer satisfaction and loyalty towards the airline, which is 0.936, greater than 0.8. that is to say the customers tends to use the same airline if they are satisfied with the current services provided by the airline.

4.3.2 Simple Regression Analysis

4.3.2.1 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The first regression analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction the passengers perceived during the in-flight. The regression output is presented in table 20 and 21.

Table 20. Model Summary for Linear Regression Analysis of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.791 ^a	.625	.621	.60928

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service_Quality

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 20, the value of the R Square is 0.625. This shows that about 62.50% of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the variances in the independent variable (service quality).

Table 21. Coefficients for Linear Regression Analysis of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.107	.277		-.387	.700
Service_ Quality	1.023	.080	.791	12.786	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 21, the coefficient matrix of this model, customer satisfaction based on the service quality about that received by particular customer is significant at $t = 12.786$ and $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, which support H1. The P value indicating that service quality delivered in flight has relationship customer satisfaction.

Service quality shows a positive correlation to customer satisfaction because the p -value is lesser than 0.05. Based on the table, an equation can be formed in order to determine the statistical significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Regression equation:

Customer Satisfaction = $-0.107 + 1.023SQ$; where SQ = Service Quality

4.3.2.2 In-Flight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between inflight entertainment system and customer satisfaction the passengers perceived during the in-flight is analysed. The regression output is presented in table 22 and 23.

Table 22. Model Summary for Linear Regression Analysis of Inflight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.426 ^a	.181	.173	.90053

a. Predictors: (Constant), IFE

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 22, the value of the R Square is 0.181. This shows that about 18.10% of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the variances in the independent variable (in-flight entertainment system).

Table 23. Coefficients for Simple Regression Analysis for Inflight Entertainment System and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.573	.392		4.012	.000
IFE	.594	.128	.426	4.657	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 23, the coefficient matrix of this model, customer satisfaction based on the in-flight entertainment system, received by particular customer is significant at $t = 4.657$ and $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, which support H2. The P value indicating that in-flight entertainment system has relationship customer satisfaction.

In-flight entertainment system shows a positive correlation to customer satisfaction because the p-value is lesser than 0.05. Based on the table, an equation can be formed in order to determine the statistical significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Regression equation:

Customer Satisfaction = $1.573 + 0.594EN$; where EN = in-flight entertainment system

4.3.2.3 Reservation, Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between reservation and ticketing and customer satisfaction the passengers perceived is analysed. The regression output is presented in table 24 and 25.

Table 24. Model Summary for Simple Regression Analysis for Reservation and Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.538 ^a	.290	.283	.83871

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reservation_and_Ticketing

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 24, the value of the R Square is 0.290 this shows that about 29.00% of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the variances in the independent variable (reservation and ticketing).

Table 25. Coefficients for Simple Regression Analysis for Reservation and Ticketing and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.550	.451		1.222	.225
Reservation_and_Ticketing	.851	.135	.538	6.323	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 25, the coefficient matrix of this model, customer satisfaction based on the reservation and ticketing system, received by particular customer is significant at $t = 6.323$ and $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, which support H3. The P value indicating that reservation and ticketing system has relationship customer satisfaction.

Reservation and ticketing system shows a positive correlation to customer satisfaction because the p-value is lesser than 0.05. Based on the table, an equation can be formed in order to determine the statistical significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Regression equation:

Customer Satisfaction = $0.550 + 0.851RT$; where RT = reservation and ticketing system

4.3.2.4 Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction

The relationship between cabin environment and customer satisfaction the passengers commented on is analysed. The regression output is presented in table 26 and 27.

Table 26. Model Summary for Simple Regression Analysis for Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.820 ^a	.672	.669	.56979

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cabin_Environment

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 26, the value of the R Square is 0.672 this shows that about 67.20% of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the variances in the independent variable (cabin environment).

