



**IMPROVING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION;
CASE TIGER AIRWAYS**

Thesis

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Abstract <p>The main objective of the thesis was to assess the level of customer satisfaction of the airline company Tiger Airways, which is a low-cost airline with a considerable number of dissatisfied customers. In the study the theories of customer satisfaction were reviewed for providing solutions for the airline to reduce the number of discontented customers.</p> <p>To analyze the current situation of the airline company's customer satisfaction the quantitative research method was used. The research material was collected by online questionnaires and an open interview on the Internet. The survey was directed both to the customers and the employees of Tiger Airways. In addition, secondary data was used in the study. The theoretical framework consists of a literature review on customer satisfaction, the research method and a review on the airline management.</p> <p>The results of the research revealed that Tiger Airways respondents complained mostly about uncomfortable delays and inadequate customer service. However, according to the representatives of the airline company a low-cost airline can be expected to provide services at a certain level only.</p> <p>In conclusion, based on the customer satisfaction theories, the importance of customers for profitable business operations is emphasized to provide suggestions for the airline. The suggestions are presented to strengthen the company's customer loyalty. The suggestions include specific strategies for delays and general improvement of the customer service and employee training.</p>		
Keywords Customer satisfaction, customer value, low-cost airline, strategies for delays, airline customer service		
Note		

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world with high modern technology, which is used to satisfy people's high living standard expectations, there are thousands of products and services invented to meet all people's desires. The airline industry is one of the most intelligent and serviceable inventions and it provides an advantageous transportation system both domestically and internationally. It is particularly convenient for long distance travel because it's much faster than other means of transportation such as cars, buses, trains or ships. However, in the recent years, there has been a huge number of customer dissatisfaction about airlines, following to the growth of low-cost airlines. Commonly, the complaints are due to low base-level of services, inconvenient aircraft interiors, check-in times, and cancellations of flight with delay of refund. (Traveler 2011)

Tiger Airways, which claims to be one of low-cost airlines worldwide, is also holding a noticeable number of customer dissatisfaction about its poor services, uncomfortable seats, unclean aircraft interiors, excessive extra costs, etc. Its customer complaints are spreading over websites for Tiger Airways customer reviews. Most passengers give low grades and display lots of uncomplimentary opinions about Tiger Airways. (Skytraxx 1999-2011 & Product review 2011)

For those aforementioned problems, the objective of the thesis is to start a research focusing on finding out what the distinct reasons for Tiger Airways customer dissatisfaction are and to create strategies to reduce the displeasures. In other words, the research aims to provide good suggestions for Tiger Airways to improve its customer satisfaction. There are two ways to collect Tiger Airways customer opinions in this research. One way is choosing the Vietnamese market for delivering questionnaires and contacting Tiger Airways office to invite some interviews. The other way is to use internet system to gathering all Tiger Airways customer complaints; not only comments from Vietnamese customer but also from foreigners.

The research is first started with an overall picture about Tiger Airways group and its operations in the Vietnamese market. Secondly, customer satisfaction theories are learnt as knowledge preparing for the research. Thirdly, the research is continued with questionnaires

filled by Tiger Airways respondents, by personal interviews (Tiger Airways employees and employers) and by selecting evidence from internet resources. After the research material has been gathered, the Excel program will be used to analyze the results and to provide suggestions for improving the Tiger Airway customer satisfaction.

2. TIGER AIRWAYS

This chapter displays general information of Tiger Airways group and analyze its competitor and SWOT in the Vietnamese market.

2.1 Tiger Airways group

Since Tiger Airways was established in 2003, it has been the largest low-cost airline in Singapore. It has 36 destinations in 12 countries throughout Asia and Australasia. Its main purpose is to provide customers affordable air travel with profitable routes. Its brand value is to offer customers frequent flying schedules with safe and reliable air travel to more places. Its business model follows LCC (low cost carrier) strategy which is expected for greatly potential profitability. (Tiger Airways, 2011)

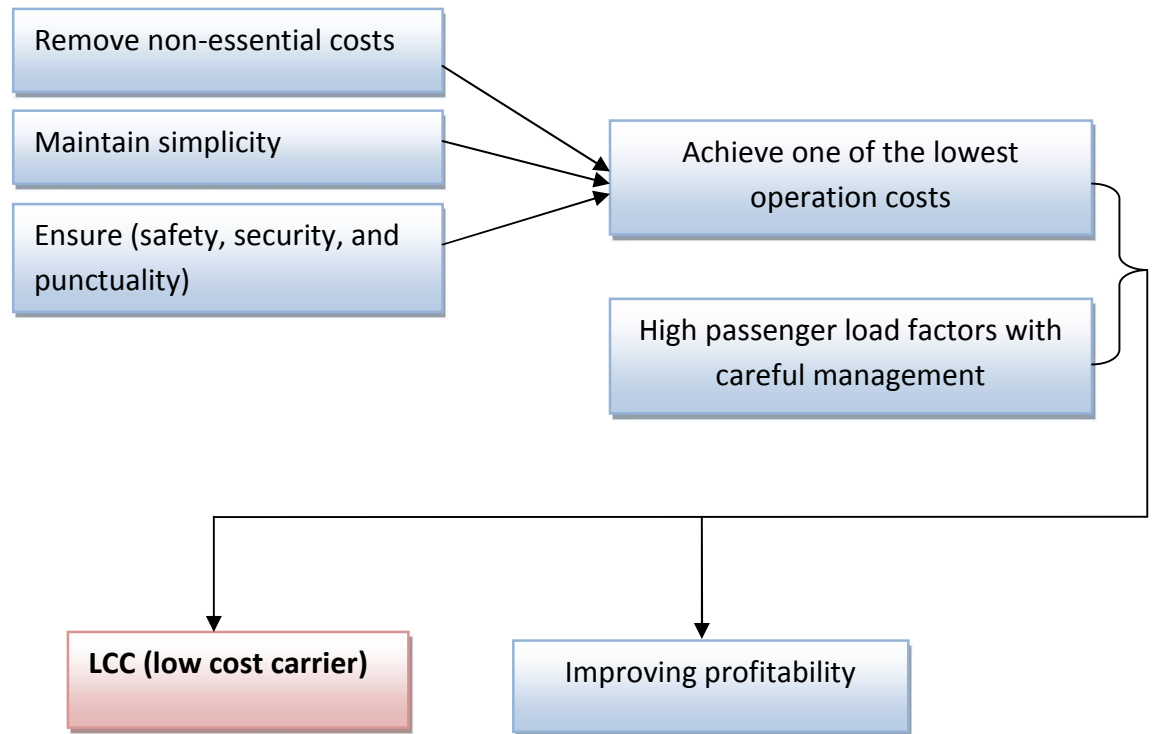


Figure 1: Tiger Airways' business model (Tiger Airways, 2011)

Figure 1 displays Tiger Airways' business model that explains why the airline company is able to offer low prices to its customers but still increase its profitability. In order to supply low prices, there are two strategies with the help of which the company is trying to be the one with the lowest operation costs and fully booked flights in a cautiously controlled operational environment with safety, security and punctuality. To obtain one of the lowest operation costs, Tiger Airways focuses on inspecting every single business surface to remove non-essential costs but still ensuring passenger's safety, security and punctuality. Furthermore, its business is determined to maintain simplicity. (Tiger Airways, 2011)

With the two aforementioned strategies Tiger Airways has been able to provide customers with low prices and improve its profitability. (Tiger Airways, 2011)

Tiger Airways' financial report for the time from November 2009 to November 2010 displayed that the number of passengers increased 34% to about 5.7 million people. The 34% increase equals to a number of 1.5 million passengers increasing from 4.2 million passengers of the

previous 12 months. At the same time load factor also grew from 83% to 86%. (Media release 1, 2011)

Tiger Airways has decided to expand the leases of the Airbus and A320 aircraft for the next 18 months starting from 2011. According to the recent financial year, the increase of Tiger's fleet results in the increase of aircraft number from 26 to 28 aircrafts. (Media release 1, 2011)

According to media release reported on 14th February 2011 that was found in the Tiger Airways webpage at the part "newsroom", Tiger Airways purchased a 32.5% stake in South East Asian Airlines (SEAIR) from existing foreign investors. SEAIR is the second-oldest airline in the Philippines, established in 1995. (Media release 2, 2011)

2.2 Tiger Airways in Vietnamese market

Vietnam is a developing country located in the South East of the Asian continent. The population is approximately 85 million (Apr.2009) and the mainland territory is about 331 thousand square kilometers. Hanoi is the capital and Ho Chi Minh is the largest city with a combined population of approximately 8 million. China, Laos and Cambodia are neighbors of Viet Nam. Buddhism is the main religion in Viet Nam and there are six others such as Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Caodaism, Hoa Hao sect and Mother Worship. Besides the mother language which is Vietnamese, there are some other languages such as English, Laos, Cambodian and Chinese which are also spoken by different small groups of population. (Vietnam tourism, 2011)

With a huge number of inhabitants, Vietnam is a prospective market with both potential consumers and business opportunities. Since Vietnam joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007, there have been many foreign investors coming to Vietnam to establish their businesses in many different fields. Airline industry has also developed in Vietnam. Evidently there are about 16 airlines choosing Vietnamese airports as one of their destination in the routes. (E-Guide, 2006)

Tiger Airways appeared in Viet Nam on 27 Jan 2005 with an office opened in Hanoi. Its purpose was to provide Vietnamese customers an opportunity for air transport with budget prices. Its business model as a LCC has monopolized the flying route from Saigon to Singapore. (ASIAT travel tips, 1998-2011)

2.2.1 Competitors of Tiger Airways in the Vietnamese market

Table 1: Tiger Airways’ competitors in the Vietnamese market (Vietnam Airlines 2008, Singapore Airlines 2011, Garuda Indonesia 2011, and Jetstar 2010)

Direct route (Ho Chi Minh- Singapore)	Indirect route (Full schedule airlines)
Vietnam Airlines	Singapore Airlines
Singapore Airlines	Vietnam Airlines
Garuda Indonesia	Garuda Indonesia
Jetstar	

According to table 1, Tiger Airways’ competitors in the Vietnamese market are separated in two kinds, direct route and indirect route.

