



Addis Ababa University College of Development Studies

Center for Regional and Local Development Studies

**Organizational Conflict and Its Effect on Customer Satisfaction: The Case of
Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office, Addis Ababa**

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DECLARATIONS

I Mitiku Srebaro Ejabo, registration number/I.D. number GSE/6249/2009, do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially; or in full, by any other person for an award of degree in any other university/institution.

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ACRONYMS

AAU Addis Ababa University

AABIA Addis Ababa Bole International Airport

AFRAA African Airlines Association

CTO City Ticket Office

CSA Customer Service Agent

CEO Chief Executive Officer

ETO Ethiopian Tourism Organization

GCEO Group Chief Executive Officer

HTO Hilton Ticket Office

IATA International Air Transport Association

SCSA Senior Customer Service Agent

EAL Ethiopian Airlines

RLDS Regional and Local Development Studies

ITO International Ticket Office

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction has been one of the main concerns of the airline industry all over the world. This has been necessitated by the stiff competition in the aviation industry. Airlines are striving hard to offer quality services to keep existing customers and to convince new ones as well. The main objective of the research is to explore the causes of conflict and resolution mechanisms between customers and Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office staffs using five dimensions, namely poor communication, knowledge gap, punctuality, personal problem and resource with customer satisfaction based on literature review. A sample of 294 customers was taken. The questionnaire was developed based on five dimensions, in addition some open ended questions also prepared and distributed for Agents. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to organize and analyze the data. The quantitative method involves a series of tabulation by using Microsoft Excel 2013, and STATA version 13. Similarly, for the qualitative method, the data was organized into different themes and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that poor communication and resource had least mean score value and they were potential causes of conflict and customer dissatisfaction. From the mean result of five dimensions poor communication and resource are negatively affecting customer satisfaction, whereas knowledge gap, personal problem and punctuality have positive effects with their own degree on customer satisfaction.

Recommendations that was made include; Ethiopian airlines need to give due attention and do strongly on the dimensions of poor communication and resource which were the potential causes of conflict and had significant effect on customer satisfaction. Ethiopian airlines recommended to work in an integrated manner with other offices like security, immigration, airport, and custom, especially in co-activities. Agents' need more skill-based training on how to handle an irritate, and angry customer while they are on duty. In addition they need also update themselves with the dynamic environment, so that they can understand customer's expectations.

Key words: Organizational Conflict, Service, Customer Satisfaction

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations, and delimitations of the study and definition of terms and organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

This thesis focuses on organizational conflict and its effect on customer satisfaction with specific reference to Ethiopian airlines Interline and Ticket Office. Many Scholars and researchers from different fields of study, in their study of conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms identify many potential causes of conflict.

Conflict is a clash of interests, values, actions views, or directions (De Bono 1985). It is also defined from communication perspective as “an expressed struggle between at least two independent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from other parties in achieving their goals (Hocker and Wilmot, 1985). Conflict is widespread and universal in the society’s affairs. It occurs among organizations, within organizations, among the members of organization and within the personality of each individual because; presence of conflict is an everyday reality (Ayalew, 2000).

Jemal Sano, (2012:1) emphasizes that "conflict is unavoidable as long as human interactions exist in any community". He has stated that its causes are difference of "interests, prejudices, need and ambition". Ways of its resolution may be different from place to place, from society to society, from country to country, from continent to continent etc based on the nature and causes of conflicts. It may be based on its simplicity and complexity.

Organizational conflict, in simpler terms, implies to the outcomes of the human interaction that commences with the declaration of a member of the organization that his values, attitudes or goals are not compatible with the attitude, values or goals that have been set by the organization and needs to be followed by the members of the organization (Siira, 2012).

There are two arguments on conflict, namely functional and dysfunctional. Robbin (2001) defines functional conflict as the conflict that supports the goals of the group and improves its (group's) performance. For functionalists the argument is that if conflict leads to normal competition among groups and the groups work harder and produce more it is advantageous to the group and the institution. One of the main benefits of functional conflict is that it gives its member a chance to identify the problems and see the opportunities. Also, it can inspire to new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008).

On the other hand dysfunctional conflicts are conflicts that hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive forms of conflict. Dysfunction lists argue that Conflict is inevitable and desirable in organizations, when effectively handled. Conflict can tear relationships apart and, thus, interfere with the exchange of ideas, information and resources in groups and departments. Dysfunctional conflict hinders and prevents organizational goals from being achieved. (Robbin ,2011). Dysfunctional conflict usually hinders organizational performance and leads to decreased productivity.

Currently at Ethiopian airlines, particularly at interline and ticket office (which is the focus of this study) both the staffs and the customers got in to conflict due to various reasons.

The student researcher is interested to support the functionalist's argument in order to identify the causes of conflict between the customers of Ethiopian Airlines with Interline and Ticket Office staffs. In this study efforts are going to be made to identify the causes of organizational conflict and its effect on customer satisfaction, and conflict resolution mechanisms with specific reference to Ethiopian airlines interline and ticket office.

This research will solve the problems that currently existing between Ethiopian airlines interline and ticket office staffs with customers, suggests conflict resolution mechanisms, able to give quality customer service and enhance to customer expectation and satisfaction.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Understanding and meeting customers' expectations and then being different from competitors are important in order to survive in the today world of globalization. Due to the dynamic environment and increasing demand of better service from the customer, it is a must for airline industry to provide excellent service and focus on continuing improvement, so that they can remain the uniqueness of their services and create more competitive advantages than the competitors.

One of the reasons that hinder to meet customers' expectation is conflict. According to Reece and Rhonda (2002; 316) conflict can serve as opportunity for personal growth if we develop and use positive and constructive conflict management skill. Effective conflict management practice contributes a lot for achieving organizational objectives. Conflicts can have positive or negative effects for the organization, depending upon the environment created by the manager as she or he manages and regulates the conflict situation (Filley, 1975).

Based on the discussions with the Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) Interline and Ticket Office staffs, my personal observation and customer's feedback conflict is a common occurrence between the staffs and passengers. This daily conflict initiated me to do a research on the cause, its effect on customer satisfaction, and the company at large. There are a lot of transit passengers at the Addis Ababa Bole airport hub. Some of them are staying in Addis and some of them are transferring to other destination, while they are transferring at the hub both the staffs of Ethiopian airlines and passengers face a lot of problems due to various reasons and finally got in to conflict.

Ticket Offices also faces similar problems in this regard. Some of the issues that are not resolved at interline desk goes to ticket offices. Some of the problems are related with other offices like Security, Immigration and Custom Office and will push customers into conflict with the Ethiopian Airlines staffs. Whatever the reasons may be, once the customer is dissatisfied, it would be very difficult to gain their trust back. In this regard, a research should be carried out to urge a major reform; to assess the root causes of the problem and get the problem rectified (Gashaw, 2011).

There are different literatures that postulate the problems in the service quality of Ethiopian Airlines. Mersha, 2004 has identified poor service quality on different areas as one of the weakness of the airline. Furthermore online rating from passengers on the quality of services provided indicate that the airline lacks in area such as quality of cleanness of the aircraft interior, in-flight meal, customer service and personnel interactions and irregularity handling. Furthermore, most studies conducted to test the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the aviation industry adopted the SERVQUAL model. So a study on aviation industry is conducted to find out the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, but none of them noticed conflict as a major cause of customer dissatisfaction especially in such service sector.

Due to competition among various airlines with Ethiopian that are flying the same destinations, it is mandatory to be unique and focus on the quality of service provided and customer satisfaction ever before.

To this end, studying about organizational conflict and its effect on customer satisfaction at Ethiopian Airlines, particularly at the Interline and Ticket Office will contribute a lot for better customer service, satisfaction and achievement of organizational objective.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this research is to explore the causes of conflict between customers and Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office staffs and their conflict resolution mechanisms at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the causes of conflict between Customers and Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office Staffs
2. To explore the effect of conflict on customer satisfaction and

3. To identify conflict resolution mechanisms.

1.4. Research Questions

The research thesis is intended to answer the following questions.

1. What are the causes of conflict between Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office staffs with customers?
2. How conflict affects the satisfaction of customers at Ethiopian airlines?
3. What are the conflict resolution mechanisms?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research will serve as an input for the aviation industry. It also assumed to serve as a relevant and reliable ground for policy makers and development partners. We need to manage conflict in order to obtain profitable return for the organization ,to give quality service to customers and enhance customer satisfaction, to create easy communication, to get important feedback for the organization, to enhance its competitive advantage with other carriers and finally, to attain the company's objective, and the development of the country at large.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This research is focused on Organizational Conflict and Its Effect on Customers' Satisfaction more specifically Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office at Addis Ababa Bole International Air port.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The sampling method that was used is convenience sampling even if it is simple methods to collect and access the data it could lead to over or under presentation of a particular group within the sample. Even if convenience sampling could affect the data representation, it is forced to use it because it is very difficult to get the population sample frame.

1.8. Definition of terms

Conflict: Processes that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. (Cook and Philp; 2001:220).