Table 27. Coefficient Relationship Between Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.276	.262		-1.053	.295
Cabin_Environment	1.087	.077	.820	14.176	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 27, the coefficient matrix of this model, customer satisfaction based on the cabin environment, received by particular customer is significant at $t = 14.176$ and $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, which support H4. The P value indicating that reservation and ticketing system has relationship customer satisfaction.

Cabin environment shows a positive correlation to customer satisfaction because the p -value is lesser than 0.05. Based on the table, an equation can be formed in order to determine the statistical significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Regression equation:

Customer Satisfaction = $-0.276 + 1.087CE$; where CE = cabin environment

4.3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

4.3.3.1 Multiple Regression Analysis on Service Quality, In-Flight Entertainment System, Reservation and Ticketing, Cabin Environment and Customer Satisfaction

According to the multiple regression analysis, the results are as follow.

Table 178. Model Summary of Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866 ^a	.750	.740	.50496

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cabin_Environment, IFE, Reservation_and_Ticketing, Service_Quality

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 28, the value of the R Square is 0.750. This shows that about 70.50% of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction) can be explained by the variances in all the independent variables (service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment).

Table 29. ANOVA^a Table for Regression Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	72.839	4	18.210	71.415	.000 ^b
	Residual	24.223	95	.255		
	Total	97.062	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cabin_Environment, IFE, Reservation_and_Ticketing, Service_Quality

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 29, the F-value is 71.415 and the significant level is 0.000. In conclusion, there is a significant effect of the independent variables (service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment) on the dependent variable (customer satisfaction).

Table 30. Multiple Regression Analysis Coefficient Relation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.579	.303		-1.914	.059
Service_Quality	.542	.099	.419	5.451	.000
In__Flight_Entertainment	-.010	.084	-.007	-.121	.904
Reservation_and_Ticketing	-.103	.110	-.065	-.941	.349
Cabin_Environment	.739	.117	.558	6.334	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, 2017

According to Table 30, service quality and cabin environment show a positive correlation to customer satisfaction, because the p-value for the both variables is less than 0.05, which is 0.000. On the other hand, in-flight entertainment system and reservation and ticketing have negative correlations to customer satisfaction because the p-values are not significant, which are 0.904 and 0.349 respectively. Based on the table, an equation can be formed in order to determine the statistical significance of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Regression equation:

$$\text{Customer satisfaction} = -0.579 + 0.542\text{SQ} - 0.010\text{EN} - 0.103\text{RT} + 0.739\text{CE}$$

Where SQ = Service Quality

EN = In-flight Entertainment System

RT = Reservation and Ticketing

CE = Cabin Environment

By referring to the result of standardized coefficients, cabin environment has the greatest influence on the customer satisfaction with $\beta = 0.558$

4.3.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Service Quality

Table 31. Coefficient Values for Multiple Regression Analysis of Service Quality Dimensions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B
Tangibility	.176
Assurance	.235
Reliability	.240
Responsiveness	.210
Empathy	.139

Source: Appendix II (4.8)

From the analysis it depicts that Assurance, Reliability, Responsiveness, tangibility and empathy have the effect on the service quality provided descending order. All these dimensions are positively impact on the service quality.

4.3.3.3 Multiple Regression Analysis for Dimensions of Cabin Environment

Table 18. Coefficient Values for Multiple Regression Analysis of Cabin Environment

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient B
Spatiality	.250
Amenity	.250
Aesthetic	.250
Staff	.250

Source: Appendix II (4.9)

From the analysis it depicts that spatiality, amenity, aesthetic and staff have the same level of effect on the cabin environment. All these dimensions are positively impact on the cabin environment.

4.4 Conclusion

Table 19. Conclusion of the Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Significant value	Accept/Reject
H1. In-flight service quality has a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.	0.000	Accept
H2. In-flight Entertainment facilities have a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.	0.904	Reject
H3. Reservation and ticketing have positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.	0.349	Reject
H4. Cabin environment has a positive influence over the customer's decision regarding choosing the airlines to travel.	0.000	Accept

Source: Multiple Regression Analysis for the Study

The cabin environment is the factor that significantly affects customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER 05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This section provides an overall summary of the findings and conclusion of the study. It also provides recommendations for policy implications to the management of the SriLankan Airlines. The future recommendation for the study on customer satisfaction in SriLankan Airlines also discussed along with the limitations of the study.