There are four airline companies, which are Vietnam Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Garuda Indonesia and Jetstar, operate their direct route from Ho Chi Minh City to Singapore. Among these airlines, Jetstar is the most noticeable competitor for Tiger Airways because its business model is also LCC. This airline company determines to provide Vietnamese passengers new low fares throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific. (Jetstart, 2010) For indirect route competition, Tiger Airways is facing up to Singapore Airlines, Vietnam Airlines and Garuda Indonesia who operate their business model as full schedule airline (FSA). (Vietnam Airlines 2008; Singapore Airlines 2011; Garuda Indonesia 2011& Jetstar 2010)

2.2.2 SWOT for Tiger Airways in the Vietnamese market

Table 2: Tiger Airways' SWOT in the Vietnamese market (media release 3, 2011; Skytrax, 1999-2011; Product Review 2011; Tiger Airways facebook 2011; Vietnam business news, 2008-2010; Airport technological, 2011; Vo, 2010; Thaindian News, 2011; National geographic, 2011; Tiger Airways 2011; Landiak. M, 2011)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low-cost airline ✓ 36 destinations in 12 countries ✓ Safe and reliable flights ✓ Top Ten airline award, since 2006 ✓ Changi Airline Award in 2010 ✓ 1st LCC airline in Singapore ✓ 2nd largest airline in Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inconvenient delays with late refund ✓ Uncomfortable aircraft interior ✓ Unclean terminals ✓ Ineffective guiding assistance ✓ Unreasonable extra charges ✓ Limited baggage volume ✓ Poor service
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Viet Nam joined WTO in 2007 ✓ Tan Son Nhat airport upgraded ✓ New larger airport completed in 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The increase in aviation fuel prices ✓ Noticeable competitors in both FSA and LCC ✓ The increase in customer's requirements of higher-quality products/services ✓ Global warming

According to table 2, the strengths of Tiger Airways are defined in seven points. LCC business model gives Tiger Airways an advantage in providing budget prices to customers who have medium and high income. Moreover, there are 36 destinations in 12 countries throughout Asia

and Australasia with indirect and direct routes. Besides offering low-price tickets, Tiger Airways also concern about strategies to create safe and reliable flights for passengers. For the awards, Tiger Airways has achieved two awards from Changi Airline for its size and growth. In addition, it got a position in the Top Ten Airline award which is ranked by passenger carriage award for 5 years running since the award program was established in 2006. In Singapore, Tiger Airways is the largest LCC airline and the second biggest airline in terms of capacity. (Media release 3, 2011; Tiger Airways 2011)

However, Tiger Airways has also weaknesses which today cause significant problems for Tiger Airways brand image. The most noticeable problem is that there have frequently been inconvenient delays with no replacing flights, and refunds have been delayed for over six weeks. Besides, the aircraft interiors are uncomfortable and untidy, and some terminals are small and unclean. Most passengers complained that it is difficult to find the machine to print boarding passes at each transfer to a connecting flight. If passengers do not know how to find the machine and print their boarding passes, they will be charged extra fees for printing a boarding pass by the employees of Tiger Airways at the check-in tables. These aforementioned problems contribute to the considerable increase of passenger dissatisfaction. Furthermore, customers complained about Tiger Airways services such as unhelpful employees and lack of professionalism. For baggage policy, it allows only 15kg baggage per passenger. If passengers want any additional units, extra fees are charged. This regulation is also one of uncomfortable things for customers. (Skytrax, 1999-2011, Product Review 2011, Tiger Airways facebook 2011, Customer underground Australia 2009-2010, etc)

Tiger Airways has advantageous opportunities in the Vietnamese market. The first advantage is that Vietnam joined World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. Since becoming a member of WTO, Vietnam has developed its legal system and created prosperous conditions for domestic and foreign investors to grow their businesses. (Vietnam business news, 2008-2010) It results in an increased number of foreign businessmen coming to Vietnam for their investments, and on the other hand Vietnamese businessmen travel to other countries for their works. In this case, air transport is expected for a more favorable transportation method than other ones such as cars, ships or trains. Therefore, Vietnam's joining to WTO gives Tiger Airways a fortunate chance for gaining more passengers. The second advantage is that Tan Son Nhat Airport was

upgraded to international airport standard. Tan Son Nhat is the biggest airport in Vietnam and it is located in Ho Chi Minh City. (Airport technological, 2011) The new Tan Son Nhat airport with international airport level promotes foreign passengers to travel to Vietnam and Vietnamese passengers are pleased to depart from this airport. The third advantage is that a new larger international airport is being built in Long Thanh and it is expected to be completed in 2015. (Airport technological, 2011)

For Tiger Airways' threats in the Vietnamese marketplace, an increase in aviation fuel prices causes a big problem for all airlines generally and for Tiger Airways specifically. There were 24 airlines which have gone to bankruptcy because of the increase in aviation fuel prices. It is evaluated that one dollar increase in fuel price results in the global aggregate loss of \$ 1.6 billion. Moreover, Tiger Airways faces a considerable number of competitors in both FSA and LCC (which are mentioned in the competitor section). In addition, potential customers reach to higher quality of services elsewhere, even for higher prices, whereas Tiger Airways is holding a huge number of passengers' complaints about its poor services and uncomfortable aircraft interiors. The greater number of aircrafts contributes to the raise of pollution which causes bad effects to global warming. (Vo, 2010; Global Thaindian News, 2011; Landiak, 2011)

3. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Before the results of Tiger Airways customer satisfactions survey are figured out, it is good to examine customer satisfaction theories. Hence, this chapter displays theories of customer satisfaction.

3.1 Satisfying customer needs

To exist on today's significantly competitive marketplace, businessmen not only concentrate on producing high-quality products/services but also take care of what their customer demands are. Customers have become more knowledgeable in evaluating on buying a high-quality product among diverse products. Thus, businessmen never stop creating new products with particular characteristics and superb benefits to satisfy customer needs. (Kotler et al, 2008, 372)

Customer needs are expectations of customers toward specific characteristics of a product/service. Customers will not buy a product that they do not need. It is difficult to excite customer's buying unless a businessman understands clearly what his customers really desire. Once the businessman obviously knows his customer demands, he can attract both existing customers and potential customers to buy the product of their interest. Therefore, determining customer needs is the key for every business to achieve success. (Analyze survey, 2008)

Potential customers normally have different demands. Therefore, in order to satisfy customer needs, it requires understanding why customers act their needs in various ways. The task is to separate consumer market into three segments such as demographic forces, life forces and usage behaviors. Each market segment presents a particular group of customers who have same demands, buying behaviors, and homogeneous characteristics. (Best, 2004, 113)

The first market segment is demographic forces which include factors such as age, income, marital status, education and occupation. These factors influence customers to change their needs. Taking an automobile as an example to consider how customers change their needs which are affected by demographic forces. When a student graduates from a university and

becomes an employee, his/her income, occupational and educational status will change, which in turn contribute to the changing in direction of his/her needs for differences of products. He/she maybe requires another automobile. It happens similarly to a person who is married and starts a family. This means that the person gets the changes in marital status and household, and it results in a requirement for a new car. The reason is that the demand of an automobile for individuals varies from households. The second market segment is lifestyle forces, which comprise attitudes, values, activities, interests and political view. It argues that customers in demographic forces may have different attitudes and value orientations. A customer with a significantly environmental value requires various features of a car, whereas another customer, who has a demographically identical value, trends to the demand of entertainment, enjoyment and personal gratification. Thus, lifestyle forces are analyzed to understand customer needs deeply. The third market segment is usage behaviors which are quality, time of use, personal, social and frequency of use. This segment focuses on figuring out different purposes of customer usage behaviors. For example, a family with under ten-year-old children requires different needs for a car than a family with over sixteen-year-old children. (Best, 2004, 113-114)

However, according to (Kotler et al, 2008), satisfying customer expectations is to recognize the needs and meet the demand of customers. This idea promotes to learn the philosophy of customer value and customer satisfaction which is examined in the following sections.

