

# CONSUMER PURCHASE-RELATED FACTORS AND SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES IN THE INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Philemon Oyewole, Howard University  
Poyewole@Howard.edu

## ABSTRACT

As competition in the international airline industry intensifies, increasing consumer satisfaction with services becomes crucial to airlines' survival. While its importance in marketing is never questioned, customer satisfaction has rightly been described as "a complex and elusive phenomenon" (Peterson & Wilson, 1992, p. 68). This paper examines the level of consumer satisfaction with the different individual elementary services customarily provided by airlines on an international flight, and determines how this is influenced by consumer purchase-related factors. Four purchase-related factors are examined, namely: (i) reasons for travel, (ii) frequency of travel, (iii) class of flight, and (iv) type of airline used. Findings show that while reasons for travel and frequency of travel had no significant influence; class of flight and type of airline used tend to influence the level of consumer satisfaction with services in the international airline industry. Managerial implications of these finding and directions for future research are given.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumer satisfaction has long been recognized as the core of the marketing concept (Hempel & Rosenberg, 1976). While its importance in marketing is never questioned, customer satisfaction has rightly been described as "a complex and elusive phenomenon" (Peterson & Wilson, 1992, p. 68). Peterson and Wilson (1992) further emphasized: "To be able to interpret and effectively utilize customer satisfaction ratings, it is necessary to understand what determines them as well as know what variables and/or factors relate to them" (p. 61). Several marketing phenomena have been shown in the literature to be impacted by purchase situations. For example: purchase situations were reported to influence industrial buyer's purchase decision (Lau, Goh, & Phua, 1999); they were found to influence consumer's choice of wine (Morey, Sparks & Wilkins, 2002); and have been demonstrated to influence communication behavior of salesperson towards customers (Reid, Pullins, & Plank, 2002). Purchase situations have been linked to deep consumer emotions (Yi & Baumgartner, 2004), which include such things as satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction. It would thus be of keen interest to determine if and how purchase situations affect the level of consumer satisfaction in the airline industry, an industry that has become the hallmark of the modern economy.

Specifically, this paper examines the following questions: (i) Which purchase situations influence consumers' satisfaction with services in the airline industry? (ii) To what extent do these purchase situations influence satisfaction? and (iii) Given a purchase situation, what marketing strategies could management adopt to enhance consumer satisfaction with services in the airline industry?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Several authors have examined the impact of purchase situations on consumers' attitude and behavior, but this was mainly with tangible products rather than with services (as is done in this paper). For example, using the multinomial logit model involving a sample of Generation Y alcohol consumers in a city in Northern Italy, Agnoli, Begalli, and Capitulo (2011) found that four consumption situations—at bars or pubs, at discos, at home and at restaurants or pizzerias—had significant impact on their perception of functions of, and their choice of, alcoholic beverages. In their own survey of 147 wine buyers using structured self-administered questionnaires in a central city retail location in Australia, Hirche and Bruwer (2014) found that purchase situations significantly influenced how much buyers would spend. They reported that “wine buyers would spend on average over \$15 more per unit when the wine is not bought for their personal consumption (e.g. gift)” (p. 318) Their level of involvement with the wine purchase was also found to vary with purchase or consumption situations.

In a study of 122 Greek producers of industrial goods, Leonidou (2005) found that their customers used significantly different influence strategies in their negotiations depending on the purchase situations—straight re-buy, modified re-buy, or new task. The author therefore suggested that industrial goods sellers treat customers differently in each buying situation. In their experimental study of purchase situations and impulse buying behavior, Wu and Huan (2010) reported, “respondents with high time pressure (limited time) or low economic pressure (larger budget) are significantly more likely to engage in impulse buying behavior” (p. 3530). Objects used for the study were souvenirs, not services as is done in this paper. In addition to not treating services, all these studies did not link purchase situations to customer satisfaction, as important as this concept is for marketing success. The current paper makes this connection.