This study analysed the impact of service quality, in-flight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and cabin environment on customer satisfaction by utilizing the structural equation model. This study leveraged to help airline establish marketing strategies related to customer satisfaction. It was found that two of the hypotheses established in this study were statistically significant while other two were not statistically significant. The summary of the study results is as follows. First, in-flight service quality would have a positive impact on customer satisfaction as well as the cabin environment would have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Of those, it was found that cabin environment was the most important factor on customer satisfaction. That is spatiality, amenity, aesthetics and service staff were the most important factors on customer satisfaction. Second, it was found that the in-flight entertainment system would not have a positive impact on customer satisfaction as well as the reservation and ticketing would not have a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

On this account, it is imperative for airline to maximize customer satisfaction and then the image by improving the quality perceived by spatial relationship between seats, between passageways and between facility components such as storage space for carry-on baggage, seat arrangement and convenience of movement in the cabin and spatiality representing seating comfort, aesthetics representing the aesthetic attractiveness of the airplane, in-flight air influencing the freshness of the cabin, temperature and light, amenity of cleanliness and service staff are the most influenced features that satisfy the customer satisfaction.

5.1 Conclusion

The research was to analyse the factors affecting customer satisfaction with specific focus of SriLankan Airlines. The three research questions for the study were: to find what the customer satisfaction concept is, to find the factors affecting customer satisfaction and the most crucial factors affecting customer satisfaction.

Thereby accomplishing three specific objectives; to study the concept of customer satisfaction, to examine the factors affecting the customer satisfaction and to analyse the most crucial factors on customer satisfaction. These research objectives are validated below based on findings as follows:

Objective 1 - To study the concept of customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the measure of how the needs and responses are collaborated and delivered to excel customer expectation. Oliver (1996), stated that the satisfaction is the fulfilment depending on a person's desires or expectations made before an experience which is subsequently being compared with the sentiment derived from the experience. It considered as the best judgment and evaluation method on the basis of consumption experience. It is clear from the study that the above statement is valid as the passengers expect they are treated actually as they have expected. That is the gap between expected level of service and perceived level of service by the service provider. If that gap is less, the higher the satisfaction the customers get while that is low when the gap is comparable. From the study, it reveals that the customer satisfaction is a part of customer's experience that exposes a supplier's behaviour on customer's expectation. This satisfaction could be related to quality of products and services, responses on customer's problems and queries, completion of service and etc. This is confirmed by Kotler *et al* (2012), stating that, actually customer's satisfaction is the customer's evaluation of goods and services in term of whether it is according to the customer's needs and wants. It is clear, that the customer satisfaction is a dependable feedback by the customers, considering the preferences and expectations. In this way, it supports the perspective that customer satisfaction is considered as the standard of performance and a standard of excellence for any business organization as stated by Kossmann, (2006). Thus, it is clear from the correlation analysis carried out, a very strong relationship (0.856) the customer expectation and satisfaction in the airline. Further it is observed that the level of satisfaction perceived differs from person to

person as stated by Kossmann (2006), customer satisfaction is a feedback, taking into account the fact that it provides an effective, direct, meaningful and impartial approach to customers' preferences and expectations. The study reveals another fact that, the customer satisfaction is strictly positively correlate with their loyalty towards the service provider. Thus, it must be emphasised that all the business enhancements, profit, status, image etc. of the organization depends on customers. Deng *et al* (2009), assures this stating that, customer satisfaction becomes the most important part in the business field because when the customer is satisfied then it will provide the profitable business to the industry. Hence it is important for all the organizations to meet all the customers' expectations and identify that they are satisfied customer.