Organizational conflict: Organizational conflict, in simpler terms, implies to the outcomes of the human interaction that commences with the declaration of a member of the organization that his values, attitudes or goals are not compatible with the attitude, values or goals that have been set by the organization and needs to be followed by the members of the organization (Siira, 2012).

Customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is defined as “the individual’s perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations” (Schiffman&Kanuk, 2004).

Interline Office: an office which is located at the back of the immigration, which is up- stair and handling all the issues of transit passengers which crosses via Addis Ababa Bole International Airport to their destination.

1.9. Organization of the study

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the entire research paper was structured in to five different chapters. The first chapter was the introductory part of the paper, which provides an overview on the paper with the statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and organization of the report. The second chapter describes the related literature review, which was mainly about theories, empirical publications and conceptual framework that show the relationship between service, customer satisfaction and conflict. The third chapter deals with the methodology of the study to display the techniques and procedure used to obtain data in the study. The fourth chapter discussed on findings from the data collection using various tools and the fifth chapter was the last chapter that summarized the major findings draws conclusions and suggested recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter consists of definition of conflict, organizational conflict, causes and effects of organizational conflict, views on conflict in an organization, types of Conflicts in the Organization, theories of organizational conflict, service, service process in airline industry, customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction in airline industry, importance of customer satisfaction, empirical literature review and conceptual framework..

2.1. Definition of Conflict

It is complicated to define conflict as it is, difficult to come to a consensus concerning the definition of the term (Borisoff and Victor, 1998). The term ‘conflict’ has been used in different ways, referring to different forms of conflict (racial, ethnic, religious, political and gender), types of conflict (within an individual, between individuals, within a group and between groups) and places where conflict occurs (at home, in organizations, and on battlefields) (Hartwick&Barki, 2002, p. 4).

Conflict is a disagreement between two or more people or it can be between groups, departments, organization and countries etc; who perceive that they have incompatible concern. Conflict exists whenever an action of one party is perceived by another party as preventing or interfering with their goal or action (Cook and Philip; 2001:384).

In addition, Dwivedi, (2004:242) defined conflict, as a process in which an individual purposefully makes a concerted effort to offset the efforts of another individual by some form of blockage that causes frustration to the latter in accomplishing his goals or furtherance of his interests. Likewise, it is important that there are people who understand conflict and know how to resolve them because conflict in a business is a natural part of the work place. From the above definitions, it is obvious that there is no just one practical definition of conflict.

2.2. Organizational Conflict

Organizational conflict refers to the condition of misunderstanding or disagreement that is caused by the perceived or actual opposition in the needs, interests and values among people who work together. Organizational conflict may also be termed as workplace conflict. The conflicts occur during situations where there is an interaction between two or more members of an organization involving contradictory opinions. These opinions may be brought forward concerning any particular decision or task that has taken place within the organization. Organizational conflict, in simpler terms, implies to the outcomes of the human interaction that commences with the declaration of a member of the organization that his values, attitudes or goals are not compatible with the attitude, values or goals that have been set by the organization and needs to be followed by the members of the organization (Siira, 2012).

2.3. Causes of Organizational Conflict

According to Bernard Mayer (2000), there are five basic forces, or sources of conflict these are: the ways people communicate, emotions, values, the structures, within which interactions takes place, and history.

Communication

Humans are very imperfect communicators. Sometimes this imperfection generates conflict, whether or not there is a significant incompatibility of interests, and it almost always makes conflict harder to solve. Many factors may contribute to communication problems. Culture, gender, age, class, and environment significantly affect individuals' ability to communicate effectively. Communication is one of the greatest sources of both difficulty and hope in dealing with serious conflicts.

Emotions

Emotions are the energy that fuel conflict. If people could always stay perfectly rational and focused on how to best meet their needs and accommodate those of others, and if they could calmly work to establish effective communications, then many conflicts would either never arise or would quickly deescalate. But of course that is not human nature, even if many of us

occasionally pretend that it is. At times emotions seem to be in control of behavior. Sometimes they are also a source of power for disputants. They contribute to the energy, strength, courage, and perseverance that allow people to participate forcefully in conflict.

Values

Values are the beliefs we have about what is important, what distinguishes right from wrong and good from evil, and what principles should govern how we lead our lives. When a conflict is defined or experienced as an issue of values, it becomes more charged and intractable. Though values are often a source of conflict and an impediment to its resolution, they can also be a source of commonality and a restraint on conflict escalation.

Structure

The structure, the external framework, in which an interaction takes place or an issue develops is another source of conflict. The elements of a structure may include available resources, decision-making procedures, time constraints, communication procedures, and physical settings. Even when compatible interests might move people toward a more cooperative stance, the structure in which they are working may promote conflict.

History

Conflict cannot be understood independently of its historical context. The history of the people who are participants in a conflict of the systems in which the conflict is occurring and of the issues themselves has a powerful influence on the course of the conflict. History provides the momentum for the development of conflict. Too often we try to understand a conflict in isolation from its historical roots and as a result are baffled by the stubbornness of the players. Conversely, history is not a determinant of conflict, although sometimes it can seem that way. The long history of conflict in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, or the former Yugoslavia, for example, does not mean that present conflicts in these regions will never be settled. That form of historical determinism is dangerous and misleading. However, such conflicts cannot be solved without an understanding of the complicated systems of interaction that have developed over time and the degree to which the conflict itself has become part of the disputants' identity (Mayer, 2000).

All these different sources of conflict communication, emotions, values; structure, and history interact with each other. People's history affects their values, communication style, emotional reactions, and the structure in which they operate. And history is constantly being made and therefore affected by this other (Mayer, 2000).

Lipid (1994) views that ineffective organizational systems, unpredictable policies, incompatible goals, scarce resources, and poor communication can all contribute to conflict in the workplace. Workplace conflict causes loss of productivity, distractions, and employee dissatisfaction. However, management can produce positive results by paying attention to and addressing the true causes of conflict in their organizations. It has been recognized that there are many basic causes of organizational conflict some of which are listed and explained further as follows:

Ineffective Organizational Systems and Unpredictable Policies

Poor follow-up, unequal applications of policies and inconsistent communications from management all contribute to workplace conflict. Lack of clearly communicated or constantly changing policies cause confusion and disharmony in the workplace. Organizations need consistent controls, clear communication, and effective conflict management systems in place in order to run smoothly. Managers and supervisors with good management skills who are able to communicate and relate to their employees make the difference between harmonious operations or chaotic, conflict-filled work environments. (Lipid, 1994)

Incompatible Goals

According to Owens (1987:245), a conflict exists when incompatible activities occur. Conflict can result when co-workers with different goals and different messages from managers and supervisors have to work together on teams, committees, or in work groups. Management agreement on clear and common goals is important for productivity and harmony among employees in work groups, and a clear vision and business goals from top management eliminate causes of conflict.

Scarce Resources

Scarce resources or competition for limited resources cause anxiety and frustration, whether the resources needed are time, space, supplies, or information. Anxiety, frustration, and competition lead to conflict if not managed well. Good policies and procedures for equitable distribution and use of resources, with proper controls, will lessen or eliminate conflict. (Lipid 1994)

Poor Communication

Poor communication, including dishonesty, unethical behavior, withholding information, and poor interpersonal skills, contribute to or even cause conflict. Clear, consistent, and open communication, as well as good conflict management skills and systems contribute to healthy working relationships and good work environments. Poor communication leads to misunderstanding and strife among employees. (Lipid1994)

Personal Problems

If the employee has problems outside of the workplace, such as marital or parental issues, she/he may take them to work with her/him. Consequently, if she is short and withdrawn from her coworkers, and if they are ignorant about the cause of her behavior, they will assume that she has an issue with them. Therefore, if she is not willing to divulge her problems to her coworkers, she should leave them at home.

Differing Values

The workplace consists of individuals who all have their own perspective of the world. Some employees have strong beliefs, which they are not willing to compromise. These beliefs can conflict with coworkers', creating conflict. For example, if one individual strongly opposes workplace diversity, he may have trouble accepting other workers different from him. To avoid conflict with these workers, he must try to accept or initiate more tolerance of those with differing values.

Opposing Interests

When an employee decides to pursue her own career goals, without regard for the organizational goals and its well-being, it results in strife among her coworkers. This occurs when the employee becomes so focused on achieving her own objectives, she disregards how it affects others within the company and the company itself. For instance, she may "forget" that she is a part of a team, in which the goal is to work together on a specific assignment. Consequently, she may work according to her own schedule and in the manner she sees fit, building resentment in her coworkers.

Personality Conflicts

No two people are exactly alike. Therefore, personality clashes in the workplace are unavoidable. One employee may have a reserved personality while another may be more outgoing and forward. Problems arise when the two do not understand or respect each other's inner nature. For instance, the more extroverted employee may feel slighted if the more introverted worker doesn't talk to him much. He may perceive it as a slight, rather than it simply being the employee's personality. Furthermore, his approach to handling projects may be analytical while hers is intuitive. When the two do not understand and respect each other's approach, conflict occurs.

2.4. Views on Conflict in an Organization

According to Robbins (1998:368) conflict thought has passed through three stages.