3.1.1 What is customer value?

Customer value is customer's conscious evaluation of a product's price relative to its amount of economic, functional and psychological benefits offered by a company. It means the bundle of respective benefits that customers believe they can receive from a company when they buy its products/services comparing to their costs. Customer value is different from customer cost. Customer cost is the customer's perceived expectation for a product's package costs of evaluating, purchasing, using, and discarding offered by a company. It means customers prefer

to buy a product with the bundle of costs matching their personal demands. (Marketing91.com, 2011)

For example, suppose that a traveler wants to book a flight from Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam) to Singapore. He has alternative choices for purchasing the flight ticket from either his usual supplier- Vietnam Airline, or a cheaper airline-Tiger Airways. The salespeople of both airline companies try to compete the other by carefully describing their benefit offers to the traveler. (Kotler et al, 2008, 373)

According to the traveler's experience with the two airlines, the traveler found that Vietnam Airline provides higher reliability, better in-flight service (prompt responsiveness, food quality, etc), and more comfortable aircraft interiors. He also decides that Vietnam Airline seldom has inconvenient delays and views personnel as knowledgeable and responsive. Finally, with Vietnam Airline's reputation built by its products, services, personnel and image, the traveler choose Vietnam Airline because he believes he can get more total customer value than he does with Tiger Airways. In this case, the traveler places on total customer value. (Kotler et al, 2008, 373)

In the case of considering total customer cost, the traveler compares the ticket prices of both Vietnam Airline and Tiger Airways. Vietnam Airline tickets cost a lot more than Tiger Airways' does, and of course the higher price offers higher total customer value. Furthermore, according "*Adam Smith's observation in over two centuries ago, the real price of anything is the toil and trouble of acquiring it*". (Kotler et al, 2008, 373) Total customer cost does not comprise only monetary costs but it also requires the buyer's predictable time, energy and psychical costs. The traveler will associate these costs with monetary costs to image an accomplished estimation of his cost. If the traveler pays more attention to customer value than to total customer costs, he will buy the ticket from Vietnam Airline that offers the most respective value. (Kotler et al, 2008, 373)

However, some marketers argue that this concept of buyer decision making among product alternatives is limited. Buyers do not always place on customer value; they may trend to total costs. For instance, a salesperson strives to persuade the traveler to notice that Vietnam Airline offers a higher customer value than Tiger Airway does. The salesperson also points out Tiger

Airways' weaknesses such as poor services, uncomfortable delay, and dirty terminals. The traveler still decides to purchase Tiger Airways' services. Why does the traveler choose Tiger Airways? A possible explanation is that the traveler is the loyal customer of Tiger Airways, or the traveler thinks it is not necessary to pay for high-price ticket for a short distance from Viet Nam to Singapore, or the traveler holds short of cash which is just enough to pay for a low-price ticket. Thus, the traveler chooses Tiger Airways for a budget ticket although Vietnam Airline provides many benefits of customer value. (Kotler et al, 2008, 374)

It is difficult to determine customer buying behavior in an exact way; customers care as much about benefits which the firm offers as about customer value. Moreover, they always make their decision putting more emphasis on their personal benefit than on company's benefit. In order to knock-down competitors in this situation, sellers have to initially recognize customer needs and their personally limited ability to buy the product/service. Then, they decide the total customer value and customer costs which suit the terms of the customer delivered value. If competitors have better value offering to customers, there are two alternatives for the sellers. One way is improving customer value by fortifying the product, service, personnel or image benefits of the offer. The other way is to reduce total customer cost by removing some non-essential costs to decrease the price, performing simplicity of the ordering and delivery process, attracting with long-term warranty offers. (Kotler et al, 2008, 374)

3.1.2 What is customer satisfaction?

To whom do companies sell their products? It's a well known fact that customers are every business's lifeblood. If there are no customers, there is no production. Therefore, meeting customers' expectation will bring businesses to the best sales and maintain good relationships. (Ward, 2011)

Customer satisfaction is an ambiguous state of satisfaction expressed differently in every personality to every product/service. Customers experience their conscious perception of products/services in many degrees of satisfaction. If companies provide products mismatch the customer's expectations and desires, customers will be disappointed. If companies supply a

product meeting their desires, customers will be satisfied. If companies give a product surpassing their desires, customers will feel highly delighted and satisfied. (Recklies, 2006)

There is no customer satisfaction standard that can exist for a long time and it is caused by two reasons. Firstly, based on their last experience of using a product, customers form their expectation for a potential product or a new product. They also spend time to listen to their friends' and partner's comments, as well as marketers' and competitors' advertising about products to shape their desires. Besides, customers learn from new products available on the marketplace to raise their demands. Secondly, one-acceptable standard of customer satisfaction may fail because of appearances of competitor's products. That is the reason why Japanese manufacturers never stop inventing new products with higher standard and quality to serve the growth of customer expectation. Although Europe is well-known for high quality cars, customers still prefer Japanese cars such as Toyota and Honda to European cars. Japanese manufacturers win European competitors because they keep the pace-setting products close to an increase of customer satisfaction. Therefore, setting a proper level of customer expectations decides the marketers' success in sales, but continuing to create new products with attractive benefits will maintain the success as well as customer relationship. (Kotler et al, 2008, 377)

Customer satisfaction is an excellent indicator for companies to evaluate their success in the further time. A company with an increased number of disappointed customers may produce high level of profitability in its financial report this year. It does not mean the company will have the same or a higher level of profitability in prospective time, because customer dissatisfaction can not immediately affect the company's financial budget. Normally, customer dissatisfaction precedes a decreased number of existent customers, and reduction in profits and revenues. Hence, the task of measuring customer satisfaction is a forward-looking indicator for firms to predict their advantage opportunities in future performance. It reminds companies to consider how well they have satisfied their customers in the past, not how well they will do in future. There will be an early warning signal for companies to recover their failures if their customer gratifications are on the downward direction. Taking care of customer pleasures provides businesses chances to solve a problem before real impairment is done. Businesses neglect customer satisfaction, meaning that they give up the opportunity to correct failures before the unexpected results of sales and profits completely appeared. (Best, 2004, 11)

Highly satisfied customers will bring some benefits to the company. They decrease their sensitivity to changes of the price and place their loyalty for longer period. They are willing to accept additional products whenever the company offers. And they trigger word-of-mouth advertising which is one of the most credible forms of advertising. Once, customers are satisfied, they certainly tell others about the company and its products. (Kotler et al, 2008, 377)

How do companies know a customer is satisfied or not? Only mail box placed in a small corner of every company for gathering customer's complaints and suggestions is not enough to draw a full picture of customer satisfaction. That is why there are many methods such as customer services, telephone, email, questionnaires, etc initiated to learn from customers' buying behaviors, to collect customers' complaints and suggestions and to introduce product's information to customers' awareness. In case customers switch to other brands, companies should contact those customers to find out why this happens. The purpose is not only to conduct exit-interview but also to supervise the fluctuation of the customer loss rate. If the customer loss rate is growing, it means the company is dissatisfying its customers. (Kotler et al, 2008, 377)

However, although satisfying customers leads the top of the strategies which decide the company's success, it should not strive to maximize customer satisfaction without concerning about profitability and stakeholders' benefits. Stakeholders include employees, dealers, suppliers and stockholders who significantly contribute to building up company profitability. Reducing prices and improving services to meet customers' requirements may cause lower profits and stakeholders' benefits. It means that concentrating on increasing customer satisfaction might result in decreasing the satisfaction of these other partners. Thus, the task of marketing is to generate satisfaction both sides, customers and stakeholders. (Kotler et al, 2008, 377)

In conclusion, customer satisfaction takes high position in companies' strategies but at the same time the companies have to ensure that stakeholders also receive at least acceptable levels of satisfaction.

3.2 Delivering customer value and satisfaction

Customer value and satisfaction are noticeable factors contributing to marketers' success. However, the challenge is how to produce and deliver customer value. (Kotler et al, 2008, 380) In order to respond to the question, value chain and value delivery system concepts are introduced in the following sections.

3.2.1 Value chain

According to Michael Porter, ‘*the purpose of value chain analysis is to measure the value delivered and the profit contributed by each link of the chain*’. In other words, value chain is a management system invented to control the connection of inputs and outputs in a transformation process. Value chain analysis consists of a chain of activities and every single factor, which associate with each other in delivering a part of the total value to customers and providing a part of profitability to companies. The aim of value chain is to manage the relationship of each element with one another in the chain to measure the amount of the value delivered and the profit achieved. Every company has its working system including distinguishable activities such as designing, producing, marketing, delivering and supporting linked together as a chain to perform the company's products. In order to understand the costs in a particular business and potential sources of competitive distinction, value chain is divided into nine value-creating activities which are represented in two sections: five primary activities and four support activities. (Sekhar, 2010, 115) The following picture describes the value chain.

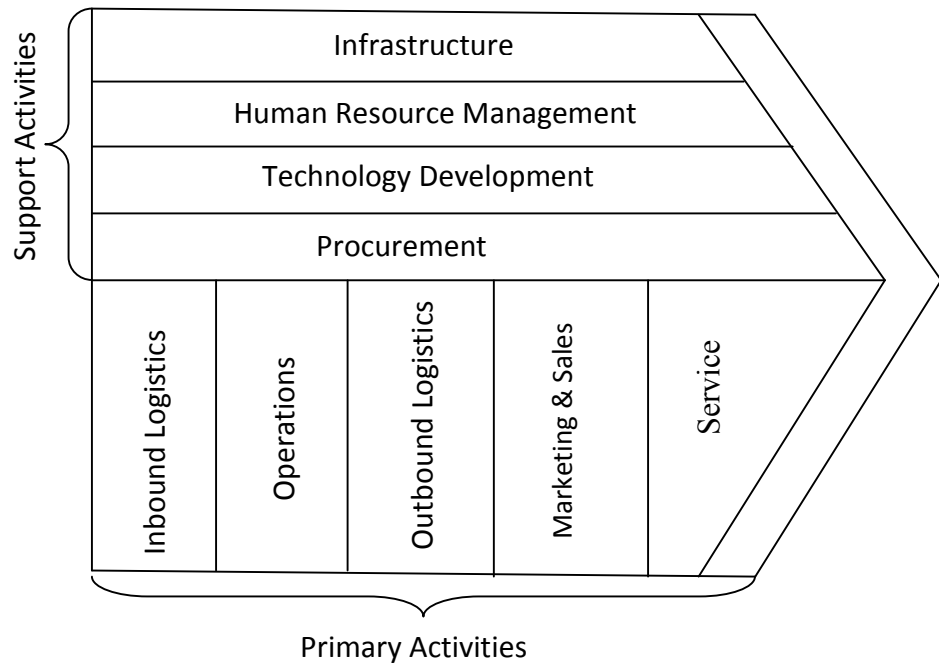


Figure 2: The basic model of Porters Value Chain (Recklies, 2001)

The primary activities comprise the succession of conveying materials to the business (inbound logistics), working on them (operations), delivering them (outbound logistic), marketing them (marketing and sales) and servicing them (service). (Sekhar, 2010, 116)