Whereas authors are unanimous in saying that the consumer determines his or her level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction through a process of comparison, they do not agree when it comes to *the basis* on which the consumer makes this comparison. Different bases of comparison have been proposed in the literature. Long before now, Howard and Sheth (1969) proposed that satisfaction is the degree of agreement found between the actual consequences or, more accurately, their perception by the consumer of the purchase and the likely impact expected at the time of purchase. The consumer is satisfied if the results are greater than or equal to what he expected. Otherwise, he will be dissatisfied.

In their analysis of the consumer decision process, Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1978) define *satisfaction* as the finding that the chosen alternative is consistent with prior beliefs of consumers on this alternative. To these authors, satisfaction is the outcome of an internal process where the

individual assesses the chosen alternative. Olivier (1981), for his part, defines *satisfaction* as the evaluation of the "surprise" on the process of acquisition and consumption of a product. It is the psychological state of the consumer—the result of a comparison between expectations about the product and feelings experienced after the purchase and consumption of the product. According to Oliver (1981), the duration of this "surprise" is very short and it is incorporated into the "attitudinal" structure of the consumer.

As noted also by Anderson (1973), there is no definition of satisfaction that is universally accepted in the literature. Smart (1982), in a review of research that deals with consumer satisfaction, notes that a set of general definitions makes the operationalization and measurement of the concept extremely difficult. Day (1977), Oliver (1977), and Smith and Houston (1983) are of the opinion that the level of satisfaction is the result of a subjective comparison made between consumer expectations and product performance on its salient dimensions. In the case where consumer expectations are confirmed, or exceeded, the consumer is satisfied. If the results are to the contrary, he will be dissatisfied.

Swan and Trawick (1979) divide consumer expectations into two types. These are (i) desired expectation, i.e., the level of product performance desired by the consumer, and (ii) the predicted expectation, i.e., the level of product performance expected by the consumer. These authors argue, then, that when the performance is equal to the desired expectation, substantial satisfaction results, and that satisfaction is very high if the performance exceeds the expectations you wanted. By contrast, when performance equals the expectation predicted, it results in indifference, while an inferior performance to the expectation predicted results in consumer dissatisfaction.

The notion of desired expectation proposed by Swan and Trawick (1979) seems interesting. Confirmation of expectations per se does not seem sufficient to analyze consumer satisfaction. We need to know if the expectation is simply the predicted or the desired one. In agreement with Swan and Trawick—it is not logical for a consumer to be very satisfied if a product is predicted to be of poor performance, and it was. This is not a desired expectation.

LaTour and Peat (1980) studied the consumer's experience with another brand of product/service. The experience of other persons concerned with the brand was proposed by Fisk and Coney (1981). Swan and Martin (1980), and Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983) proposed that the consumer's previous experience with the same product should be the basis for comparison. Morris (1977) proposed the social and cultural values of the consumer. The motive for the consumer for which he uses the product/service was proposed by McGuire (1974), while Swan and Trawick (1981) proposed the desired level of performance as a basis for comparison.

Other bases for comparing the performance of a product/service developed in the literature include the best alternative (Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins, 1987); values or personal needs of consumers (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983); and profits from the transaction by the consumer vis-à-vis those derived by another appropriate person—such as the seller or a friend (Swan & Mercer, 1981).

From all these proposals, one point stands out: satisfaction does not depend only on the expected performance of a product or service, a form of standard or norm plays a crucial role as well (Woodruff, Cadotte, & Jenkins 1983). The nature of this standard is a field for continuous research in view of the place occupied by the concept of satisfaction in marketing. There is thus a persistent need to determine factors that influence consumer satisfaction in particular industries such as the airline industry—which is the focus of this paper. To this end, 20 individual elementary services offered in the airline industry on international flights have been retained in this paper for study. Four purchase situations are also proposed to influence the level of consumer satisfaction with those services. These purchase situations include:

1. Reason for travel
2. Frequency of travel
3. Class of travel
4. Type of airline used

To examine this proposition, the following hypotheses have been formulated and tested:

H1. Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the reason for which the passenger travels.

H2. Significant differences exist in the levels satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the frequency of travel by air of the passenger.