The **Traditional View** Assumed conflict as bad that leads to dysfunctional outcome like aggression, violence and hostility resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust between people and the failure of manager to be responsive to the needs and aspiration of their employees. So that conflict must be avoided.

The Human Relation View argues that conflict is a natural and inevitable outcome in any group and that it need not be evil but rather has the potential to be a positive force in determining group performance.

The Interactionist View is the most recent perspective and proposes not only that conflict can be positive in performance but also explicitly argues that some conflict is necessary for performing effectively. Creation and effective management of conflict can lead to constructive problem solving, encourage people to work out their difference and participate in developing an ethical and fair organization.

2.5. Types of Conflicts in the Organization

Conflicts could be stratified on the basis of individual, group, and organization at which they occur. In relation to this experts in the area (Rahim, 1986; Baraki & Hartwick, 2002) recognized four types of conflicts that could occur in organizations. These are intra- personal, interpersonal, intra and inter- group conflicts.

Intra- personal Conflict

Intra-personal conflicts are conflicts within the individual and are value- related conflicts. They occur when the expected roles of an individual do not conform to the values and beliefs of held by the individual. (Barki and Hartwick, 2002)

Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflicts are conflicts that arise between individuals. These types of conflicts occur when different situational conditions such as scarce resources and personal conditions like pre-historic conflict and personal diversity exist (Barki and Hartwick, 2002).

Intra –group Conflict

Groups, be they formal or informal, have their own norms and standards of behavior that members are expected to adhere to. Individuals and groups come into conflicts when members do not abide by the groups 'rule. (Rahim, 1986). According to the writer, there are several sources of such conflict: leadership style, group composition and size cohesiveness and groupthink external threats and their outcomes.

Intergroup Conflict

This kind of conflict refers to disagreement or differences between two or more units or groups (departments) in an organization. Such conflict is generated from differentiation of tasks, differences in culture across groups (departments), need for joint decision making; dependence on shared resources, communication difficulties, ethnic or racial backgrounds (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1982).

On the other hand, Jehn and Mannix (2001) proposed three types of conflict in workgroups in general: relationship, task and process conflict.

Relationship Conflict: It is an awareness of interpersonal incompatibilities includes affective components such as feeling, tension and friction. This type of conflict involves issues such as dislike among group members and feelings such as annoyance, frustration and irritation.

Task Conflict: This is an awareness of differences in viewpoints and opinions pertaining to a group task. Similar to cognitive conflict, it pertains to conflict about ideas and differences of opinion by the given task.

Process Conflict: It is defined as an awareness of controversies about aspects of how task accomplishment will proceed. It pertains to issues of duty and resource delegation such as who should do what and how much responsibility different people should get. It also relates to how the work gets done.

2.6. Theories of Organizational Conflict

Theories of conflict are the explanations put forward to explain causes of conflict. The causes of conflict are numerous and complex. The theories are advanced to simplify the causes by looking at them in categories. The theories explaining causes of conflict include structural theory of conflict, Marxist theory, economic theory of conflict and realist theory.

Structural Theory of Conflict

The structural theory attempts to explain conflict as a product of the tension that arises when groups compete for scarce resources. The central argument in this sociological theory is that

conflict is built into the particular ways societies are structured or organized. It describes the condition of the society and how such condition or environment can create conflict. Structural conflict theory identifies such conditions as social exclusion, deprivation, class inequalities, injustice, political marginalization, gender imbalances, racial segregation, economic exploitation and the likes, all of which often lead to conflict (Oakland, 2005). Structuralists maintain that conflict occurs because of the exploitative and unjust nature of human societies or because of domination of one class by another. The theory is however deficient in its one-sidedness of looking at causes of conflict. It, for instance, does not see the bright sides of racial or ethnic diversity and the strength that a society may derive from pluralism. It only sees the flaws. The structural theory thus makes sense only when conflicts are viewed from the broadest possible perspective, and only if the observer opts to ignore alternate causes of the conflict.

Marxist Theory of Conflict

The Marxist theory is an offshoot of the Marxian explanation of society. Society is divided into unequal classes: the one is strong, rich and noble and bears the tag of bourgeoisie, who controls the instrumentality of state; while the other is deprived, socially deflated, financially infantile and is called the proletariat. There is a constant struggle between the two, but he that has the financial muscle controls both the state and the poor, and that is the structure of society. Thus, the Marxist stand is that the state is itself a product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms (Lenin, 1917). The state is therefore structured to be in a perpetual state of conflict.

The rich controls the state as well as means of production. The rich thus grows wealthier at the expense of the poor, who lives at his mercy and is implicitly embittered by the development. The central argument of Marxism is thus that capitalism is at the heart of the state, and that same capitalism is exploitative and oppressive and has been responsible for the polarization of the society (and state) into two incompatible classes. The limitation of Marxism is similar to that of structuralism. It looks at every issue of conflict from the viewpoint of dialectical materialism alone. This economic prism is not enough to capture every aspect of conflict causation.

Economic Theory of Conflict

Economic theory of conflict explicates the economic undercurrents in conflict causation. There is considerable interface between politics (power, resources or value) and scarcity. People seek power because it is a means to an end, more often, economic ends. Communities feud over farmlands, grazing fields, water resource, etc, and groups fight government over allocation of resources or revenue. Scarcity, wants, needs, or the fear of scarcity is often a driving force for political power, contention for resource control, and so forth. Conflict is thus not far-fetched in the course of such palpable fear or threat of scarcity. Just as the fear of poverty and deprivation could lead to fraud or corruption; so is threat of or real famine, deprivation, mismanagement of scarce resources, could propel conflict over resource control.

Realist Theory of Conflict

Political realism explains conflict as an inherent attribute of man. As far as men live with their ‘baggage of emotions’, so will conflict remain a part of their habitat; and as long as man remains a ‘political animal’ with interests different from others, so shall conflict of interests remain a feature of society. More importantly, as long as there are scarce resources where most men are ambitiously seeking comfort or control of resources, conflict is inevitable. Realism is a good blend of the Marxist, international capitalist and economic theories in the explication of conflict.

The realist theory describes conflict as a product of the innate selfish nature of man, who continues to pursue his own best interests even if the ox of others is gored. This selfish nature of man leads to “competitive processes” between actors who seek to have all or most of available scarce resources. It is such attribute that is taken to the inter-state level, which leads to erratic behavior, hegemonic propensities, imperialism, et cetera, that can impel resistance as well as violent opposition and consequently heat up the international system.

Except the Marxist theory of conflict the rest theory of conflict more or less supports the paper idea because conflicts are occurring due to scarce resources, misunderstanding, wants and needs of human being, values and belief systems, and the innate selfish nature of man. These issues matters for the occurrence of conflict and customer dissatisfaction in the organization.

2.7. Approaches to Conflict Management

Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflict in sensible, fair and efficient manner. It is important that there are people who understand conflict and know how to resolve them because conflict in a business is a natural part of the work place.

Turkalj; (2008:509) stated the success of the organization depends on the ability of conflict recognition and conflict management, conflict management implies integration of all factors which can contribute to conflict resolution or its prevention.

There are five most typical approaches to conflict management explained by Turka's.

Dominance (Competing)

It occurs when the cooperation is extremely low, and the persistence in satisfying of personal interests high (when concern for one's own group is high but concern for the other group is low) by this strategy conflict is resolved in a way to satisfy the needs of one party damaging the other party involved in the conflict.

Integration (collaborating)

Cooperation is high, as well as the persistence in satisfying of one's own needs, so there is to be sought for the appropriate solution for all parties involved in the conflict.

Compromise (loss-loss)

There is an equal wish for medium level of cooperation and persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs, so the conflict is resolved so that each party involved in conflict gives up the part of the value.

Avoiding (withdrawal)

When the cooperation as well as persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs is very low, in that case the conflict resolution will be solved by withdrawal or repression of conflict.

Cooperativeness (Accommodating)

The accommodative style is low in assertiveness and high on cooperativeness. Parties will be generous and self-sacrificing. The emphasis is on the common interests of the conflicting group and a de-emphasis on their differences. Implicit in this style is the belief by the individual or group that others will cut off their relationship if he or she expresses self-oriented concerns, so better go along with whatever the other person requests, rather than get in to difficulties of direct confrontation.

2.8. Service

According to Kotler (2000), whether the production is tied with a tangible product or not, a service is any act or performance that one party offers to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Using simple terms, services are also defined as deeds, processes and performances (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). They are different from physical products and cannot be stored. Their purpose however is to satisfy human needs and wants. Although services are part of our life there is difference between services and commodities.

Schneider and White (2004) highlighted that pure services cannot be seen, touched, held, or stored because they have no physical manifestation, but are considered part of a process or interaction. Berry (1980) distinguished between services and goods and argued that, services are acts, deeds, performances, or efforts, whereas, goods are articles, devices, materials, objects, or things.

Lovelock and Wright (1999) presented two approaches to capture the essence of the word service. In the first approach service is defined as an act or performance offered by one party to another while in the second services as economic activities that create value and provide benefits for customers at specific times and places, as a result of bringing about a desired change in or on behalf of the recipient of the service.