Objective 2 - To examine the factors affecting the customer satisfaction.

Abbas *et al* (2014), has mentioned that the effect of in-flight services, reservation and ticketing, in-flight availability, and reliability have marginal effects on the passenger's overall satisfaction. According to Jayaraman *et al* (2011), they have found that the factors such as the pre-flight services which they are proving, customer relationship management and cabin environment and in-flight services that customers are getting influence customer satisfaction. With the regression analyses carried out, inflight service quality, inflight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and the cabin environment have affected on the customer satisfaction with different levels of effectivity. The inflight entertainment system has the least impact on the customer satisfaction, which is with the unit change of inflight entertainment system, a little change (18.1%) in the customer satisfaction occurs. The reservation and ticketing facility also impact on the customer satisfaction, but it alone impacts at 29% only on the customer satisfaction with the change of reservation and ticketing facility. The service quality is a factor that changes the customer satisfaction comparatively with the unit change in service quality (62.5%). The cabin environment also shows a comparative impact (67.5%) on customer satisfaction. Hence it is evident that inflight service quality, inflight entertainment system, reservation and ticketing and the cabin environment are factors affect the customer satisfaction, yet at different rates.

Objective 3 - To analyse the most crucial factors on customer satisfaction.

According to the study there are positive relationships ($p < 0.05$) stands for both service quality and the cabin environment with customer satisfaction. Therefore, these two are the main factors affected the customer satisfaction. The service quality entails the tangibles, assurance, reliability, responsiveness and empathy. Thus, the customers are impressed with the adequate facilities available for them to utilize when the need arises and the attention paid on the passengers. The cabin environment involves with the spatiality, amenity, aesthetics of the cabin environment and the service staff. These increase level of perceived value of expectation and hence the customer satisfaction increases. But according to the Pearson correlation analysis, cabin environment has the strongest effect (0.820) on the customer satisfaction. Therefore, the most affecting factor on the customer satisfaction is the cabin environment in SriLankan Airlines.

5.2 Managerial Recommendations

Based on this research, the first recommendation for management in SriLankan is to have an understanding of who their customers are and what they expect from the airline services. On the one hand, such knowledge would lay a good ground for further internal research on customer expectations and satisfaction and help an airline firstly to target exactly the customers that are profitable and loyal and second to find out what service components the customers value. On the other hand, service expectations research would help to point out the areas of improvement and probably figure out the services that are not so important to the customers.

The most important finding of this research is that the customers care more about very basic aspect of customer satisfaction: the ability to perform the promised service accurately. The study points out that rather than the utilizing the technology, what the passengers expect is that they are impressed with the pleasant physical environment with filled humanity of the crew such as knowledge, courtesy, ability of crew to ensure the passengers confidence, and help the passengers.

Although the respondents appreciated the previously mentioned steps as more important than on-board and back office technical facilities, it appeared from the open questions that travellers complain on specially on the lack of courtesy, especially when they travel in economy class to middle east countries, yet this is also reported on flights

on other routes as well. The airlines may consider such results as an incentive to deliver proper service to enhance the customer satisfaction and consider on the implementation of giving training or make them aware of serving people equally.

Also, the airline should not underestimate the importance of baggage allowance permitted, 30 kg. The passengers accuse that this is pretty low limit compared to the other airlines operating. Since this is addressed by frequently flying passengers, it is recommended to pay the immediate attention by the management.

All these results are aimed on indicating the right direction for SriLankan Airlines to research their customer expectations as well as perceptions and thus achieve better understanding of their customer base.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

As this is could be one of the studies and research conducted on factors affecting Sri Lankan Airlines customer satisfaction, it has set the groundwork for further research. First, in this research, survey questionnaire wasn't presented to each and every passenger hence the ability of the collected data to generalize the entire population is reduced because only 100 passengers were questioned. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small. A larger sample should be used to carry out any future research in this field. Further the time frame for the research is limited to 6 months.