H3. Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the class in which the passenger travels.

H4. Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the type of airline used by the passenger.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to carry out this research, a list of services that make up the typical service offering in the airline industry was first drawn up. The basic service for this part of the tertiary sector of the economy is to airlift passengers from one location to another. However, in addition to this basic service, several other peripheral services are included in the service offering. Based on a review of the literature on the subject, as well as personal interviews with the executives of several airlines, a total of 20 elementary services often offered by companies in the industry were identified. These include the core service (i.e. the flight itself), and other facilitating and enhancing supplementary services usually offered on an international flight by airlines. Not included were such ad hoc services that may be offered by the airlines in cases of emergency, as well as general airport services, immigration control services, car rental services, etc., over which the airlines have little or no control.

The 20 elementary services that are retained are as follows:

1. Distribution of printed materials for general information
2. Ticket sales
3. Reservation services
4. Check-in
5. Luggage services
6. Information service by the airline at the airport
7. The flight itself (air lift)
8. Communication of the flight's progress to the passengers
9. Demonstration of the life jacket
10. Distribution of newspapers aboard
11. Provision of music aboard
12. Movie showings aboard
13. Food (or refreshment) services aboard
14. Provision of non-alcoholic beverages aboard
15. Provision of alcoholic beverages aboard
16. Off-tax sales aboard
17. Toilet facilities aboard
18. Bar service aboard
19. Gift-giving to passengers
20. Communication of weather condition and the time at destination (meteorological service).

Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaires distributed at an international airport. The respondents were adult passengers (18 years and above) on an international flight of about 6-7 hours non-stop duration. This flight was of long enough duration to have all the 20 services listed above offered to the passengers. Questionnaires were administered to the passengers as they waited for their luggage in the arrival hall of the airport. A total of 271 questionnaires were completed by the respondents. Of these, however, 10 were unusable and were thus discarded. Hence, a net total of 261 questionnaires were analyzed.

The questionnaire asked for the level of satisfaction with each service consumed out of the 20 elementary services retained. Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction by circling one percentage value on an eleven-point scale that went from 0% (not at all satisfied) to 100% (completely satisfied). Before the data analysis, these percentages were rescaled into numbers, going from 0 to 10. Finally, the questionnaire asked for the purchase situations of the customer, which include reason for travel, frequency of travel, class of flight, and type of airline used.

Respondents were asked the following questions: "In which class did you fly?" "Which airline did you travel with?" "For what reason did you travel?" and "How many times did you travel by air in the last 12 months?" In view of the exploratory nature of this study, the research hypotheses were tested at the 0.1 level of significance.

## RESULTS

Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction with each of the 20 retained elementary services. To do this, respondents used an 11-point scale ranging from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). From the responses, the average scores across all respondents for each of the 20 elementary services were calculated. Table 1 shows the distribution of these scores in descending order. This distribution helps determine the place of an elementary service compared to others regarding the level of consumer satisfaction. The fourth column of Table 1 shows the ranking of the 20 elementary services. The standard deviations of the satisfaction scores are given in the third column of the Table.

As shown in Table 1, the service of demonstration of the use of lifejacket is in the first place with an average score of 7.68. In second place, comes the flight itself, which is here the core service. The average score for satisfaction with the flight is 7.43. Registration comes in third with an average score of 7.27. After these three services, the only other service to achieve an average score of 7 is the weather information service on board. The average score for this service is 7.09. All the other services have a mean score of less than 7. In fact, the gift services, printed materials, duty free sales, bar, newspapers, information on the ground, movies, and luggage, each have an average score below 6.

This analysis demonstrates a low level of satisfaction generally. The standard deviations of satisfaction scores range from 2.22 to 3.46, however, and show that consumers differ in their assessments of elementary services studied.

What impact purchase situation has on these differences in satisfaction is examined in this paper via the test of the four hypotheses stipulated above. Results of the test of these hypotheses are given and discussed below.

**TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF SATISFACTION SCORES WITH THE 20  
ELEMENTARY SERVICES**

SERVICES	MEAN SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION	RANK
LIFE JACKET	7.68	2.22	1
ACTUAL FLIGHT	7.43	2.26	2
CHECK-IN	7.27	2.63	3
METEOROLOGY	7.09	2.59	4
PROGRESS OF FLIGHT	6.98	2.25	5
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	6.94	2.61	6
TOILET	6.64	2.59	7
MEALS	6.63	2.60	8
RESERVATION	6.62	2.79	9
TICKETS	6.58	2.68	10
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	6.55	3.04	11
MUSIC	6.13	3.46	12
LUGGAGE	5.95	3.36	13
MOVIES	5.75	3.11	14
INFORMATION	5.64	3.13	15
NEWSAPAPER	5.57	3.33	16
BAR	5.41	3.10	17
DUTY FREE SALES	5.19	3.10	18
PRINTED MATERIALS	4.96	3.01	19
GIFTS	4.71	3.18	20

### Result of the Test of Hypothesis H1

Hypothesis H1 states as follows:

*“Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry, depending on the reason for which the passenger travels.”*

The purposes of travel of our respondents are:

- (i) For business
- (ii) For tourism
- (iii) For personal reasons

Only seven people ticked "tourism" as the purpose of their trip. This leaves several empty cells making impossible the analysis envisaged. These seven respondents were thus combined with respondents in the category "personal reasons." Consequently, two categories of trip purpose were used in the analysis. These two categories are:

- (i) Business reasons
- (ii) Non-business reasons

The result of testing the Hypothesis H1 is reported in Table 2. As shown in column 6 of the table, none of the three tests of multivariate analysis of variance—Pillai, Hotelling, and Wilks—gives an F value which is significant at 0.1. According to this result, hypothesis H1 was rejected by the data from this research. The purpose of travel does not tend to determine the level of satisfaction with services in the airline industry.

**TABLE 2. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS H1**

NAME OF TEST	VALUE OF TEST	APPROX. F	HYPOTHESIS D.F.	ERROR D.F.	SIG. of F
PILLAI	0.10632	1.42762	20	240	0.110
HOTELLING	0.11897	1.42762	20	240	0.110
WILKS	0.89368	1.42762	20	240	0.110

Note:

APPROX. F = The value of F that roughly equals the value of the given test.

D.F. = Degree of Freedom.

### Result of the Test of Hypothesis H2

Hypothesis H2 states as follows:

*"Significant differences exist in the levels satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the frequency of travel by air of the passenger."*

To test this hypothesis, respondents were grouped into 4 categories of travelers, according to the frequency of air travel in the past 12 months. These four categories are:

CATEGORY 1 (once) Non-frequent flyers

CATEGORY 2 (from 2 to 5 times) Less-frequent flyers

CATEGORY 3 (from 6 to 12 times) Frequent flyers

CATEGORY 4 (more than 13 times) Very frequent flyers

The result of testing the hypothesis H2 is reported in Table 3. As shown in column 6 of the table, none of the three tests of multivariate analysis of variance—Pillai, Hotelling, and Wilks—gives an F value which is significant at 0.1. According to this result, hypothesis H2 was rejected by the data from this study. Thus, frequency of travel by air does not tend to determine the level of satisfaction with services in the airline industry.

**TABLE 3. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS H2**

NAME OF TEST	VALUE OF TEST	APPROX. F	HYPOTHESIS D.F.	ERROR D.F.	SIG. of F
PILLAI	0.25888	1.13331	60	720	0.235
HOTELLING	0.28807	1.13628	60	710	0.231
WILKS	0.76118	1.13482	60	710	0.233

Note:

APPROX. F = The value of F that roughly equals the value of the given test.

D.F. = Degree of Freedom.

### Result of the Test of Hypothesis H3

Hypothesis H3 says as follows:

*"Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the class in which the passenger travels."*

The respondents have traveled in (i) the first class, (ii) the economy class, and (iii) the business class. The result of testing this hypothesis H3 is reported in Table 4. Each of the three tests of multivariate analysis of variance—Pillai, Hotelling, and Wilks—gives a value of F which is significant at 0.1 level. According to this result, hypothesis H3 is not rejected.