2.9. Service process in Airline Industry

As Gliatis& Minis (2007) say, a service is a sequence of processes; and each of those processes generates a different value for a service in question. The value of each service process depends on service attributes (characteristics) as well as the way the process accounts for these attributes. Similarly, Chen & Chang (2005) define airline service experience as a chain of services; each service is made of a series of processes. Here, a service process is divided into ground and in-flight services (sub-processes), and whereas Chen and Chang (2005) suggest that both have to be evaluated separately (which they do in their article), a customer is not very likely to differentiate between them.

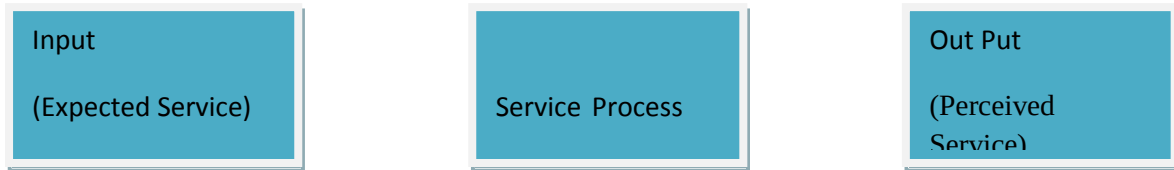


Fig.1. Service Process Model (Kelley, 2012).

Chen and Chang (2005) suggested that service process is a descriptive service process from a customer's perspective, a process that converts inputs to outputs through service steps that each customer takes when using air transportation. To measure customer satisfaction, Airlines should use the each service process step to measure customer satisfaction. Consequently, it will help them to measure customer satisfaction as well as service process improvement. When it comes to airline transportation, it is important to remember that the services are provided not by only carrier itself, but also by a number of other service companies.

The airline provides actual transportation as well as tickets sales (although not in all cases) and on board services, an airport offers shopping services, check-in services (not in all cases) as well as baggage handling services. A subcontractor chosen by the airport often provides baggage handling, catering and technical services. In this environment, so heavily relying on outsourcing the services, it is often hard for an airline to keep service quality in control.

Here, the customer enters to a service process with certain expectations, created by e.g. word of mouth, prior experiences, marketing campaigns etc. The expectations (or expected service) have an impact on the process itself as well as the output of the process. The service process steps are based on the airline passenger lifecycle suggested by Kelley (2012), which consists of five stages.

Ticket Purchase:

- Easily available information on ticket prices, flight schedule etc.
- Ease, accuracy and speed of reservation and ticketing

Pre-flight Services:

- Availability of pre-flight services (early baggage check-in, email reminder etc.).
- Airport is conveniently located / parking facilities are easily accessible and close to the airport.

Check-in Services:

- Ease, accuracy and speed of check-in.
- Availability of more than one check-in option
- Employees of the airline are courteous and helpful in case you use traditional check-in or have trouble with machine check-in.

Airport Services:

- Airline has comfortable waiting lounges.
- The airport has all necessary facilities and is clean and up-to-date.
- Airport staff is courteous and helpful.
- Employees of the airline are courteous and helpful during the flight.
- The aircraft has clean and comfortable facilities and seats

Departure:

- The flight departs and arrives at a time it promises.
- See departure

Post-arrival:

Promptness and accuracy of baggage delivery

The airline has other travel related partners such as car rentals, hotels and travel insurance where you can get discounts or earn extra miles.

2.10. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as “the individual’s perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations” (Schiffman&Kanuk, 2004). According to (Chan, 2000) in the airline sector, judging what passenger wants and imagine is necessary to deliver excellent customer service and quality and subsequently to analyze the firm’s performance standards. Customer satisfaction is an output, resulting from the customer’s pre-purchase comparison of expected performance with perceived actual performance and incurred cost (Churchill &Surprenant, 1982).

The marketing literature suggests that customer satisfaction operates in two different ways: transaction-specific and general overall (Yi, 1991). The transaction-specific concept concerns customer satisfaction as the assessment made after a specific purchase occasion.Overall satisfaction refers to the customer’s rating of the brand, based on all encounters and experiences (Johnson &Fornell, 1991). In fact, overall satisfaction can be viewed as a function of all previous transaction-specific satisfactions.Customer satisfaction stimulates repeat purchases and favorable word-of-mouth (Rogerson, 1983. A business organization must regularly gauge consumer satisfaction in order to analyze and identify whether clients were delighted or not. Customer satisfaction is when the consumer is delighted with the service delivered by the airline sector that meets the client desires, wants and expects.

2.11. Customer Satisfaction in Airline Industry

Customer satisfaction in the airline industry is dependent on various factors that range from reservation and ticketing, check in procedure, in- flight services, and luggage. Airlines have started customer relationship programs for better customer satisfaction (Oliver 1999) so as to have better relations with customers so customers can travel on the same airline again and again. Failings to meet specific customer expectation will only result in losing a customer.

2.12. The Importance of Customer Satisfaction

The significance of customer satisfaction is enormous in the business world, it has so many advantages and few are shown below:

Customer loyalty and Retention: The major importance of satisfying customers is to make them addictive to their products and services and retain them for their life time. In every industry or market there are numerous competitors or business organizations producing goods and services to succeed. Therefore, business organizations have to ensure that they put their strategy in the right order to satisfy their customers in order to differentiate their products and services. As a result of this, customers will become repetitive to the business organization that satisfies them and prefer staying as long as they are always satisfied (Roger Hallowell, 1996, 27).

Increase in sales: When a business organization satisfies its customers, the customers will be encouraged to buy more and often. Quality products and services defined by the customers' needs and wants have to be provided at all time to ensure this sales increase. In order to ensure customer satisfaction, business organizations have to define and redefine their corporate goals and objectives in order to make all that is involved in the organization to work towards this cause.

Increase in Profits: So far the business organization has put every arms of the business together towards satisfying the customer, then the operations and delivery will be effective, efficient and customized for the customers taste as known, offering the best quality services and products as expected by customer will result into high cost savings and increase in profits (Richard Gerson 1993, 10).

Cost Reduction: The possible costs that may be attached to the production and delivery of products and services will be reduced since the aim is to satisfy the customers. Quality that meets up with the customer expectations will lead to low time cost, reparation costs, operational costs, return costs and costs of acquiring new or lost customers.

Increase in the market share: Customers all around the world always want to get value for their money and above all be satisfied with the products offered to them. As a result of this, a business organization that majors on satisfying customers will have more customers, values and loyalty in the market it operates (Richard Gerson 1993, 11).

Price leadership: Huge quality of goods and services that are provided as expected by the customers will cause no trouble when a slight increase in price is done in order to increase profitability. All customers want is to get value for their money and then they are satisfied. As a result of this, a business organization that focuses on customer satisfaction may easily set the pace in price setting in his market (Richard Gerson 1993, 10).

Improved Goodwill: Goodwill is the positive reputation, which may be as a result of good relationship with the customers or good ethical relationships with the public in general, of a business organization over a period of time, this reputation is valued as an asset and it can increase the worth of the business organization. As a result of continuous customer satisfaction by a particular business organization, their goodwill will continue to improve because majority or all their customers are happy to do business with them.

Marketing and advertising: When existing customers that do business with a business organization are satisfied, they are going to refer the business to their friends, family and relatives so that they can also enjoy the good customer experience. Therefore, the marketing and advertising projects that may be needed to embark on may be minimal (Richard Gerson 1993, 11).

Long term success and survival: When a business organization set it as its goal to satisfy its numerous customers, majority of the machineries in the business organization will be effective. They will also be successful because the major reason why their existence is attained and their long term survival will not be shaking.

2.13. Empirical Literature Review

HailleoulDesta (2014) conducted a research study on assessment of conflict management practice of national tobacco enterprise (Ethiopia) SC. The findings of this study were based on the analysis of a sample of 205 respondents and the survey was conducted at national tobacco enterprise sc.

The interview findings of this study showed that the major cause of conflict in the company was lack of transparency during overtime work, promotion and salary increment stage, lack of team sprint among employee, and inappropriate decision of managers were the major cases of conflict.

The second issue was concerning type of conflict resolution method used and from the result found that mostly unfair arbitration and using weak method of conflict resolutions. Managers mostly exert an influence forcedly on one party (i.e. employee) instead of arbitrate. Besides, when evaluating the result from the conflict resolution technique used, as a whole most respondents agreed that it was weak.

Thirdly, the main problems in the process of conflict management practice of the company were arising from the rigidity of the managers in decisions making, unwillingness to understand the problems of lower level employees and unfair frequent illegal decisions only favoring to the managing body.

The fourth point was regarding to the extent that the organization consider conflict management as integral part of management. And from the result found, managers give high concern for the task while forgetting conflict management as integral part of management.

AregaBazezew and MulugetaNeka (2017) conducted a research article on interpersonal conflicts and styles of managing conflicts among students at Bahirdar University, Ethiopia. Mixed method research composed of quantitative and qualitative approaches was implemented for the study. One way multivariate analysis of variance was employed to identify the interaction effect between dependent and independent variable.