- Inbound logistics: the tasks are responsible for the whole work of inputting raw materials to the company. It covers activities such as receiving raw materials, transporting them to warehousing, managing inventory, making schedules, and returning to suppliers. (Sekhar, 2010, 116)
- Operations: the task is to handle the whole process of production. The process includes machining, packing, assembly, equipment maintenance, testing, printing and facility operations. (Sekhar, 2010, 116)
- Outbound logistics: the tasks are responsible for the whole process of collecting final products and delivering them to buyers. The process comprises gathering complete products, storing them at certain places, selecting transportation means, scheduling ordering and delivering time and then distributing them. (Sekhar, 2010, 116)

- Marketing and sales: the task is to use marketing strategies to achieve the best sales. Marketing strategies consist of advertising, promotion, sales-forces, quoting, pricing, placing, channel selection, and channel relations. (Sekhar, 2010, 116)
- Service: the tasks aim to provide customers installation, technical supports, parts of supply, product adjustment and training the way to use products. (Sekhar, 2010, 116)

The five primary activities are exploited for producing products with more additional value for customers. However customer satisfaction also looks forward to other stages' benefits of value chain and it results in the appearance of the support activities which occur within each of these primary activities. For example, procurement relates to all input activities, in which purchasing is only a fraction. Technology development and human resource management manage entire departments. Infrastructure leads the head of general management, planning, finance, accounting, etc borne by both the primary and support activities. (Recklies, 2011)

Value chain is the key factor for every business to succeed. Value chain offers businesses a chance to modify their models to response to the change of competitive environment. If a business has the intelligent function in managing the connection of each department with each other in value chain, the business can obtain competitive advantages to win its competitors. (Bidgoli, 2004, 528)

Value chain provides businesses many advantages. It offers a chance for businesses to gain speed of taking the first mover in achieving the costs which satisfy customers, meet their demands, reduce risks, and decrease prices. Moreover, businesses can establish their brand image by offering buyers credibility when interacting with a site and creating easy name for customers to remember. Value chain allows businesses to create barriers to entry in the developed marketplace. Value chain gives niche strategies for small or weak companies to become an expert in trading arena. Also, it assists businesses to improve their customer relationships by keeping close steps to customers to meet their requirements better. (Bidgoli, 2004, 530)

Besides advantages, value chain also has some disadvantages. Flexibility in achieving the prior position in every field of business strategies may require big amounts of capital to uphold advantages. Furthermore, maintaining a brand name and building barriers also need a large

amount of capital. Improving customer relationships could result in the lack of relationship between companies and their suppliers, stakeholders, and personnel who also contribute to the companies' successes. It means that businesses pay all attention to meet customers' needs, and neglect to satisfy demands of their suppliers, stakeholders, and personnel. (Bidgoli, 2004, 530)

3.2.2. Total quality management

In value chain, total quality management covers entire management practices which focus on responding to or exceeding customer demands. Total quality management concentrates considerably on measuring and controlling working process by means of quality improvement programmes. (Kotler et al 2008, 382)

A company should consider the task of increasing service and product quality as the priority position in strategies to satisfy customers. Most customers will not stay for a long time with a low or medium quality of a product. If companies want to survive in today's competitive marketplace, they need to obtain total quality management which includes six key concepts. These concepts compose a management framework appropriate for business organization. They are customers, never-ending improvement, control of business processes, 'upstream' preventive management, ongoing preventive action, and leadership and teamwork. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 11)

The first concept is customers (external and internal). Most successful businesses recognize that the goal in Total Quality Management (TQM) is supervising performance in satisfying customer requirements and exceeding their expectations. Customers are not only external customers who purchase products or services from a company, but also internal customers who influence the process of inputting raw materials to the company. Internal customers are suppliers who also have requirements that the company needs to pay attention to. This concept aims to advise business that the responsibility of the smooth co-operation between the company and its internal customers gives good chances to satisfy external customers. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 11-12)

The second concept is never-ending improvement. Never-ending improvement is to maintain impetus for continuing to seek further improvements. Improvement is to keep the process going on in further time with non-ending. Based on the concept, when a company's targets are met, and its customers are satisfied; the company should determine to set higher levels of product, process and service efficiency. This performance relates to a real competitive edge which helps the company lessen the growth of competition. Japan's industry with the enviable reputation has the slightly increased number of competition because it has enthusiastically utilized this concept during forty years. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 13)

Using this concept and the other concepts of Total Quality Management results in the change of the company's organizing management style. However, TQM not only changes the company's program, but also requires techniques and management horizons which focus on making ongoing progress, and sustained improvement, not just target on short-term gains. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 14)

The third concept is control of business processes. The production process manufactures the quality of any organization's products or services. If the chain of process is performed operative and reasonable, then it produces high-quality products or services which meet external customers' demands. Therefore, the mater of control of business processes is to concentrate on managing the processes, rather than on controlling products or services. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 14)

In this performance, it requires that the process owners need to have essential knowledge about a cornerstone of Total Quality and abilities to control the process. The process owners are those who supervise the process in every minute, as well as give advices and comments for any problems during the process. There are many different processes which need to be controlled by proper ways. The different processes are manufacture, service delivery, secretarial, personal services, and administration. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 14)

The fourth concept is 'upstream' preventive management. The successful companies use the strategy of improvement to seek out potential problems, and not to wait for the appearance of failures and then use improvement to recover them. Upstream preventive management targets to scrutinize pre-event planning and prevention activities, rather than to perform past-

event inspection. Inspecting existent problems cannot make a company succeed, but managing by planning and prevention can. This helps to predict potential risks which could be prevented by utilizing continuous improvement. (Chapman & Hall, 1991, 16)

The fifth concept is ongoing preventive action. The purpose is to attack the real root which causes problems by combing the leaders' abilities in management with staffs' capabilities in work. Staffs need to have abilities to recognize any hindrances during the process and highlight them. Then, the leaders decide appropriate and corrective action to preclude the hindrances. This execution helps to delete or diminish the root causing the problems and prevent their reappearance. (Chapman & Hall, 1991, 17)

The sixth concept is leadership and team work. Leadership and teamwork play an important role in the organization. Total Quality necessitates the leaders and teamwork to work with the highest standards in all activities. Viewable and actual commitment from the headman administration is necessary if the whole process in the organization is executed excellently through Total Quality. The task of the management teamwork is to set a suitable style or culture to establish the sustainable commitment, and keep up the style during the organization. The sustainable commitment makes every individual at any position in the process co-operate with each other to obtain improvement goals for Total Quality. The contribution of each person and the use of continuous improvement in teamwork can significantly increase the return of turnover and remuneration. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 19)

In order to be successful businesses by utilizing the full effect of the Total Quality Management, the six concepts in TQM need to be interacted and supported each other, not applied in insulation. (Chapman & Hall, 1994, 14)

3.3 Customer retention

Customer retention is the action of companies to keep up relationship with their customers over the long time. Customer retention reflects the number of customer defection or churn. When retention increases, it means defection decreases. (Buttle, 2010, 258)

In the past, according to “leaky bucket” theory of business, companies did not pay attention to their customer satisfaction. Even a company did not worry about its loss of 100 customers within a week because it believed the replacement of new 100 customers would be enough to compensate for the amount of defect ones. However, the fact is that if the company strived to keep 100 existent customers and gained no new ones, the costs would be lower than losing these customers and acquiring others to replace. Thus, it is important for the company to take care of defect rate and to overtake strategies to decrease it. (Kotler et al, 2008, 385-386)

The following picture displays the steps of improving customer retention:

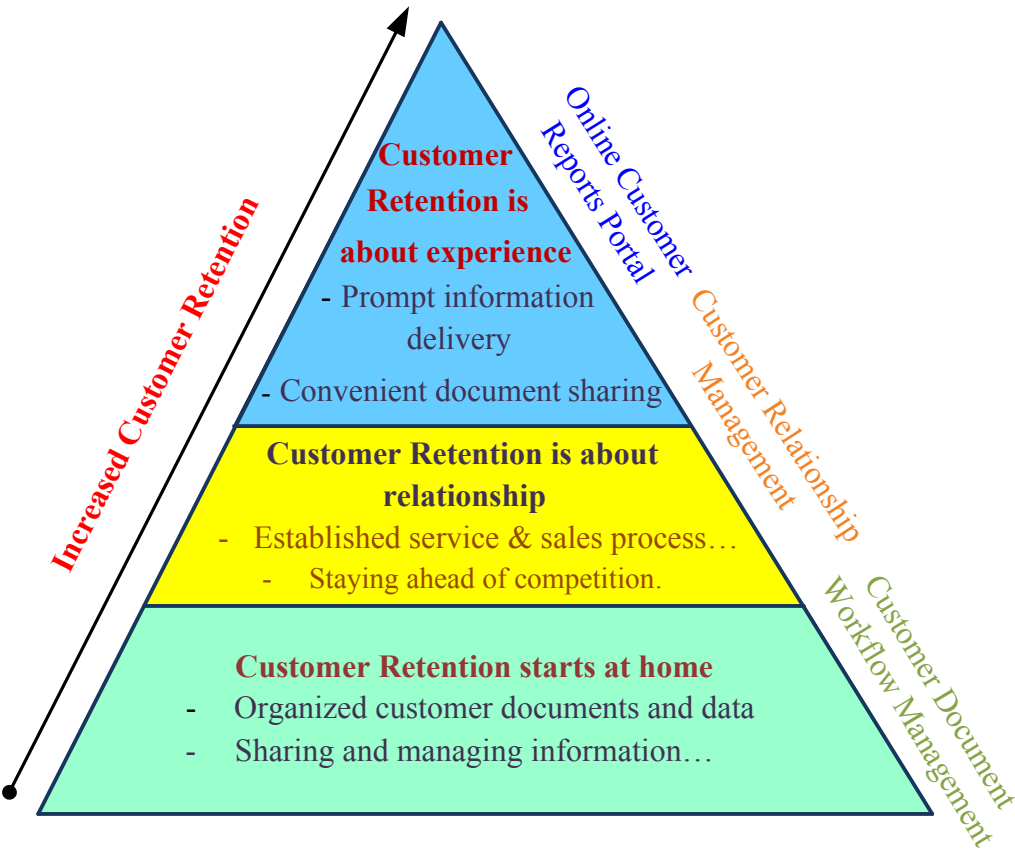


Figure 3: Client retention enhancement stages (Sedtec, 2006)

The first step is identifying what customer retention relates to a business. The aim of customer retention is to focus on the efficiency of the customer rate for savings, borrowings, spending or purchasing, rather than just attempting to gain the complete amount of customers. The second step is the ability to measure customer retention by utilizing the strength of technology to know

the number of times a customer log-in to the self-service site. The third step is learning to figure out the reasons of customer defections which are mostly caused by unreasonable prices, low-quality products or services, wrong marketplace, technological faults and organizational leaks. Next, it should record the defects, analyze data and reduce the defects by replacing other proper elements. The final step is back to the first step as a continuous process. (Sedtec, 2006)

Today, most companies are aware of the significance of customer retention. Therefore, behinds steps of improving customer retention, companies retain customers by building favorable relationship with them.