A univariate analysis of variance was subsequently performed to determine which elementary service(s) have contributed particularly to the substantial difference in the means vector. The result of this analysis is reported in Table 5. Columns 2, 3 and 4 of the table show the average scores of the three groups of respondents. The F values are in column 5, while the thresholds at which these values are significant are given in column 6.

**TABLE 4. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS H3**

NAME OF TEST	VALUE OF TEST	APPROX. F	HYPOTHESIS D.F.	ERROR D.F.	SIG. of F
PILLAI	0.21674	1.45848	40	480	0.034
HOTELLING	0.24324	1.44726	40	476	0.041
WILKS	0.79495	1.45288	40	478	0.040

Note:

APPROX. F = The value of F that roughly equals the value of the given test.

D.F. = Degree of Freedom.

**TABLE 5. UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS H3**

SERVICES	FIRST CLASS	BUSINESS CLASS	ECONOMY CLASS	F	SIG. of F
PRINTED MATERIALS	4.65	4.83	5.08	0.64	
TICKETS	7.07	6.79	6.62	0.51	
RESERVATION	7.14	7.05	6.49	1.52	
CHECK-IN	7.69	7.74	7.05	1.95	
LUGGAGE	6.69	5.89	5.85	0.80	
INFORMATION	5.97	6.41	5.44	2.82	0.061*
ACTUAL FLIGHT	7.59	7.72	7.30	0.85	
PROGRESS OF FLIGHT	6.79	7.24	6.93	0.54	
LIFE JACKET	7.00	8.45	7.54	5.39	0.005*
NEWSPAPERS	5.83	5.71	5.86	0.10	
MUSIC	4.97	6.78	6.06	3.60	0.029*
MOVIES	5.00	6.50	5.68	2.94	0.055*
MEALS	6.27	7.02	6.59	1.07	
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	6.76	7.59	6.76	2.44	0.089*
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	6.76	7.07	6.59	0.84	
DUTY FREE SALES	4.03	5.24	5.22	3.96	0.020*
TOILET	6.24	7.19	6.53	1.84	
BAR	5.03	5.36	5.11	0.44	
GIFTS	5.10	5.22	4.80	1.73	
METEOROLOGY	6.97	7.12	7.10	0.04	

Note:

\*Significant at 0.1 level

Empty cell denotes F is not significant

The table shows that the services of information, life jacket, music, movie, non-alcoholic beverages and duty free sales have a value of F, which with degrees of freedom of 2 and 258, is significant at 0.1 level. As shown in columns 2, 3 and 4 of the table, except for the information service, the first class passengers are less satisfied with the services listed than the passengers of other classes. This might be due to higher prices paid by these passengers on the same flight, hence they expected more.

#### **Result of the Test of Hypothesis H4**

Hypothesis H4 states as follows:

*“Significant differences exist in the levels of satisfaction with the 20 retained elementary services in the airline industry depending on the type of airline used by the passenger.”*

Two types of airlines have been used in this research: Company A (national flag bearer, government-owned in a developing country) and Company B (privately owned in a developed country). The result of testing hypothesis 4 is reported in Table 6. Column 6 of the table shows that each of the three tests of multivariate analysis of variance—Pillai, Hotelling, and Wilks—gives a value of F, which is significant at the 0.05 level. According to this result, hypothesis H4 is not rejected. Type of company used tends to affect the level of satisfaction with services in the airline industry.

**TABLE 6. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 4**

NAME OF TEST	VALUE OF TEST	APPROX. F	HYPOTHESIS D.F.	ERROR D.F.	SIG. of F
PILLAI	0.40442	8.14838	20	240	0.000
HOTELLING	0.67903	8.14838	20	240	0.000
WILKS	0.59558	8.14838	20	240	0.000

Note:

APPROX. F = The value of F that roughly equals the value of the given test.

D.F. = Degree of Freedom.