Future researchers can focus on following suggestion. First, widen the coverage of present study to include not only to passengers coming to Sri Lanka, but also passengers travelling to other countries. Further it can be extended to cover every route the airline operates. Second, future researchers can increase the variables. It could be either both dependent and independent variables, it is up to researcher. Third, future researcher can examine the study in broader scale such as "factor analysis" based on data collected. Fourth, future researcher can increase number of hypothesis.

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for the Research on Factors affecting Customer Satisfaction in SriLankan Airlines

Buddhika Gonagala is a student of Open University of Sri Lanka following the degree of Bachelor of Management Studies conducting his research to assess the factors affecting the satisfaction level of SriLankan Airlines passengers. Based on your experience please tick (✓) for each of the questions below to show your level of satisfaction that best describes your perception on the services listed below.

Each question can only choose **ONE** answer.

Section A - Personal Background

1. I have travelled with SriLankan Airlines Before

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

2. Gender

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

3. Age Level

Under 20		21 - 35		36 – 50		Above 50	
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4. Reason for Travel

Business		Holiday		Medical		Visiting Relations/friends		Other	
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5. Class of Travel

Business class		Economy Class	
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6. Flight Date

Section B – Evaluation of Customer Satisfaction

Please read description given. Then rate the frequency by tick (✓) the corresponding next to the statement.

1 = Strongly Dissatisfied (SD)

2 = Dissatisfied (D)

3 = Neutral (N)

4 = Satisfied (S)

5 = Strongly Satisfied (SS)

In Flight Service Quality

<u>Tangible</u>					
<u>Statement</u>	SD	D	N	S	SS
The airline's materials associated with the service are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
The airline company provides in-flight entertainment facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
The airline company provides good quality of food and beverage.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Assurance</u>					
<u>Statement</u>	SD	D	N	S	SS
Behavior of the crew instills confidence in me.	1	2	3	4	5
The cabin crew are consistently courteous with me.	1	2	3	4	5
The cabin crew have the knowledge to answer my questions.	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Reliability</u>					
<u>Statement</u>	SD	D	N	S	SS
When I have a problem, the crew shows a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew performs the service right the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew provides their services at the time it promises to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Responsiveness</u>					
<u>Statement</u>	SD	D	N	S	SS
The crew tells me exactly when the services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew is never too busy to respond to my requests.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew is always willing to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Empathy</u>					
<u>Statement</u>	SD	D	N	S	SS
The cabin crew gives me individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5
The cabin crew understands my specific needs.	1	2	3	4	5

In Flight Entertainment System

Ease of Operation

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
The touch screens respond fast.	1	2	3	4	5
I could use functioning keys easily.	1	2	3	4	5
The languages available on screen are easily understandable.	1	2	3	4	5

Wi-Fi Connectivity

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
The Wi-Fi connectivity is fast.	1	2	3	4	5
Wi-Fi System Signal Coverage is strong.	1	2	3	4	5
It is easy to get my devices connected to Wi-Fi network.	1	2	3	4	5

Variety of Entertainment Media

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
Movie programs are diverse	1	2	3	4	5
Reading materials (newspapers, duty free guide book and cabin articles) placed in cabin are diverse.	1	2	3	4	5
Music programs are diverse.	1	2	3	4	5
Games are interesting.	1	2	3	4	5

Ticketing and Reservation

User Friendliness

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
SriLankan Airlines reservation website is easy to navigate.	1	2	3	4	5
All services I need displays on website (check in, baggage allowance etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
It is easy for me to become skillful at using reservation website.	1	2	3	4	5

Promotion

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
I think promotion with advertisement is very informative and influence my satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
Radio, television and online advertisements influence my satisfaction.	1	2	3	4	5
SriLankan Airlines's promotion impact my purchase decision.	1	2	3	4	5