Concurrent mixed-methods research was employed because quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and the results were embedded during the analysis. Questionnaires

and key informant interviews were employed to collect the necessary information for the study. Regular undergraduate students ranging from first to third year on different campuses were included for the study. Multi-stage sampling techniques were employed to select the survey respondents to fill in the questionnaire.

Primary data were collected using questionnaire and key informant interview. The questionnaire was organized in a mix of closed- and open-ended questions. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed in this study. The information that was collected through key informant interviews and observations in relation to interpersonal conflicts and management styles of students were documented and analyzed textually to substantiate the statistical results from the structured questionnaire.

The study examined the causes aggravating interpersonal conflicts and the role of conflict management styles for enhanced teaching and learning processes. The final goal of any university is to create a productive, collaborative and smooth environment for positive learning outcomes. However, there were cases where students were engaged in some interpersonal conflicts that create impediments in their day today educational performances. From this study, it was learnt that ethnic differences, theft, drinking too much alcohol and insulting were the major causes of conflict in the university. The study also indicated that respondents commonly practice compromising, avoiding and collaborating strategies as measures of minimizing conflicts.

A paper conducted by (MrsAshimi, Rashidat, 2014) on organizational conflicts, causes effects and remedies, and examines the causes, effects and remedies of organizational conflict.

The study found out that like other terms, conflict generates considerable ambivalence and leaves many scholars and administrators quite uncertain about its meaning and relevance and how best to cope with it. Conflicts are inevitable in human life. It is also inevitable in organizations or even between nations. Conflict is an inseparable aspect of people's as well as organizations life.

The study also discovered that conflicts occur in organizations as a result of competition for supremacy, leadership style, scarcity of common resources, etc. If a conflict is not well and timely managed, it can lead to low productivity or service delivery. The study also discovered

that conflict could sometimes produce positive result, if well managed. Thus, not all conflict situations are bad.

The paper concludes that early recognition and paying attention to the conflicting parties and negotiation between parties involved in the conflict should be adopted in resolving conflicts while force or intimidation should never be used to resolve conflicting parties.

Another research conducted with the objective of finding out the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the airline industry the case of Kenya Airways (2009) also determines attributes that passengers consider important in judging quality of service delivery by Wang OndurWamucii was very fascinating.

The research was a descriptive survey to establish the factors affecting customer satisfaction in the airline industry. The target population of the study consisted of one hundred and fifty Kenya Airways Ltd corporate passengers located in Nairobi. The systematic sampling was used where the Travel Agencies was chosen based on their market share, i.e. the top two agents, while the corporate passengers from the Agencies were selected using the simple random sampling method. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire, which contained closed ended structured questions developed by the researcher.

Analysis of the data indicated that there are many factors that passengers consider important in customer satisfaction. Factors such as reservation and ticketing check in procedures, in-flight services, baggage handling and collection. From the study it can be concluded that reservations and ticketing, check-in procedures, in-flight services and baggage handling and collection do affect customer satisfaction in the Airline industry.

2.14. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a collection of concepts or models from literature, which informs a research study. It relates a study to existing ideas or principles. The conceptual framework below shows the casual link between potential causes of conflict and its effect on customer satisfaction. So, from the below diagram poor communication, resource scarcity, values and beliefs, power, wants and needs poor management, poor work environment, unclear job roles and incompatible

goals are described as potential causes of conflict and they have an effect on customer satisfaction and organization too. Some of the effects are poor performance, absenteeism, lack of employee engagement, higher complaints, customers switch to another airline, damage airline image etc.

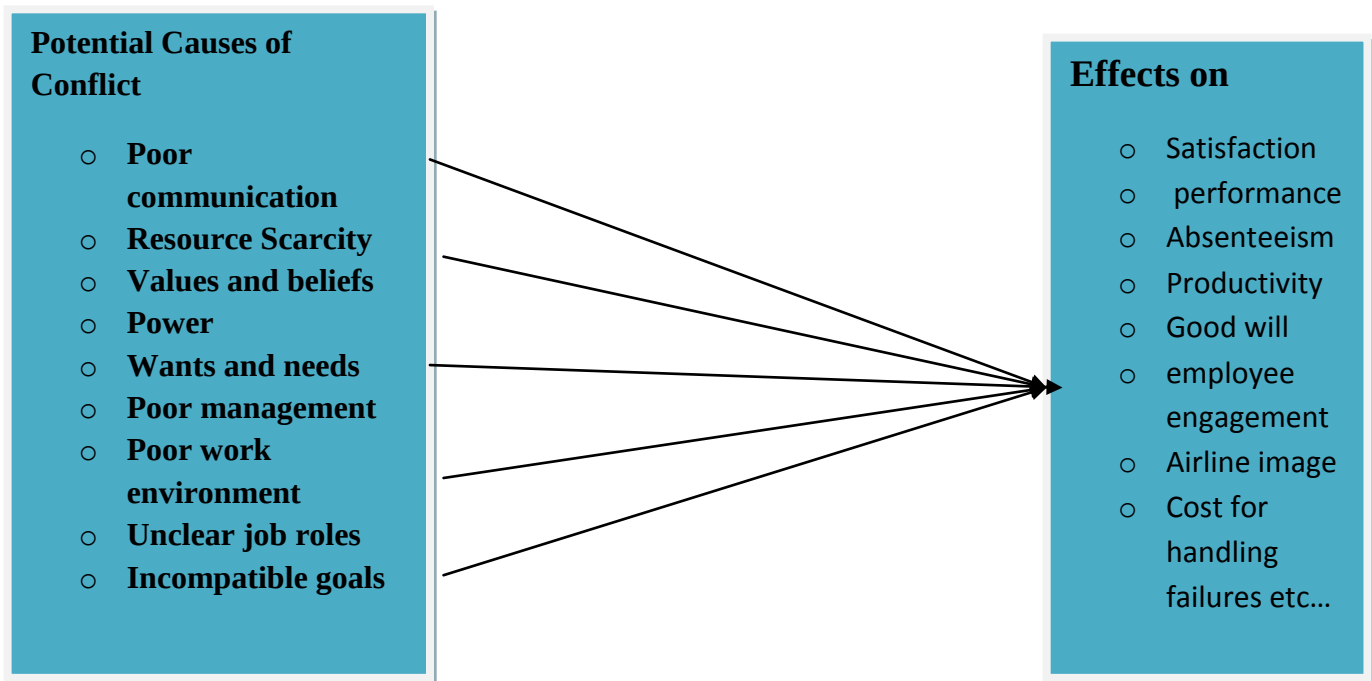


Fig.2Own Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes research design, target population, sampling method, data sources, data collection instruments, method of data analysis, mean calculation and ethical considerations.

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Orodho (2005), “descriptive survey design is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. Sequential mixed method approaches were used to collect objective data and subjective opinion to have opportunity of getting diversified view that make the data more reliable by complementing one another for descriptive analysis.

3.2. Target population

The entire set of units or objects the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings, that a researcher is interested in researching and analyzing. A sampling frame is then drawn from this target population. So people, firms, markets that are of interest to the researcher are called the population. The target population for this study was passengers of Ethiopian airlines and Interline and Ticket Office Agents. The sample frame is a set of items from which the sample is drawn from unknown size population.

3.3. Sampling Method and Sample Size

The current study will depend on non-probability sampling; namely, convenience sampling because the sampling frame is unavailable (Saunders et al., 2012). Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique in which some parts of the population have zero chance of selection or where the probability of selection cannot be accurately determined (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

According to Kothari (2004) when the population elements were selected for inclusion in the sample based on the easiest of access, it can be called convenience sampling. This is a technique in which a sample is drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand, readily available, or convenient (Bhattacharjee, 2012). It is an easy, quick, and cost-effective technique,

but the main drawback is that it is unrepresentative of the population (Churchill, 1995; Saunders et al., 2012).

In order to develop accurate sample size the researcher use default statistical techniques. However, as Stevens et al. (2006) explain, statistical methods of establishing sample size are only applied to probability samples. In the case of non-probability samples, the choice of sample size was determined by the insight, judgment, experience or financial resource of the researcher.

According to Roscoe (1975), provides the 'rule of thumb' for determining sample size; as it is declared that sample size larger than 30 and smaller than 500 are appropriate for most of the studies for unknown population. Based on the above scholar idea, sample sizes of 294 passengers were selected accidentally and conveniently for the current study.

The researcher conducts its data collection from 294 Voluntary passengers and 25 Interline and Ticket Office Agents for few consecutive dates of the month of OCT 2019. The data was collected accidentally and conveniently from passengers during their flight waiting area at Airport and from three selected Ticket Offices in Addis, namely Hilton Ticket Office (HTO), City Ticket Office (CTO) and International Ticket Office (ITO). The qualitative data from agents also collected with the same manner at their respective office.

3.4. Data Sources

The major source of data in this study was primary data. The primary data was collected from transit passengers and walking customers from three different ticket offices (Hilton Ticket Office, City Ticket Office and International Ticket Office inside the airport) and Interline and Ticket Office Agents using open ended questionnaire.