As before, a univariate analysis of variance was subsequently performed to determine which elementary service(s) have contributed particularly to the significant difference in the means vector. The result of this analysis is reported in Table 7. Columns 2 and 3 of the table show the average scores of both groups of respondents. The F values are in column 4, while the thresholds at which these values are significant are given in column 5. The table shows that all 20 retained elementary services have a value of F which, with degrees of freedom of 1 and 259, is significant at 0.05. As shown in columns 2 and 3 of the table, respondents who traveled with Company B are more satisfied with all 20 services than respondents who traveled with Company A.

**TABLE 7. UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: RESULT OF TEST OF HYPOTHESIS H4**

SERVICES	COMPANY A	COMPANY B	F	SIG. of F
PRINTED MATERIALS	4.18	5.79	40.69	0.000**
TICKETS	6.24	7.19	11.07	0.001**
RESERVATION	5.89	7.50	27.20	0.000**
CHECK-IN	6.27	8.30	45.26	0.000**
LUGGAGE	4.63	7.30	49.02	0.000**
INFORMATION	4.57	6.89	54.92	0.000**
ACTUAL FLIGHT	6.68	8.19	32.40	0.000**
PROGRESS OF FLIGHT	6.22	7.76	34.61	0.000**
LIFE JACKET	6.90	8.48	37.96	0.000**
NEWSPAPERS	5.44	6.21	8.42	0.004**
MUSIC	4.57	7.66	92.80	0.000**
MOVIES	4.63	6.97	49.57	0.000**
MEALS	5.67	7.63	43.43	0.000**
NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	5.94	7.97	49.81	0.000**
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	5.68	7.78	59.19	0.000**
DUTY FREE SALES	4.24	5.97	49.35	0.000**
TOILET	5.69	7.63	43.36	0.000**
BAR	4.46	5.87	39.98	0.000**
GIFTS	4.71	5.16	5.21	0.023**
METEOROLOGY	6.35	7.85	24.70	0.000**

Note:

\*\*Significant at 0.05 level

Several factors may have contributed to the situation where Company A is consistently rated lower than Company B. These factors can be divided into two main types: (i) the subjective factors and (ii) objective factors.

Discussing subjective factors, Company B is older than Company A in the air transport industry. It is larger and better known worldwide than Company A. In fact, the central theme of advertising of Company B is "the preferred airline of the world!" Given these characteristics of Company B, passengers may believe subjectively that the airline's services are necessarily superior.

In addition, Company B is from a developed country, while Company A is from a developing country. There is a general belief that things made in developed countries are better than those made in a developing country. This belief could be transmitted to the field of air transport subjectively.

Finally, it is possible that the less desirable conditions of the airport at the destination in the developing country are incorrectly blamed on Company A by the passengers. On the other hand, passengers could have wrongly credited Company B for the proper functioning of the airport at point of origin in the developed country. The result of these misconceptions is to rate Company B better than Company A on satisfaction with their services.

Company B has developed a system to reward loyal customers. This is the "Executive Club" that gives customers free flights depending on the number of miles traveled. They also enjoy several preferential considerations. The sense of belonging created can influence consumers to give better grades to Company B.

With regard to objective factors, respondents' comments, collected from the last question of this research, show that Company A lacks good organization. There are too many cancellations at the last moment, diversion of flights, delays, and over-bookings. These disturbances hurt the quality of services and reduce satisfaction of the clients of the company.

Respondents also noted problems with the physical supports of the company. The planes are old, the cabins are not very clean, the movies are not high-end, goods for duty-free sales are not of great variety, and the sound is not very clear. There are also problems with the personnel on contact. Several of the respondents said that staff are not very polite, are uncooperative, and are irritable. This situation demonstrates a deficiency in the selection, training, and/or motivation of personnel.