3.4 Customer relationship management software

Customer relationship management is the comprehensive access to the purpose of establishing, maintaining, and generating relationship between companies and their customers. (Anderson & Kerr, 2002, 2)

According to (Kotler et al, 2008, 393), “*customer touch points comprise customer purchases, sales force contacts, service and support calls, website visits, satisfaction surveys, credit and payment interactions, market research studies which are learnt from every contact between the customer and the company*”.. An intelligent company adopts its communication with customers to catch up with these “*touch points*” to form the proper organization. However, it is not easy to gather the entire information scattered across the whole organization. The reason is the information lurks deeply in the different databases, plans and records of many separate departments of the company. In order to solve the problems, CRM software is used as a tool of controlling detailed information of every customer as well as managing customer touch points. Companies utilize CRM analysis to estimate the value of each customer, specify the target groups which should be focused on and then produce appropriate products correlating to each group’s requirements. (Kotler et al, 2008, 393)

In other words, CRM software is created to manage customer information as databases. Customer information provides an advantageous edge for companies to control their customer

relationship. Companies need to gain as much information as they can get from every single customer to choose a proper way to serve him/her. However, the problem is when salespeople deal with highly complicated relationships with a mountain of information shared among others in the sales force; it may sabotage companies' internal operation of customer relationship. Therefore, CRM program is an effective method for managing the huge package of information such as customer's ages, income levels, marital status, number of children, address, etc. (Anderson & Kerr, 2002, 65-68)

Data warehouse associating with technique is the useful tool for analysis. CRM analysts create data warehouses for the purpose of collecting and amassing customer information as endless stores. Analysts use data warehouse to integrate information gained, and to link these information together for analysis. Then, data warehouses allow selecting interest relationships and findings about customers with the support of highly powerful data mining technique. Throughout the useful efficiency of data warehouse that supports Customer Relationship Management, companies achieve many benefits which are essential for the strategies of improving customer services and building up substantial customer relationships. CRM helps marketers point out high-value customers who would be offered a higher quality product. (Kotler et al, 2008, 393)

However, CRM software also has disadvantage due to its cost and risk. It is estimated that approximately €25billion to €50billion is the total cost which worldwide companies have to pay for using CRM software every year. In fact, half of all CRM efforts are defeated in satisfying companies' objectives because mostly they misunderstand the use of CRM. They consider CRM only as a technology and software solution but CRM is not. Technology alone cannot establish favorable relationship between companies and customers. One cannot just simply to slap some software into CRM to gain improved customer relationships. Instead of that, CRM requires training to use it. (Kotler et al, 2008, 394)

4. RESEARCH ON TIGER AIRWAYS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The chapter displays the steps of the research process, which depend on theories to select the appropriate strategies for the research. Moreover, the ways of how to perform the survey and handle the results as well as the research limitations are also explained in the following sections.

4.1 Aim of the research

Tiger Airways annual financial reports display its profitability improving year by year with an increasing number of passengers as well as many awards achieved. However, has Tiger Airways known about its customer dissatisfaction? If the number of those customer's disappointments continues to grow, could Tiger Airways still keep up its profitability and awards in the prospective time? Tiger Airways only concentrates on providing its customers air transport with the LCC business model of budget prices, which is a significantly attractive strategy exciting potential customers. However, maintaining existent customers is also an important factor which Tiger Airways should focus on to sustain its success. "Customer satisfaction" in marketing theories advises businesses to track the fluctuation of the disappointed customers as a good strategy for measuring their success in future (Best, 2004, 11), whereas Tiger Airways is holding a large number of customers' displeasure comments. This motivates the idea to start a survey with questionnaires to gather Tiger Airways customer's complaints and to figure out the obvious reasons why they were displeased. Better strategies will be offered to the airline as suggestions for reducing its customer discontents.

For the performance of collecting Tiger Airways customers' opinions, the research is determined to focus on two target areas. One target area is the Vietnamese market where the questionnaires are distributed and interviews are obtained by contacting Tiger Airways office. The other target area is internet system on which there are many websites and forums created for Tiger Airways customers' reviews and experiences.

Why the Vietnamese market is opted for performing questionnaires and interviews, whereas Tiger Airways has 36 destinations in 12 countries throughout Asia and Australasia. Besides the strengths of Tiger Airways in Vietnam, which are mentioned in chapter 2, another reason for choosing the Vietnamese market is that there are more and more Vietnamese people who come to Singapore for medical tourism or studying abroad. In fact, since hospitals in Vietnam are overloaded with patients and lack of modern medical technologies, people tend to travel to Singapore for better treatment. (VietSingCorp, 2006) In addition, Vietnamese students prefer to study in Singapore because English is spoken as their second language here. Besides, Singapore is a beautiful and modern country with high-quality education. (Goldenway education, 2010) Moreover, Vietnamese students are supported with scholarships as well as jobs after their graduation in Singapore. (OSC education, 2011) With these aforementioned reasons, the Vietnamese market promises a noticeable number of potential customers for Tiger Airways. Should Tiger Airways pay their attention to Vietnamese customers' demands for air travel research? Therefore, Vietnam is chosen for performing the survey.

The target goal is to gather customers' opinions about Tiger Airways; not only Vietnamese but also customers throughout Asia and Australasia where Tiger Airways performs its routes. It is why internet system is selected as the second target area for collecting complaints from passengers over Asia and Australasia.

In conclusion, the aim of the thesis is to provide suggestions for Tiger Airways to decrease its customer dissatisfactions through the research. The Vietnamese market and internet system are opted for gathering necessary information.

4.2 Research approach and method

Quantitative research was used as research approach, and questionnaires were determined to perform as the research method in this research with the aim of finding out Tiger Airways' relationship with its customers.

The research approach used in this research is quantitative. Quantitative research focuses on ascertaining the relationship between variations of an independent variable and a dependent variable. Variables are things such as time, performance, treatment and size measured on samples of subjects of cells, animals, tissue or human. (Hopkins, 1998)

Quantitative research is used with either descriptive study or experimental study. A descriptive study is also called observational study which focuses on analyzing the relationship between variables. This study requires a performance with samples of hundreds or even thousands subjects and the subjects are measured once. Experimental study is considered as longitudinal or repeated-measure studies which are used to find out obvious reasons. This type of design requires only tens of subjects and concentrates on analyzing causality. (Hopkins, 1998)

The reason for choosing quantitative research approach was to meet the purpose of examining how an independent variable affects a dependent variable. In this case of the thesis, an independent variable was Tiger Airways' services and a dependent variable was Tiger Airways customers. In order to know how Tiger Airways' services affected its customers, it was necessary to utilize descriptive study to analyze the relationship between Tiger Airways' services and its customers. This research approach is performed with research method as questionnaires which were designed with samples of 500 subjects. Each subject represented one customer who would be invited to give the opinions about Tiger Airways.

The purpose of the research is to know why there are a lot of displeasure comments of Tiger Airways' passengers. This promotes an action to gather Tiger Airways customers' complaints. This results in the need of using quantitative as research approach.

Questionnaires are designed in many various ways to be used in many various purposes which a researcher aims to study. Questionnaires are also written with many variations of data-gathering media. In case of asking a large number of different people with the same questions, questionnaire is the proper method for researchers to target the goal of the questions and interpret the results. For instance, if questionnaires are not used, the same question is maybe answered differently by different people. That is because the respondents are not able to face-to-face communicate with the researcher, may come from different countries, and have different knowledge backgrounds, any information could be misapprehended without being

explained in details. Consequently, it would be more difficult for the researcher to interpret the results of the survey. Hence, questionnaire is an essential and effective way which provides a standardized interview across all subjects. (Brace, 2008, 4)

Choosing the research method is highly significant because it crucially affects what determinations the researcher aims to make a phenomenon. It also impacts on the cause and factors displayed in the phenomenon. Moreover, the researcher must consider the limitations such as time, money, feasibility, ethics and availability to select the correct research method. (Experiment-resource.com, 2008-2011)

The research method is a web survey and an online interview. The web survey was designed with questionnaires and the online interview was performed via email. Online questionnaires were considered as an appropriate way for the purpose of collecting Tiger Airways customers' opinions for a long distance. Typala website of Savonia was utilized to make Tiger Airways online questionnaires. Then, internet system was used for sending the questionnaires to a target group of population. The target group was Vietnamese customers who have flown with Tiger Airways. The questionnaires were delivered via internet software, social networks and public websites such as yahoo messenger, emails, yahoo plus, my space, facebook and forums. Online questionnaires were chosen because they meet the expectations of saving the cost of research and of limited time. The amount of money which was paid for the questionnaire performance in this way was negligible. The questionnaires were determined to carry out in one and half month with the goal of gathering 500 respondents' answers.

