

Airline Passenger Travel Cycle, Satisfaction and Loyalty: A Comparison of EgyptAir and Emirates Airlines

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Abstract *Passenger satisfaction is a major concern to airlines. It is an important competitive advantage that airlines need. In addition, customer loyalty is significantly associated with satisfaction. This study, using structural equation modelling to analyze passenger perceptions of EgyptAir and Emirates airline, aims to measure the influence of passenger travel cycle service quality on passenger's satisfaction and its impact on loyalty. In addition, it investigates the opinions of passengers on provided services of both airlines including their tangible, intangible services, information availability and airlines' commitment to declared times. The findings revealed the significant effect of travel cycle services on passengers' satisfaction while it highlights the services that passengers are not satisfied with. Contributions of the study to knowledge and practice are also discussed.*

Keywords: *Passenger Travel Cycle, Satisfaction, Loyalty, EgyptAir, Emirates Airlines*

INTRODUCTION

Air travel has changed the life of human being and how they conduct business. After the World War II, commercial flights started to provoke to different destinations all over the world. Button (2008) mentioned that air travelling is the most popular mode of travel including business, leisure, and for those need to travel in fast, cheap, and save way in the modern society. Air transportation has made it possible to travel long-lasting journeys in a short time period and increased the demand for long-distance trips.

Therefore, Basnet (2015) pointed out that air transportation has not only made an impact upon the tourism industry and developed countries, but it has made a huge impact upon developing countries and their economy. This also encouraged governments to improve and build the required infrastructure such as modern airports to attract tourists developed countries. Private sector as well has witnessed

an enormous growth in airline companies, travel agents, and their supply sources and production chains.

Airline companies are customer-centered and seek better understanding of customer's needs and wants in the different stages of their services provision. Therefore measuring passengers' satisfaction has become increasingly popular in the last two decades (Lin, 2003). However, limited studies investigated the impact of passengers' satisfaction in the Egyptian airline industry on passengers' loyalty. In addition limited studies have investigated the services of the whole travel cycle (pre-travel, inflight, and post-travel services) (Khuong, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the services provided pre-during and post flights and its effect on passengers' satisfaction and loyalty. The study compares the airline services of EgyptAir and Emirates airlines. The findings of this study will help improving and increasing the effectiveness of airline services during the different stages of airline passenger travel cycle.

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