Company B conducts opinion research among its clients. Company A does not. This is due to lack of funds (as was explained by the company officials during interviews). They went on to say that the company's debts are so much that research of opinions is not a priority. However, without such research, there is the possibility that services rendered do not match customers' tastes and/or needs. In contrast to Company B which is private, Company A is a government corporation, and it suffers from political intrusions as may be expected. For example, the government sets the fare and staff salaries.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Class of travel was found to affect the level of satisfaction with airline services. First class passengers are less satisfied with several of the elementary services than passengers of other classes. Since they paid more for the flight, these first class passengers may have greater expectations. Hence, management needs a strategy of expectation management. Advertisements for first class flights should not overblow the number and quality of services in the first class. In fact, a strategy of under-promising and over-delivery will be a more viable option for airlines to enhance the level of satisfaction of first class travelers.

Type of airline used also was found to affect level of satisfaction with airline services. In fact, more elementary services are affected by airline used than any other buying situation explored in this study. Respondents who traveled with the public-owned national flag bearer Company A

were less satisfied with several of the 20 elementary services than those who traveled with Company B. A strategy of limited service offering is hereby suggested to management. Government-owned national flag bearer airlines, especially in developing countries (e.g. Africa and Latin America), could limit their services to the core service and facilitating peripheral services such as tickets, reservations, and check-in. In turn, the airlines could pass on the reduction in cost to the customers by way of lowering prices. This limited offering and value-pricing strategy may be attractive to the more value-conscious market segments and enhance their level of satisfaction with the airline services. In practical terms, one does not have to do everything that everyone is doing to succeed in the marketplace. The more important thing is to know your target markets and satisfy their needs.

The result of the test of hypotheses in this paper found that while reasons for travel and frequency of travel had no influence, class of flight and type of airline used tend to influence the level of consumer satisfaction with services in the international airline industry. Managerial implications of these findings and directions for future research are given.

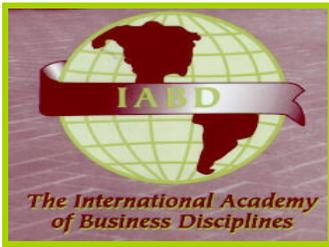
Some limitations of this paper should be borne in mind by readers. This study was based on a flight of 6-7 hours duration and so results may differ for other durations. Future studies should retest the hypotheses of this research with several different flight durations. Also, prices may vary even for passengers in the same class, depending on where they bought their ticket and under what program. Future studies should have larger samples and make this distinction of differential same-class prices in their analysis. Such future studies could even include seat that passengers traveled in even in the same class. Hence aisle, middle, and window seats could be included as independent purchase situation variables to see their impact on satisfaction. Some passengers may prefer aisle seats for safety, while others prefer window seats for view and privacy. Impact of type of seats could therefore be an interesting variable to study. Implications could be far reaching, such as airlines charging more or less for seat locations.

## REFERENCES

- Agnoli, L., Begalli, D., & Capitello, R. (2011). Generation Y's perception of wine and consumption situations in a traditional wine-producing region. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 23(2), 176-192.
- Anderson, R. E. (1973). Consumer dissatisfaction: The effect of disconfirmed expectancy on perceived product performance. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 10(1), 38-44.
- Cadotte, E. R., Woodruff, R. B., & Jenkins, R. L. (1987). Expectations and Norms in Models of Consumer Satisfaction. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(3), 305-314.
- Day, R. (1977). Extending the concept of consumer satisfaction. In W. Perrault (Ed.), *Advances in Consumer Research* (pp. 149-154). Atlanta, GA: Association for Consumer Research.
- Engel, J. F., Blackwell R., & Kollat, D. (1978). *Consumer behavior*. Hinsdale: The Dryden Press.
- Fisk, R. P., & Coney, K. A. (1981). Postchoice evaluation: An equity theory analysis of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction with service choices. In H. Keth, & R. L. Day (Eds.), *Conceptual and empirical contributions to consumer satisfaction and complaining behavior*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University.