4.3 Questionnaire design

In order to make questionnaires for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey, the theories of questionnaire were reviewed to prepare for the basic knowledge. Besides, many existent questionnaire samples of airline surveys on the internet such as were also consulted to make the questionnaires more professional. These internet sources for questionnaire references are displayed clearly in the reference list.

The steps to form questionnaires for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey are as following:

1) Define which information is needed for structuring question content

To specify the desired information which was aimed to achieve from Tiger Airways respondents, the negative rumors about Tiger Airways' image were initially confirmed by consulting Tiger Airways customer's complaints spreading on the internet. The online sources for these references were stated in reference list at the title ‘internet sources for questionnaire samples’

Throughout the uncomplimentary comments and complaints which caused disparagement to Tiger Airways' brand, the problems were defined. They are such as no refund, customer assistance, no response or contact, flight cancellation fees not repaid, poor service, lack of professionalism, etc. (Complaints Board 2010, Customer underground Australia 2009-2010, Not good enough 2002, etc)

Each problem would be the target information used to build one questionnaire or a group of questionnaires, which focused on asking respondents about the problem. For example, one of the problems which cause Tiger Airways customer dissatisfaction was its poor services. This point would be used to create a group of questions, the content of which was concentrated on inquiring respondents about Tiger Airways' services such as employee attitudes, check-in service, foods, and special services for special situations (children, oldest and disabled).

2) Choose a question type and method of administration

There are three question types which comprise fixed-alternative, open-ended and projective. The fixed-alternative question is designed as multiple-choice answers, the content of which is defined by researchers. This type is useful and convenient for few and clear-cut replies such as age, gender, car ownership, etc. The open-ended question provides respondents the right to express their answers deeper. Researchers frequently use this question type for the purpose of obtaining a deep interview of descriptive research, or for exploratory research. However, the open-ended questions cause difficult

for researchers to administer and analyze. The projective methods are used for the goal of attempting to project a person's attitudes from the response. Questionnaires are often built as a vague question such as word associations or fill-in-the-blank sentences. Using the type for exploratory research is better than for descriptive or causal research. The methods also cause obstacles for researchers to analyze the results. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010)

Among the three question types, fixed-alternative and open-ended types were chosen to make questionnaires for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey. Projective method was rejected because this research approach is quantitative which is included descriptive research; not exploratory research.

According to theory for administrative method, questionnaires are normally performed in different ways such as via personal, telephone interview, a mail questionnaire, or the web. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010) Based to these various ways of administrative methods, the questionnaires for Tiger Airways survey were designed as online questionnaires which would be presented in the web.

3) Define the background of question content needed to gain the desired information

Question content covered all questions which each one was represented for a specific purpose of obtaining the required information. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010)

The desired information for the survey was the customers' opinions about Tiger Airways' services such as assurance, flight patterns, reliability, responsiveness, employees, facilities and customization, which were causing Tiger Airways customer dissatisfactions. Hence, the general question content would be concentrated on asking respondents about Tiger Airways services to point out which terms of its services disappoint its passengers.

4) Determine the form of response

The form of response will be set differently according to the purpose of each part in the question content. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010) In case of Tiger Airways customer

satisfaction survey, the question content was divided into three parts which were introduction part, body part and conclusion part.

In the introduction part was determined to get the background information of respondents such their age group, their travel purpose and the number of times they flew with Tiger Airways. These questionnaires were set as fixed-alternative which allowed selecting only one answer in multiple answers.

In the body part, question content included groups of questions. Each group focused on inquiring respondents about each term of Tiger Airways' services. Tiger Airways' services comprised many terms such as flight patterns, reliability, responsiveness, employees, facilities, etc. In other words, each group of questionnaires aimed to ask respondents to express their opinions or feedbacks about Tiger Airways' services. In this case, all answers were therefore set in the same way of rating scale which allowed respondents to answer the questions by grading from 1 to 5 scores (1: very bad, 2: bad, 3: neutral, 4: good, 5 very good). One additional choice was added to provide an advantage for respondents when they do not have any idea for the questions. The additional choice was named 'no opinion'.

In the conclusion part, the question content was purposed to figure out why the respondents stop purchasing Tiger Airways' services. Therefore, fixed-alternative questions were associated with open-ended questions to provide respondents both options of answers. One was to choose multiple choices from available answers and the other was blank where respondents could add their personal opinions.

5) Arrange questions into an effective sequence

The questions should be arranged logically to meet the purpose of the research and make it easy for the respondents to understand the situation. For sequencing the questions, it is necessary to place the neutral questions at the beginning to create rapport which provides respondents an advantageous access to the goal of the survey. Then, effective opening questions should be set as simple and non-threatening ways. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010)

Based on the aforementioned steps of sequencing question content, the question content for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey was arranged as an effective sequence. The introduction and body part were designed with fixed-alternative question types because according to the step 4, the question content for both parts was similar to neutral questions. The question content in conclusion part was desired to obtain deeper information from the respondents. Therefore, open-ended question types, which represented as effective opening questions, were used to allow respondents to display more their personal ideas.

6) Decide the physical characteristics of the questionnaire

This step is to specify physical characteristics of the questionnaire such as paper type, number of questionnaires per page, page layout, font type, etc. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010) However, the form of the questionnaires for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey was determined to set as online questionnaires by using Typala website of Savonia. The website provided the layout standard which suits requirements for professional questionnaires. Therefore, the task in this case was just to learn how to use Typala website to establish these online questionnaire.

The languages of questionnaires are set in two languages, English and Vietnamese. The Vietnamese question version gives respondents an advantage to understand and answer the questions. The English question version is needed for analyzing results. The strength of Typala website is that it automatically transfers languages in both sides, Vietnamese and English. If a respondent chooses Vietnamese question version to answer, Typala website automatically fulfills these answers in the English question version and the contrary.

7) Test the questionnaire

The questionnaires should be tested before they are delivered to the respondents. There are two stages of the action of revising the questionnaires. One stage is to use personal interviews for trials to figure out vague questions. Then, the other stage is that an administrated data is chosen to analyze the results to discover any unexpected shortcomings. (QuickMBA, 1999-2010)

According to the lesson, pre-test questionnaires were performed with some personal interviews before they were published as the web of online questionnaires on the internet. Some personal interviews were executed via telephone. The administrated data, which was used to analyze the online questionnaires, was the Excel program. After taking pre-test from some personal interviews, the results were put into the Excel program to analyze as a trail. Throughout two stages of pre-test, the online questionnaires were decided to post on the internet for collecting customers' opinions about Tiger Airways.

4.4 Sampling method, sample size, and data collection

Sampling method is very necessary for the market research process. It helps to select a target group of members which reflects the entire population. The entire population is a significantly large amount that is impossible to access for most surveys. Probability and non-probability sampling are known as two types of sampling method. Probability is also called random sampling which includes four basic types of random sampling techniques. They are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and multi-stage sampling. (Birchall, 2005-2011)

In this research, simple random sampling was used. Simple random sampling method allows selecting single members randomly from a list of the population and every member has a similar opportunity of selection. (Birchall, 2005-2011)

For the survey's purpose of collecting Tiger Airways customers' opinions, this method suits the requirement of collecting Tiger Airways customers. It is almost impossible to gather all Tiger Airways customers because Tiger Airways held a huge number of customers through Asia and Australasia. In case of this research, the huge number of Tiger Airways customers was diminished within the Vietnamese market. However, it was still very large for the research. Therefore, simple random sampling method was essential to select a small group from the list of Vietnamese people who have flown with Tiger Airways. In other words, the task was to initially define a list of those who have flown with Tiger Airways from the Vietnamese market,

and then to use random sampling method to randomly select single Vietnamese members from the list.

However, how to make the list? The list was made by selecting Tiger Airways customers in Vietnam by following ways:

- Contacting to employees at Tan Son Nhat airport (the biggest airport in Vietnam) to get Tiger Airways customer's information such as their email address and Facebook.
- Contacting the head office of Tiger Airways in Ha Noi to deliver questionnaires to customers.
- Entering forums where Vietnamese share their experience after their flights
- Visiting Facebook of Vietnamese and posting online questionnaires
- Utilizing relationship "person to person" to send questionnaires to gain as many respondents as possible

These online areas were considered as highly advantageous possibility to pick up Tiger Airways customers randomly. It means questionnaires would be posted on these areas to seek Tiger Airways customers. The questionnaires posted were always attached with a caption "the survey is only for Vietnamese". The aim was to note foreign people not to join this.

Sample size is calculated with two types, one for a mean and the other for a proportion. (Birchall, 2005-2011) However, the two formulas were not used in this research to calculate the amount of Tiger Airways customers which were needed for the survey. In fact, it was impossible to know exactly how many customers in Vietnam who have flown with Tiger Airways, whereas two formula types of sample size required the distinct number of population.

Therefore, the survey was randomly determined to collect 500 people from the list of Tiger Airways customers in the Vietnamese market. This performance represented one of the weaknesses of the survey.

Data collection of this research included primary data and secondary data proving factual and useful information which help to point out the problems of Tiger Airways customer dissatisfactions and establish better strategies for Tiger Airways.