Infrastructure

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
Ticketing and reservation infrastructure allows information to be readily accessible.	1	2	3	4	5
Ticketing and reservation infrastructure provides sufficient information.	1	2	3	4	5
SriLankan Airlines's reservation website is updated.	1	2	3	4	5

Customer Support

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
Reservation and ticketing system provides good personal sales assistance by e-mail, telephone calls or SMS	1	2	3	4	5
Reservation and ticketing system provides full details of pricing and taxes for services.	1	2	3	4	5
Reservation and ticketing technical support terms and conditions of sales are easy to find through the web.	1	2	3	4	5

Cabin Environment

Spatiality

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
There is sufficient space between seats.	1	2	3	4	5
Seat can be used comfortably.	1	2	3	4	5
It is easy to access the washroom and doorway.	1	2	3	4	5

Amenity

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
Cabin light is adequately adjusted.	1	2	3	4	5
Cabin temperature is adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
Washroom and cabin are neat.	1	2	3	4	5

Aesthetics

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
Airplane appearance is attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
Cabin colour provides a comfortable feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
Interior is stylish and modern.	1	2	3	4	5

Service Staff

Statement	SD	D	N	S	SS
The crew is neat-appearing.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew is friendly.	1	2	3	4	5
The crew performance is as I expected.	1	2	3	4	5

Customer Satisfaction

I think I did the right thing when I decided to use SriLankan Airlines.

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

In general how would you rate the services provided by SriLankan Airlines ?

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

Based on your experience how was your satisfaction with SriLankan Airlines?

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

Travelling with SriLankan Airlines is worth money being paid.

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

In general, when travelling with SriLankan Airlines I feel safe.

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

SriLankan Airline always fulfils my expectations.

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

How likely are you to make your next fly with SriLankan Airlines ?

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

I can recommend SriLankan Airlines to others.

Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied

Thank you for your valuable support.

APPENDIX II
SPSS V23.0 OUTPUT

Appendix II (4.3)

**Service Quality
Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.951	.951	14

IFE

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.855	.855	10

Reservation and ticketing

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.912	.912	12

Cabin Environment

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.938	.938	12

Customer Satisfaction

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.977	.977	8

Appendix II (4.1)

Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Male	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Appendix II (4.2)

Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	21-35	59	59.0	59.0	59.0
	36-50	32	32.0	32.0	91.0
	Over 50	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Appendix II (4.3)

Purpose of Travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business	21	21.0	21.0	21.0
	Holiday	58	58.0	58.0	79.0
	Medical	3	3.0	3.0	82.0
	Other	16	16.0	16.0	98.0
	Visiting relations	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Appendix II (4.4)

Class of Travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Business Class	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Economy Class	85	85.0	85.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Appendix II (4.5)

Service Quality Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.947	14

In-Flight Entertainment System Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.865	10

Reservation and Ticketing Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.905	12

Cabin Environment Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.927	12

Customer Satisfaction Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.973	8

Appendix II (4.6)

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Tangibility1	180.0400	1186.099	.640	.971
Tangibility2	180.0300	1187.484	.511	.971
Tangibility3	180.0300	1174.231	.658	.971
Assurance1	180.1700	1163.920	.738	.970
Assurance2	180.2000	1165.273	.736	.970
Assurance3	179.9200	1176.963	.715	.971
Reliability1	180.0600	1173.067	.654	.971
Reliability2	180.0500	1169.664	.720	.971
Reliability3	180.0300	1171.504	.700	.971
Responsiveness1	180.3400	1175.883	.570	.971