- Hempel, D., & Rosenberg, L. (1976). Consumer satisfaction: A neglected link. In B. Anderson (Ed), *Advances in Consumer Research*, (pp. 261-262). Cincinnati, OH: Association for Consumer Research.
- Hirche, M., & Bruwer, J. (2014). Buying a product for an anticipated consumption situation: Observation of high-and low-involved wine buyers in a retail store. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 26(4), 318-295.
- Howard, J., & Sheth, J. (1969), *The theory of buyer behavior*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Leonidou, L. C. (2005). Industrial buyers' influence strategies: Buying situation differences. *The Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 20(1), 33-42.
- Latour, S., & Peat, N. (1980). The role of situationally-produced expectations, others' experiences, and prior experience in determining consumer satisfaction. In J. C. Olsen (Ed.), *Advances in Consumer Research* (pp. 588-592). Ann Arbor, MI.: Association for Consumer Research.
- Lau, G. T., Goh, M., & Phua, S. L. (1999). Purchase-related factors and buying center structure: An empirical assessment. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 28(6), 573-588.
- McGuire, W. J. (1974). Psychological motives and communication gratification. In J. G. Blumler & K. Eliha (Eds.), *The uses of mass communication* (pp. 167-196). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Morey, R. C., Sparks, B. A., & Wilkins, H. C. (2002). Purchase situation modelling in wine selection: An evaluation of factors in an Australian context. *International Journal of Wine Marketing*, 14(1), 41-66.
- Morris, E. W. (1977). A normative deficit approach to consumer satisfaction. In H. K. Hunt (Ed.), *Conceptualization and measurement of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction* (pp. 240-274). Cambridge Mass: Marketing Science Institute.
- Oliver, R. L. (1977). Effects of expectation and disconfirmation on postexposure product evaluations: An alternative interpretation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 62(4), 480-486.
- Oliver, R. L. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460-469.
- Oliver, R. L. (1981). Measurement and evaluation of satisfaction process in retail settings. *Journal of Retailing*, 57(3), 25-48.
- Peterson, R. A., & Wilson, W. R. (1992). Measuring customer satisfaction: Fact and artifact. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 20(1), 61-71.
- Reid, D. A., Pullins, E. B., & Plank, R. E. (2002). The impact of purchase situation on salesperson communication behaviors in business markets. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(3), 205-213.
- Smart, D. (1982). Consumer satisfaction research: A review. In *Consumer behavior: Classical and contemporary dimensions* (pp. 286-306). Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Smith, R., & Houston, M. J. (1983). Script-based evaluations of satisfaction with services. In L. T. Berry, G. L. Shostak, & G. D. Upah (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives on services marketing* (pp.59-62). Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association.
- Swan, J. E., & Martin, W. S. (1981). Testing comparison level and predictive expectations models of satisfaction. In K. B. Monroe (Ed.), *Advances in Consumer Research* (pp. 77-82). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.
- Swan, J. E., & Mercer, A. A. (1981). Consumer satisfaction as a function of equity and disconfirmation. In R. L. Day, & H. K. Hunt (Eds.), *Concept and theory in consumer*

- satisfaction and complaining* (pp.2-8). Bloomington: School of Business, Indiana University.
- Swan, J. E., & Trawick, F. (1979). Satisfaction related to predictive vs. desired expectation. In H. K. Hunt, & R. L. Day (Eds.), *Refining concepts and measures of consumer satisfaction and complaining behavior* (pp. 7-13). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, School of Business.
- Swan, J. E., & Trawick, F. (1981). Disconfirmation of expectations and satisfaction with a retail service. *Journal of Retailing*, 57(3), 49-67.
- Woodruff, R. B., Cadotte, E. R., & Jenkins, R. L. (1983). Modelling consumer satisfaction processes using experienced-based norms. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20(3), 296-304.
- Wu, W. C., & Huan, T. C. (2010). The effect of purchasing situation and conformity behavior on young students' impulse buying. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(16), 3530-3540.
- Yi, S., & Baumgartner H. (2004). Coping with negative emotions in purchase-related situations. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14(3), 303-316.



*Journal of  
International Business  
Disciplines*



---

Volume 10, Number 2

November 2015

---



**Published By:**  
International Academy of Business Disciplines and Frostburg State University  
All rights reserved

---

ISSN 1934-1822

WWW.JIBD.ORG