The primary data was collected by gathering questionnaires. The address of online questionnaires was sent to respondents with the help of employees in Tan Son Nhat airport and employees at the head office of Tiger Airways in Hanoi. The survey was also posted in several online forums and on Tiger Airways Facebook. Furthermore, 'person to person' relationship is utilized to distribute online questionnaires and to gain as many respondents as possible. Some softwares such as Yahoo-Messenger, Facebook and MSM were utilized as appropriate means for sending the survey in this case. In these aforementioned ways of collecting respondents, most results were received thanks to utilizing the relationship 'person to person' and the assistance from employees in Tan Son Nhat airport and at the head office. Few results could get with the questionnaires posted in the online forums and on Tiger Airways Facebook, because the address was removed by the websites' admins. They deleted any strange address posted in their own webs for security purposes. This problem lessened the facility of achieving the goal number of respondents (500 ones). The total number of respondents collected was only 171.

The answers were automatically sent back to the Typala account which was created and managed by the researcher. Each result was checked carefully to reject any empty answers or ones with wrong standards. The Excel program was used to analyze the results.

The secondary data was selected from various literary sources in the field of marketing and internet resources such as articles, newspapers, online stories, etc. In the researcher' point of view, Google-book was considered as a good method for searching necessary books for this research.

4.5 The limitations of the research

Normally anything has two sides, their strengths and weaknesses, and this survey was too. Although Tiger Airways customer satisfaction research was considered carefully to select

essential and appropriate methods, but there were some limitations. Only 171 respondents were collected from the survey, whereas the goal was to get 500 people. The limitations were caused by four reasons which happened during the survey performance.

Firstly, it is difficult to select respondents who were specified not to be the general population. They were a target group of those who have been Tiger Airways customers. This caused the disadvantage for the goal of gathering 500 people.

Secondly, the time for distributing the questionnaires was also a reason to reduce the amount of respondents because it was within one and a half month from 15th Feb to 30th March 2011.

Thirdly, online questionnaires have some disadvantages. The distance of delivering questionnaire is very long (Finland-Vietnam), so it required using online questionnaires as the most proper method. The problem was that online questionnaires were sometimes considered as spam, because they were displayed as a website which was represented as a web-link. Commonly, when somebody sees a web-link on a website that invites them to click for some purposes, they are afraid of dangerous viruses behind the web-link. Some will ignore it. This problem resulted in the lack of an amount of respondents.

Moreover, the survey with online questionnaire allowed everyone freely to join. Although the survey topic was noticed with an additional caption “ this survey is just for Tiger Airways customers”, someone inquisitively tried to click the web-link to see the content of the questionnaires. It conducted to the result of empty answers entering to the warehouse of the data, and it took time to delete them. Another serious problem of online questionnaires was somebody, who has never flown with Tiger Airways, attempted to answer the question for fun. This decreased the percentage of the result exactitude. However, this problem was anticipated before deciding to distribute the online questionnaires to Tiger Airways customers. That is why the areas, where the online questionnaires were posted, were defined carefully before making decision of sending them to respondents.

Finally, Typala website sometimes had an error and some respondents informed that they could not enter the website. It was a vague problem for which there was still no explanation. It was maybe failures due to errors of Typala website or internet network. This mistake also reduced the number of respondents.

In conclusion, even though the number of 171 respondents did not meet the expectation of total 500 subjects, it did not strongly affect the research's result standard. In other words, the purpose of the research is to figure out the exact reasons with which Tiger Airways customers are dissatisfied, and to create strategies to recover the failures. Therefore, the aim of the survey is to collect their opinions which help to specify the mistakes which Tiger Airways should correct to gratify its customers.

5. THE RESULTS OF TIGER AIRWAYS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The results of Tiger Airways customers' complaints are analyzed from two sources, internet sources and questionnaires. For the questionnaire, 171 respondents spent time to join the survey. Moreover, an interview, which was taken from an employee working at Tan Son Nhat airport, is also analyzed to figure out the problems.

5.1 Analyzing results from Internet sources

On the internet, there are many websites which display a large number of Tiger Airways customers' comments and stories after their flights. Throughout the websites which are listed in the reference list at the title "internet sources for gathering Tiger Airways customer complaints". Most comments are uncomplimentary. Hundreds of the negative opinions are issued by Tiger Airways customers over the world, especially by those who are living in Asia and Australasia. The content of those complaints are about delays, services and facilities.

For delays, most passengers were strongly indignant because Tiger Airways had changed their flights without notifications. Then, it offered other flights to replace after some days, but it was ineffectual for the compensations. Passengers had planned their trips and Tiger Airways demolished their plans. When postponements happened, passengers wanted other flights immediately but Tiger Airways could not do that. In addition, refunds were sent to passengers after 6-7 months and it boosted passengers' angers up.

For services, passengers expressed their surprises when Tiger Airways employees charged extra fees for printing boarding passes at each transfers. It happened because some passengers had difficulties in finding the machine to print their boarding passes. They had to ask assistances at service desks and were charged additional fees. This policy shaped a worse picture in passengers' mind about Tiger Airways' brand and there were requirements for guidance services at each transfer. Furthermore, even check-in times lasted over 2 hours and passengers were again disappointed. It presented the lack of Tiger Airways employees'

professionalism. Besides, limited baggage volumes were also one of those things which caused passenger dissatisfactions.

For facilities, Tiger Airways got a bad rumor for unclean aircraft interiors and uncomfortable seats. Seats have very small places for legs and they are inconvenient for those whose legs are long. Moreover, many passengers made complaints about waiting lounges because they are old and dirty.

Actually, comments were very extensive but they are separated into three sections considered as typical problems which Tiger Airways should pay attention to.

5.2 Analyzing answers

Questionnaires were performed in the Vietnamese market and altogether 171 answers were collected. Tiger Airways' services include reliability, assurance, flight pattern, responsiveness, and facilities. The results will be based on each term of its services to analyze.

5.2.1 Reliability (on-time departure/arrival and consistent service)

In reliability, problems to be analyzed are concentrated on Tiger Airways delay situations and its consistent services such as quality of foods, special programs (for elderly, children and disabled), and effective ways for guidance at each transfer.

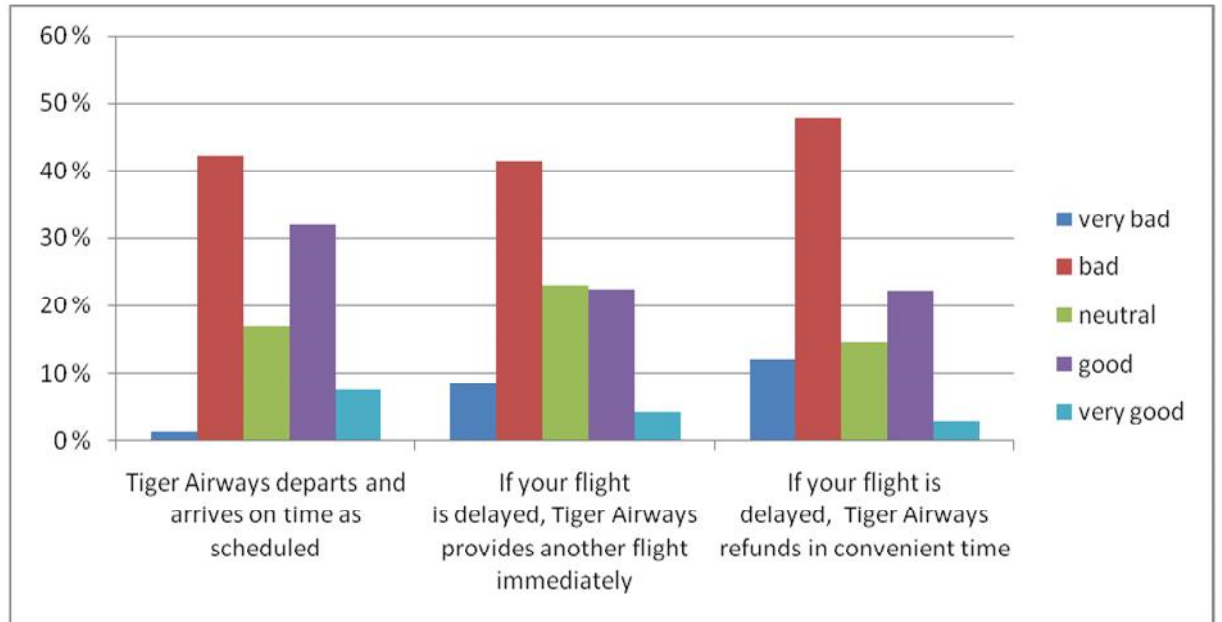


Figure 4: Tiger Airways delay situations and its response (N=171)

In figure 4, for both questions about Tiger Airways departure/arrival on-time and replacing flights for delays, over 40 % of passengers gave bad-level grades for these problems and around 20 % of them chose neutral-level grades. It means that over half of total passengers were dissatisfied about these terms of Tiger Airways services. Moreover, when asking passengers about Tiger Airways refunds for every delay or cancelation, approximately 50% of passengers gave bad-level grades for this performance. This result proves that the airline has repaid its customers in late time and customers have been significantly disappointed.