3.5. Data Collection Instrument

Data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire developed for transit passengers and walking customers was 5 point likert scale rating form 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and its collected from voluntary passengers at airport flight waiting area and the above three mentioned ticket offices for few consecutive dates of OCT 2019 accidentally and

conveniently in addition 25 open ended questions also prepared and distributed accidentally and conveniently for Interline and Ticket Office Agents at their respective office.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

To conduct this study data was gathered from different respondents. The collected data was organized in order to remove errors and coded and analyzed with the statistical tool of the software program: (STATA) version 13 and Microsoft Excel 2013 was applied to analyze the data based on the needed results and objective of the study.

Mixed method was used to organize and analyze the data. The quantitative method involves a series of tabulation. The researcher started with tallying the data collected through questionnaire. Descriptive statistics frequency, percentage and tabular summarization were applied to represent the dimensions of the study.

Similarly, for the qualitative method, the data was organized in to different themes and analyzed thematically. This involves sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on the sources of information in order to get a general sense of the information gathered and to reflect on its overall meaning. The researcher sorted out core categories then formed themes that are related to ascertained research questions. Consequently, themes were analyzed in detail in the analysis section to bring meaningful study results.

3.7. Mean Calculation

Mean is found by adding all of the numbers together and dividing by the number of items in the set. In other words it is the sum divided by the count. A Mean Score below 3.00 is lowest mean score and above 3.00 is highest mean score.

Example of mean $10+10+20+20+40+70/5=30$

3.8. Ethical Consideration

The study considers ethical issues. When collecting questionnaires from customers their permission was asked to fill the questionnaires. Name of the respondents and companies name were not asked to write in order to increase the confidentiality of the information they give. And also the questionnaire explains that the purpose of research was for academic purpose and finally the respondents were included based on their willingness.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Customers)

The demographic description of the 294 respondents of customers includes gender of respondents, age of respondents, education level of respondents, frequency of travel and reason for travel are included.

Table 4.1 Gender of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	128	43.54
Male	166	56.46
Total	294	100.00

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

As we see from the above table 4.1 majority of the respondent's gender were male (56.46%) and the remaining 43.54 were female respondents, so that male respondents are slightly higher in number than females.

Table 4.2 Ages of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-30	182	61.90
31-40	94	31.97
41-50	18	6.12
Total	294	100.00

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

Regarding the age group, the majority of respondent's ages were 61.90% within the age group of 18-30, followed by 31.97% were from 31-40, and the rest 6.12% were within the age group of 41-50, so this shows most of the respondents were young age group.

Table 4.3 Education Level of Respondents

Education	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	59	20.07
BSC/BA Degree	193	65.65
Masters Degree	42	14.29
Total	294	100.00

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

Regarding to educational background of the respondents the majority 65.65% of the respondents has BSC/BA Degree, 20.07% of the respondents have Diploma, and the remaining 14.29% of the respondents have Master's Degree. The response shows that most of the respondents have a good educational background.

Table 4.4 Frequency of travel (how respondents frequently travel) with Ethiopian airline per year?

Frequency of Travel	Frequency	Percent
1-5	96	32.65
6-10	139	47.28
11-15	23	7.82
16-20	12	4.08
>20	24	8.16
Total	294	100.00

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

From the above result the customer who travel frequently per year 6 to 10 were 47.28%, and those respondent who traveled 1 to 5 were 32.65%, and more than 20, were 8.16%, and 11 to 15 were 7.82%, and the rest 4.08 were customers who travelled 16 to 20 per year. And the response depicts those passengers who fly more than five times per year can get a privilege on the Sheba miles program like additional luggage allowance, priority at any time, lounge, and free award and transfer tickets, up-grading etc.

Table 4.5 Reason for travel

Reason for Travel	Frequency	Percent
Business	152	51.70
Leisure	47	15.99
Holiday	59	20.07
Education	12	4.08
Medical	6	2.04
Other	18	6.12
Total	294	100.00

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

From the above table 4.5 results we can see that most of the respondents 51.70% were traveling for business purpose and 20.07% were for holiday, 15.99% for leisure, 6.12% other purpose, 4.08 for education and the remaining 2.04% were traveling for medical reason.

4.2. Determinants of Causes of Conflict Based on Literature Review

Table 4.6 Communication Problem

Poor Communication	N	Mean
I did not miss flight due to inaccurate information from ticket office assigned agents about flight departure time.	294	2.87
I did not miss flight due to inaccurate information from ticket office assigned agents about required travel documents.	294	2.43
The agents at ticket office and interline are polite.	294	3.24
The agents at ticket office and interline are an open minded.	294	2.87
The agents assigned at interline and ticket office easily understands my verbal and nonverbal clues to interpret messages accurately.	294	2.94
The security and immigration staffs are customer friendly.	294	2.92
Overall Poor communication	294	2.88

Source own Survey, Stata 13 result

The analysis of the result highest mean score shows that there is a good relationship between customers and employee because the questionnaire expected positive response from the respondents furthermore the lowest mean score shows that there is conflict /unwanted or bad relationship between respondents and employee. Based on the questionnaire 5 point likert scale where(1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree),

So from table 4.6 analysis result the least mean score value for poor communication was 2.43, it implies that respondents were missing their flight due to inaccurate information getting from assigned agents and also it is one potential cause of conflict .

Table 4.7 Knowledge Gap

Knowledge Gap	N	Mean
Agents assigned at transit (transfer) and ticket office give me exact answer to my questions.	294	3.65
In my opinion the agents assigned at transit (transfer) office have good knowledge on their job or task.	294	3.41
In my opinion the agents assigned at ticket office have good knowledge on their job or task.	294	3.45
The agents assigned at ticket office have awareness about visa, travel document, vaccination, pregnancy certificate, and medical certificate.	294	3.34
The agents at ticket office have good knowledge on after mid night flights check- in time and departure time.	294	3.31
Overall knowledge gap	294	3.40

Source: own survey Stata13 result

From knowledge gap analysis result all statements mean score value was >3, and also the overall knowledge gap mean score value was >3, so this indicates that there is good relationship between customers and employee on the attribute of knowledge gap.

Table 4.8 Punctuality

Punctuality	N	Mean
Flight departure and arrival are on time.	294	3.50
Convenient flight services are available with enough frequencies.	294	3.32
Online flight booking is convenient.	294	3.22
There are enough available flight routes to satisfy passengers' demand.	294	3.65
The airline provides sufficient compensation in case of loss or damage as per international convention.	294	2.95
The airline provides sufficient compensation for any flight irregularity.	294	3.27
Overall Punctuality	294	3.32

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Table 4.8 the questions that was proposed to the respondents were that punctuality, all statements had >3.00 mean score value except the statement “the airline provides sufficient compensation on time in case of loss or damage as per the international convention” which had a mean score value of 2.95 which was < 3.00 , So this implies that the compensation fee is not satisfactory for the customers even if it is based on the international convention.

Table 4.9 Personal Problem

Personal Problem	N	Mean
I don't have good feeling but I have to travel	294	3.09
I have good feeling and I will travel.	294	3.51
The agents assigned at transfer/transit and ticket office were in good mood and served me in a nice way.	294	3.73
Over all Personal Problem	294	3.50

Source: own survey Stata13 result

From table 4.9 the least mean score value of personal problem is 3.09 a statement that describes (I don't have good feeling but I have to travel) So, this implies that when respondents did not have good feeling due to various reasons and at the same time when it was must to travel to them

on various process of the airline service it leads them dissatisfaction and on the other side also when the employee does not have good feeling due to many reasons, they did not perform their work properly and creates customer dissatisfaction and conflict.

Table 4.9.1 Resource

Resource	N	Mean
The number of assigned agents at transit/transfer and ticket office is enough to serve the customers.	294	2.81
The number of x-rays at airport for screening is enough.	294	2.51
There is convenient transportation system to/from/ and in the airport.	294	2.68
The road was crowded due to high traffic jam and VIP movements so that I cannot reach to my flight on time.	294	2.78
The number of check-in counters and gets are enough to serve the customers.	294	2.94
The number of ticket offices and Customer service desks are enough to serve customers.	294	2.72
Overall Resource	294	2.74

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Table 4.9.1 based on the analysis result of resource, all mean score value of resource was below the average which is <3.00, this implies that there was resource problem proportional with their number due to this they were forced to keep a long queue and other unnecessary extra cost as result it creates customer dissatisfaction and leads them conflict.

Table 4.9.2 Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction	N	Mean
I am satisfied with the information given by transit/transfer and ticket offices assigned agents.	294	3.64
I am satisfied with the flight punctuality (arrival and departure).	294	3.39

I am satisfied with the airline safety.	294	3.65
I am satisfied with the services of transit/transfer and ticket office.	294	3.63
Overall Customer Satisfaction	294	3.54

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Even though, there were least mean score value like poor communication and resource, all customer satisfaction mean score value were >3.00. This implies that customers were satisfied with the dimension of Customer satisfaction.

Generally one can understand from the analysis of the result that the attributes that had least mean score value like **poor communication and resource** were potential causes of conflict and customer dissatisfaction, so it needs due attention. On the other side the one who had highest mean score value like punctuality, knowledge gap and personal problem depicts that they were good attributes of the airline and needs to work on them.

4.3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Interline and Ticket Office Agents).