Responsiveness2	180.3300	1172.587	.632	.971
Responsiveness3	180.0800	1166.842	.698	.971
Empathy1	180.4900	1167.485	.635	.971
Empathy2	180.3400	1167.782	.696	.971
Easiness1	180.4100	1176.972	.484	.971
Easiness2	180.2300	1182.745	.447	.971
Easiness3	179.6100	1190.200	.434	.971
Connection1	181.0900	1194.547	.331	.972
Connection2	180.9700	1196.292	.291	.972
Connection3	180.9700	1197.686	.283	.972
Variety1	180.2300	1180.825	.517	.971
Variety2	180.7100	1187.016	.422	.971
Variety3	180.3600	1188.293	.457	.971
Variety4	180.8100	1187.125	.402	.971
Userfriendliness1	180.1300	1188.498	.459	.971
Userfreindliness2	180.0300	1189.504	.491	.971
Userfriendliness3	180.0100	1187.687	.500	.971
Promotion1	180.2800	1184.729	.543	.971
Promotion2	180.4300	1180.389	.577	.971
Promotion3	180.5800	1185.539	.510	.971
Infrastructure1	180.3500	1182.169	.648	.971
Infrastructure2	180.2800	1181.880	.607	.971
Infrastructure3	180.1300	1186.357	.519	.971
Customer_Support1	180.1200	1196.389	.368	.971
Customer_Support2	180.3400	1188.045	.427	.971
Customer_Support3	180.2100	1186.067	.525	.971
Spatiality1	180.5000	1171.162	.637	.971
Spatiality2	180.4800	1164.878	.677	.971
Spatiality3	180.2100	1173.218	.749	.971
Amenity1	180.1400	1176.404	.652	.971
Amenity2	180.0300	1181.423	.631	.971
Amenity3	180.2400	1177.962	.529	.971
Aesthetic1	180.1400	1167.253	.665	.971
Aesthetic2	179.9700	1177.141	.688	.971
Aesthatic3	180.4200	1170.913	.676	.971
Service_staff1	179.9300	1175.722	.639	.971
Service_staff2	180.0200	1163.313	.761	.970
Service_staff3	180.2400	1166.063	.752	.970
Satisfaction1	180.0600	1155.996	.828	.970
Satisfaction2	180.1600	1163.227	.817	.970
Satisfaction3	180.1800	1167.826	.794	.970
Satisfaction4	180.3700	1159.367	.779	.970
Satisfaction5	180.0300	1160.615	.785	.970

Satisfaction	180.2700	1156.543	.841	.970
Satisfaction7	180.1900	1156.600	.757	.970
Satisfaction8	180.1800	1152.088	.814	.970

Appendix II (4.7)

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.579	.303		-1.914	.059
Service_Quality	.542	.099	.419	5.451	.000
IFE	-.010	.084	-.007	-.121	.904
Reservation_and_Ticketing	-.103	.110	-.065	-.941	.349
Cabin_Environment	.739	.117	.558	6.334	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_Satisfaction

Appendix II (4.8)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.998 ^a	.996	.996	.04883

a. Predictors: (Constant), empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness, Reliability

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	57.752	5	11.550	4844.928	.000 ^b
Residual	.224	94	.002		
Total	57.976	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Service_Quality

b. Predictors: (Constant), empathy, Tangibility, Assurance, Responsiveness, Reliability

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.000	.026		-.010	.992
	Tangibility	.176	.008	.168	22.414	.000
	Assurance	.235	.011	.276	22.022	.000
	Reliability	.240	.012	.282	20.432	.000
	Responsiveness	.210	.011	.261	18.942	.000
	empathy	.139	.008	.188	17.108	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service_Quality

Appendix II (4.9)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1.000 ^a	1.000	1.000	.00000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Staff, Spatiality, Amenity, Aesthetic

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.249	4	13.812	.	. ^b
	Residual	.000	95	.000		
	Total	55.249	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Cabin_Environment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Staff, Spatiality, Amenity, Aesthetic

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.442E-15	.000		.000	1.000
	Spatiality	.250	.000	.302	181479777.030	.000
	Amenity	.250	.000	.275	176536786.885	.000
	Aesthetic	.250	.000	.306	173510554.229	.000
	Staff	.250	.000	.300	198597473.538	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Cabin_Environment

Supervisory Meetings – MCU 4204 (Research Project)

Student Registration Number	Date / Remark	Signature of the Supervisor