The demographic description of 25 respondents of Interline and Ticket Office agents includes level of education, sex, position in the organization, number of working years, and whether they faced conflict or not were described and the rest questions response also were described as follow.

Table 4.9.3 Education level of respondents

Level of education	Frequency	Percent
BA/BSC Degree	23	92.00
Masters Degree	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

Source: own survey Stata13 result

From the table 4.9.3 among 25 respondents 92% of them had a BA Degree and the remaining 8% had Master's degree so, this implies that the respondents had good educational background.

Table 4.9.4 Gender of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Female	8	32.00
Male	17	68.00
Total	25	100.00

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Among the 25 respondents 68% were males and 32 % were females this shows males were higher than females and had no effect on the result of the research.

Table 4.9.5 Position in the Organization

Position	Frequency	Percent
Customer Service Agent	12	48.00
Senior Customer Service Agent	13	52.00
Total	25	100.00

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Among the 25 respondents 52% of the respondents were Senior Customer Service Agents and the rest 48% were Customer Service Agents so, this depicts that there were more senior agents of respondent and they had better work experience in customer service and handling of many cases which actually leads to conflict. In a seminal study, Ross (1957) found that high seniority employees who were significantly better performers than low seniority employees.

Table 4.9.6 how many years have been working in Ethiopian airlines and in this position?

Working Years	Frequency	Percent
Below five years	7	28.00
Above five years	18	72.00
Total	25	100.00

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Among the 25 respondents 72% of it, has been working five years and above and the remaining 28% of it has been working less than five years in the company, so it shows that respondents had again a better experience in customer service. The more they became senior the more they handle and manage cases. In a seminal study, Ross (1957) found that high seniority employees who were significantly better performers than low seniority employees.

Tables 4.9.7 have you faced conflict between you and customers while you are in duty?

Faced Conflict or Not	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	92.00
No	2	8.00
Total	25	100.00

Source: own survey Stata13 result

Among 25 of the respondents 92% of them answer was “yes” they faced conflict with customers while in duty including seniors even though they handle many cases and 8% of the respondents answer was “no” they do not faced conflict while in duty, so this clearly implies that there was a conflict between customers and employee while in duty but the conflict level varies.

4.4. Responses of Interline and Ticket office Agents for open- ended Questions.

If your answer is yes what were the major reasons?

Based on the 25 responses of the respondents, we can classify the major reasons as employee/company side, Customer side and both.

Most of the reasons from employee/company side are due to flight schedule change without notifying the passengers, Miss-connection flight i.e. late arrival of their incoming flight or early departure of their flight, due to short connecting time, wrong information at the origin by ET agents, Ticket Office agents, or travel agency, overbooking, un-empowerment, busy and crowded gate, wrong information, baggage delay, etc.

Major reasons from customers side are due to wrong or forged travel document, not having the required travel document, vaccination, medical certificate, pregnancy certificate, passing the blame to others, when they came late and miss their flight, when they pay money to change the time or date for the missed flight, don't want to wait a queue etc.

For both sides being emotional, language problem, being tired, bad feeling, miss-understanding or communication problem etc.

Do you think that customers are satisfied with the service that you gave them? If yes what was their reaction? Or if not what was their reaction?

According to the 25 respondents, most of the customers were satisfied and they expressed their reaction by saying thank you very much! , Thank you! , Perfect! Great! Proud of ET, Wonderful!, Shake a hand, so exiting and writing a letter for their manager, telling their satisfaction directly for the service they get, telling that they have good communication skill etc.

The Un-satisfied customers also express their reaction like they became angry, get-upset, they may insult, and they feel cheated or ignored by the airline, they don't want to travel by the airline anymore etc.

How does conflict affects the satisfaction of customers?

According to the 25 respondents' conflict highly affects the satisfaction of customers in various ways. If there is a conflict customers tend to have a negative image on the service that we gave them and the company as a whole. Customers will search other option and we lose them. Customer service will decrease, lose interest in the company, company will go out of business, and they will move away and develop relationship with other carrier, it highly affects the service delivery of the customers, they will disseminate their dissatisfaction to the world using social media, they will lose their trust and confidence on the airline, ET may lose a significance number of passengers, they may promise not to use the same service again, lower his/her expectation towards the company, conflict make our customers un- satisfied etc.

What was your challenge when you face conflict with customers?

The respondents faced a number of challenges with customers. Trying to calm the passenger, not being heard by the customer, throw chairs, difficulty to make decision without prior notice of the duty manager, difficulty to re-route if there is no flight, shortage of time, things were done in rush time especially at Interline office, so it is difficult to satisfy customers with having different cases or problems with fraction of minutes, when they did not get swift replay to clear documents while passengers stranded in the terminal, keeping of emotion etc. were the major challenges.

How does conflict affects Ethiopian Airlines performance?

The respondents briefly explained that conflict highly affects Ethiopian airlines performance in various ways. ET will lose its status, its business, its performance will be totally fail, customers may go to other airline, the airline image and good will be affected, losing loyal customers, difficulty to attract new customers and the existing one, as you know mouth advertising one of the most effective form of advertising and when they there is a conflict they may tell for other people about it and will create negative image, it will affect the well - known name of the company, might lower efficiency of the company, dissatisfaction of customers will drive the customers to other airline, reduce the number of travelers, quality of service negatively affected, decline its revenue etc.

How you handle, when you face conflict between you and customers?

According to the respondents response they use various methods and skills to manage conflict. Calm the customers and talk slowly, then solve their problem, listening the customer and asking what they need from us and if any problem happens try to fix it, apologizing, controlling the emotion and understand the message, contacting the supervisor, “customers are always right and they are king” so that will listen them and solve their problem on time, show empathy, looking seniors and learning a lot how to be confident enough, calm, and improve relation, listen them first and take as it is.

Based on the quantitative analysis result poor communication and resource were the potential causes of conflict and customer dissatisfaction based on their mean score value which is < 3.00 , in addition the qualitative organized and analyzed finding shows that there is a communication problem and lack of resources, which finally leads them to conflict. Some of the communication

problems were misunderstanding, wrong information, language barrier etc and some of resource related issues were busy and crowded gate, lack of staffs, and lack of equipment, busy and crowded baggage collecting area, not having the required travel document, long queue, small number of x-rays for screening, etc.

All the above and other problems lead to customer dissatisfaction, specially based on the result communication barrier and lack of resource dissatisfies esteemed customers and affects Ethiopian airlines too.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.1 Summary

The objective of this study was to explore the causes of conflict between customers and Ethiopian Airlines Interline and Ticket Office staffs at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport and conflict resolution mechanisms, therefore on the bases of the data collected and analyzed result the research come up with the following findings.

- Regarding to educational background of customer respondents among 294 the majority 65.65% of the respondents had BSC/BA Degree, 20.07% of the respondents had Diploma, and the remaining 14.29% of the respondents had Master's Degree. The response shows that most of the respondents had a good educational background. In addition 56% of the respondents were males but it does not have any implication on the finding.
- Among 294 customer respondents the greater respondents 61.90% within the age group of 18-30, followed by 31.97% were from 31-40, and the rest 6.12% were within the age group of 41-50,so this shows most of the respondents were young age group.
- From 294 customer respondents result we can see that most of the respondents 51.70% were traveling for business purpose and 20.07% were for holiday, 15.99% for leisure, and 6.12% other purpose, 4.08 for education and the remaining 2.04% were traveling for medical reason.
- From the analysis result customer respondents of poor communication dimension the least mean score value for poor communication was 2.43, it implies that respondents

were missing their flight due to inaccurate information getting from assigned agents and also it is one potential cause of conflict.

- From the analysis result customer respondents of knowledge gap all statements mean score value was >3 , and also the overall knowledge gap mean score value was >3 , so this indicates that there is good relationship between customers and employee on the attribute of knowledge gap.
- Concerning punctuality analysis result of customer respondents, all statements had >3.00 mean score value except the statement “the airline provides sufficient compensation on time in case of loss or damage as per the international convention” which had a mean score value of 2.95 which was < 3.00 , So this implies that the compensation fee is not satisfactory for the customers even if it is based on the international convention.
- The least mean score value of personal problem is 3.09 a statement that describes (I don’t have good feeling but I have to travel) So, this implies that when respondents did not have good feeling due to various reasons and at the same time when it was must to travel to them on various process of the airline service it leads them dissatisfaction in addition when the employee does not have good feeling due to many reasons, they did not perform their work properly and creates customer dissatisfaction and conflict.
- Based on the analysis result of resourcedimension for customers, all mean score value of resource was below the average which is <3.00 , this implies that there was resource problem proportional with their number due to this they were forced to keep a long queue and other unnecessary extra cost as result it creates customer dissatisfaction and leads them to conflict.
- From the analysis of the result the attributes that had least mean score value like poor communication and resource were potential causes of conflict and customer dissatisfaction. On the other side the one who had highest mean score value like punctuality, knowledge gap and personal problem depicts that they were good attributes of the airline.
- Regarding educational background of agents respondents, among 25 respondents 92% of them had a BA Degree and the remaining 8% had Master’s degree so, this implies that the respondents had good educational background. 68% of agent respondents were males and the rest 32 % were females.

- Regarding position of agents in the organization among the 25 respondents 52% of the respondents were Senior Customer Service Agents and the rest 48% were Customer Service Agents so, this depicts that there were more senior agents of respondent and they had better work experience in customer service and handling of many cases. In a seminal study, Ross (1957) found that high seniority employees who were significantly better performers than low seniority employees.
- Concerning their work experience among the 25 respondents of agents 72% of it, has been working five years and above and the remaining 28% of it has been working less than five years in the company, so it shows that respondents had again a better experience in customer service. The more they became senior the more they handle and manage cases.
- Among 25 of agent respondents 92% of them faced conflict with customers while they were on duty including seniors and the remaining 8% of them did not face conflict while they were on duty, so this implies there was conflict between customers and employee while they were on duty.
- Based on the 25 agents' response, the major reasons of the conflict were due to communication problem and travel document issue.
- According to the 25 Agent respondents' conflict highly affects the satisfaction of customers in various ways and also agent respondents briefly explained that conflict highly affects Ethiopian airlines performance in various ways.
- Agent respondents used various methods and skills to resolve conflict. Calm the customers and talk slowly, then solve their problem, listening to the customer and asking what they need from them and if any problem happens try to fix it, apologizing, controlling the emotion and understand the message, contacting the supervisor, "customers are always right and they are king" so that will listen them and solve their problem on time, show empathy, looking seniors and learning a lot how to be confident enough, calm, and improve relation, listen them first and take as it is.

5.2 Conclusions

The first point raised in this research study was about the major causes of conflict between customers and Ethiopian airlines interline and ticket office staffs. On the literature part communication problem, emotions, differing values, incompatible goals, scarce resources, personal problems, opposing interests were listed as major causes of conflict in parallel the analysis result shows that poor communication and resource were the major causes of conflict with their mean score value 2.88 and 2.74 respectively, more over the qualitative organized and analyzed finding shows that travel document issues and flight cancelation were also causes of conflict.

The second issue was concerning how conflict affects the satisfaction of customers at Ethiopian airlines. Since it has cause and effect relationship the first is dissatisfaction of customers and from the qualitative result also found that conflict affects the satisfaction of customers in various ways. Lower their expectation towards the service and the company, disseminate their dissatisfaction to the world using social media, and promise not to use the same service again, lose their trust and confidence on the airline, negative image on the service and the company, discomfort, move away and develop relationship with other carriers, higher complaints etc.

The third question was conflict resolution mechanisms. Based on literature there were five major conflict management styles Collaborative style, Avoiding, Competing, Accommodating and Compromising. Most people have a preferred conflict management style, but they will use different style under different conditions. The skill of conflict management is to apply the right style for the situating. In other word we need to recognize the contingency approach. Likewise Interline and Ticket Office Agents had been using to handle angry and an irritate customers. They use various methods and skills to manage conflict. Calm the customers and talk slowly, then solve their problem, listening the customer and asking what they need from them and if any problem happens try to fix it, apologizing, controlling the emotion and understand the message, contacting the supervisor, “customers are always right and they are king” so that will listen them and solve their problem on time, show empathy, looking seniors and learning a lot how to be confident enough, calm, and improve relation, listen them first and take as it is.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings the following were the recommendations of the study. The study revealed that there is a conflict between employee and customers and it is due to the un-full field demand of customer's and communication barrier. So that Ethiopian airlines should work on the dimension of communication and resource.

Ethiopian airlines particularly Interline and Ticket Office recommended to work in an integrated manner with other offices like airport; security, and custom, especially in co- activities, so that together they can enhance the level customer satisfaction.

Both interline and ticket office Agents need more skill based training how to handle an- irritate and angry passengers while they are on duty. In addition need also update themselves with the dynamic environment, so as to increase customer's expectation.

All the concerned parties (Airport, Security, Custom and Immigration Staffs should participate in customer care and customer relation offices in order to change customers complain to an opportunity and improve customer service and retain loyal customers at the same time building good company image.

Keeping a long queue at different section of the airline makes the customers angry and dissatisfied, so that the airline take it in consideration and solve the problem as much as possible to give quality service and enhance customer satisfaction.

Ethiopian airlines, consistently and in advance advise schedule changes and flight cancellations via different communication channels for customers, so that they can avoid any inconvenience and complaints.

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Appendix 1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
CENTER FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
POST GRADUATE PROGRAM

Questionnaire for Interline and Ticket Office Agents

Thank you for your Cooperation

Level of education _____

Sex _____

Responsibility/ Position in the organization _____

1. How many years have been working in Ethiopian airlines and in this position?
2. Have you faced conflict between you and customers while you are in duty?
3. If your answer is 'yes' what were the major reasons?
4. Do you think that customers are satisfied with the service that you gave them? If yes what was their reaction? Or if not what was their reaction?
5. How does conflict affects the satisfaction of customers?
6. What was your challenge when you face conflict with customers?
7. How does conflict affects Ethiopian airlines performance?
8. How you handle when you face conflict between you and customers?

Appendix 2

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

CENTER FOR REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

POST GRADUATE PROGRAM

Questionnaire on Organizational Conflict and its Effect on Customer Satisfaction: The case of Ethiopian Airlines and Interline (Transit) Office. This questionnaire will be filled by customers only.

Greetings!!!

I am MitikuSrebaro and I am a graduate student at Addis Ababa University College of Development Studies. Currently I am undertaking my thesis under the title “Organizational Conflict and Its Effect on Customer Satisfaction” the case of Ethiopian Airlines Ticket and Interline (Transit) office.

Your exact reaction is vital for the realization of the study and it is only used for an academic research purpose. The primary aim of the research is to achieve my MA Degree. In addition, to access the effect of conflict on customer satisfaction particularly (Ethiopian airlines Ticket and Interline Office (Transit) at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport, to give better services for customers and to satisfy them, finally to achieve organizational objective.

Instructions

1. There is no need to write your name.
2. For questions that are provided with alternative answer, make tick mark on the space provided.
3. For questions that are not provided with alternative answer, you are kindly requested to write your full answer on the space provided.
4. Many thanks and compliments for your cooperation

PART I: General Information

1. Sex? Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age group? 18-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ More than 50 ☐

3. Level of education

Diploma ☐

Bsc/BA Degree ☐

Master's Degree ☐

Doctorate Degree ☐

Others specify ☐

4. How frequently travel with Ethiopian airline per year?

1-5 ☐ 6.-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ More than 20 ☐

5. Which airline are you flying with frequently?

Ethiopian airline ☐ other airline ☐

6. Reason for travel? Feel free to select more than one option?

Business ☐ Leisure ☐ Holiday ☐ Education ☐ Medical ☐ Other ☐

Part II. Causes of conflict which affects customer satisfaction. Directions: You are required to choose the appropriate response category by putting a tick mark () against each statement given for a 5 point likert scale where (1 = strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= strongly Agree).

No	Poor communication	1	2	3	4	5
1	I did not miss flight due to inaccurate information from ticket office assigned agents about flight departure time.					
2	I didnot miss flight due to inaccurate information from ticket office assigned agents about required travel documents.					
3	The agents at ticket office and interline are polite.					
4	The agents at ticket office and interline are an open minded.					
5	The agents assigned at interline and ticket office easily understands my verbal and nonverbal clues to interpret messages accurately.					
6	The security and immigration staffs are customer friendly.					

No	Knowledge Gap	1	2	3	4	5
1	Agents assigned at transit (transfer) and ticket office give me exact answer to my questions.					
2	In my opinion the agents assigned at transit (transfer) office have good knowledge on their job or task.					
3	In my opinion the agents assigned at ticket office have good knowledge on their job or task.					
4	The agents assigned at ticket office have awareness about visa, travel document, vaccination, pregnancy certificate, and medical certificate.					
5	The agents at ticket office have good knowledge on after mid night flights check- in time and departure time.					

Personal problem	1	2	3	4	5
I don't have good feeling but I have to travel.					
I have good feeling and I will travel.					
The agents assigned at transfer/transit and ticket office were in good mood and served me in					

a nice way.					
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No	Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5
1	Flight departure and arrival are on time					
2	Convenient flight services are available with enough frequencies					
3	Online flight booking is convenient					
4	There are enough available flight routes to satisfy passengers' demand.					
5	The airline provides sufficient compensation in case of loss or damage as per international convention.					
6	The airline provides sufficient compensation for any flight irregularity.					

No	Resource	1	2	3	4	5
1	The number of assigned agents at transit/transfer and ticket office are enough to serve the customers.					
2	The number of x-rays at airport for screening are enough.					
3	There is convenient transportation system to/from/ and in the airport.					
4	The road was crowded due to high traffic jam and VIP movements so that I cannot reach to my flight on time.					
5	The number of check-in counters and gets are enough to serve the customers.					
6	The number of ticket offices and Customer service desks are enough to serve customers.					

No	Customer satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am satisfied with the information given by transit/transfer and ticket offices assigned agents.					
2	I am satisfied with the flight punctuality (arrival and departure).					
3	I am satisfied with the airline safety.					
4	I am satisfied with the services of transit/transfer and ticket office.					