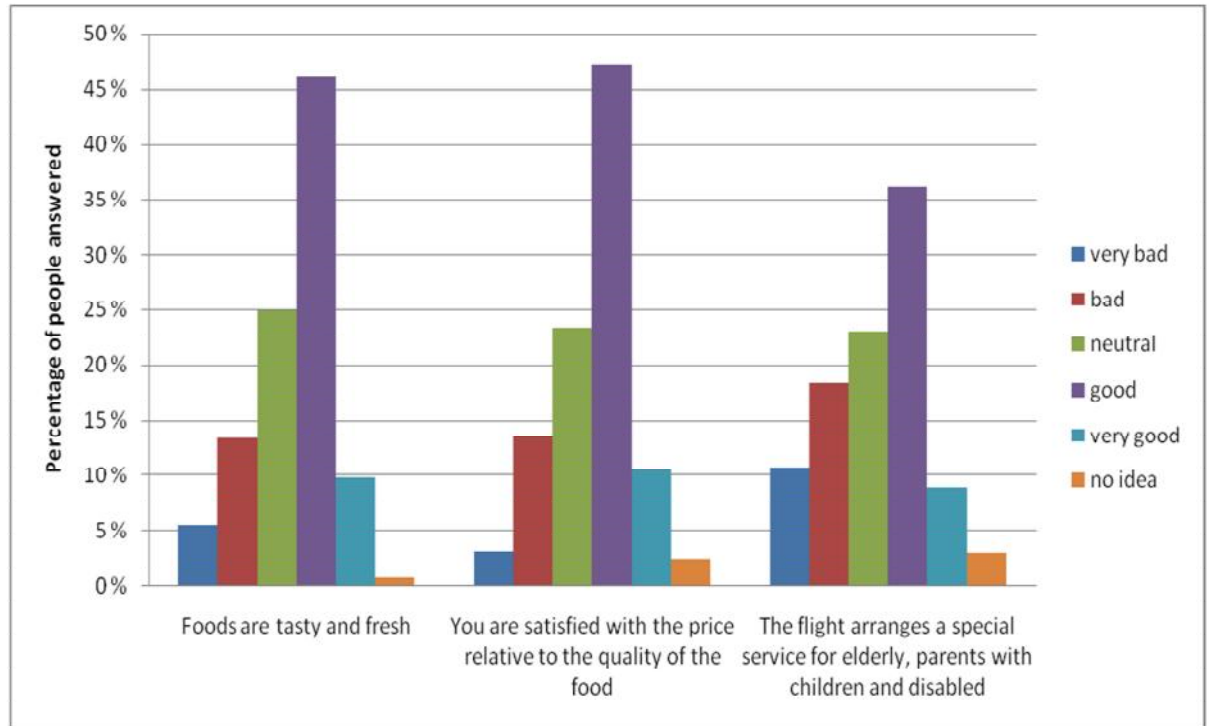


Figure 5: Tiger Airways food quality and a special service (N=171)

Figure 5 displays the three questions with the contents of Tiger Airways food quality and its special service for elderly, children and disabled. In two questions for food quality and its relative prices, the result shows that about 45% and 49% of respondents who gave good-level grades. It means that passengers are quite pleased with Tiger Airways food quality and its reasonable prices. For a particular service for old people, children and disabled, there were nearly 40% and 10% of passengers who were willing to offer good-level and very-good-level grades for Tiger Airways. Furthermore, neutral-level grade got over 20% on the chart in this case. This reports that passengers did not significantly complain about this service.

Overall, Tiger Airways customers are satisfied with the quality of food and its reasonable prices. They were also happy with the special service for elderly, children and disabled. In these terms of services, Tiger Airways provided good-quality services for its customers. In other words, Tiger Airways satisfied its customers' requirements about meals and special places during flights.

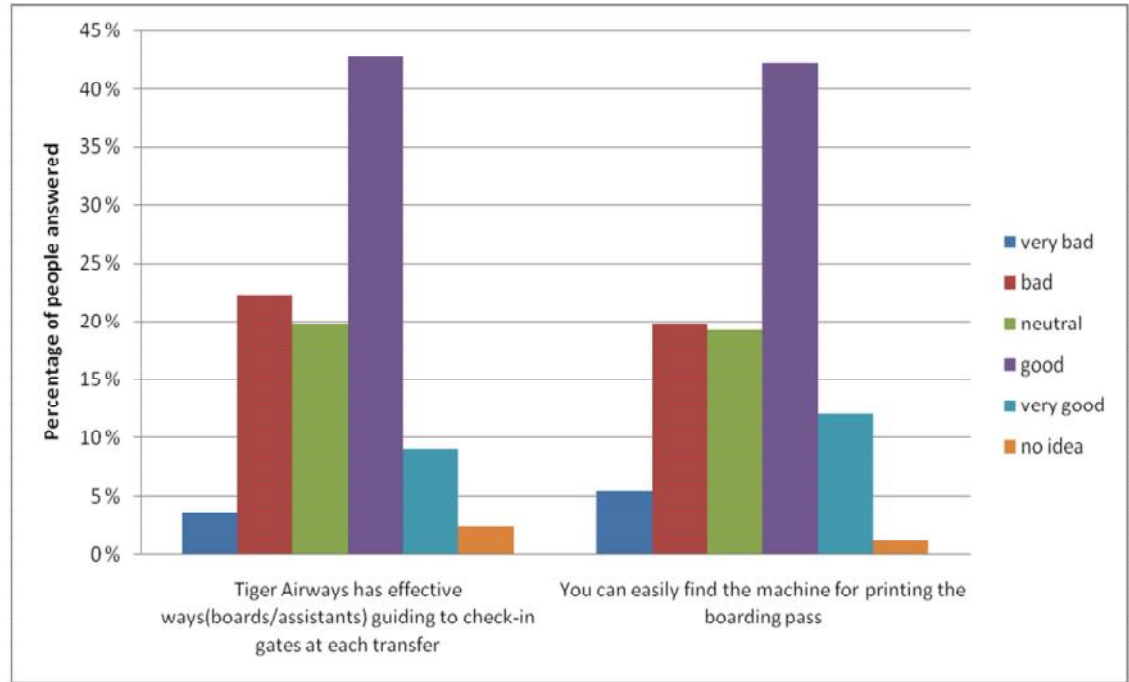


Figure 6: Tiger Airways effective ways for guidance at each transfer (N=171)

How about effective ways for guidance at each transfer such as boards/assistants for guiding passengers to check-in gates and to find a machine for printing boarding passes?

In both questions in figure 6, the highest columns are for good-level grades and they equal to 45% of total passengers who were satisfied with these services. Approximately 9% of passengers gave very-good-level grades for Tiger Airways guidance to check-in gates, and around 12% of people who were also pleased with grading the same level for the question of finding the machine for printing the boarding passes. These results prove that half of people satisfied with this term of service.

However, it is necessary for Tiger Airways to notice the amount of over 20% of passengers which were not satisfied with Tiger Airways guidance service for taking them to check-in gates.

5.2.2 Assurance (safe records)

There were three questions about Tiger Airways assurance service. The content of these questions focuses on inquiring passengers about professional skills of Tiger Airways employees in providing detailed safety instruction and creating a safe atmosphere during flights.

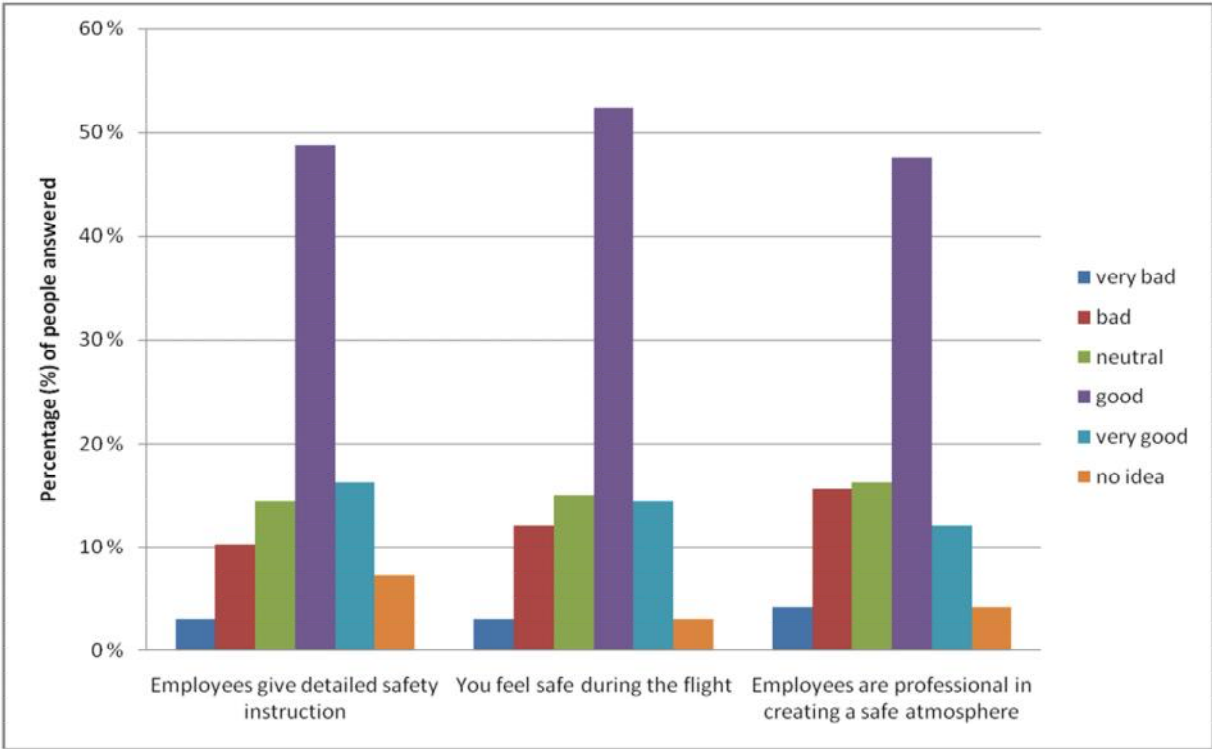


Figure 7: Tiger Airways assurance service (N=171)

In figure 7, when passengers were asked about this term of service, over half of the respondents gave good-level and very-good-level grades for this case. Evidently, good-level columns are highest with around 50% of passengers in three questions. Very-good-level columns got approximately 16%, 13% and 11% in three questions respectively. Overall, there were about over 60% of Tiger Airways customers who gratified with its assurance’s service. Around 10%-15% passengers gave their bad grades for this service. Therefore, for the task of safety record in flights, Tiger Airways performed successfully.

5.2.3 Flight patterns (flight schedules, flights frequencies, flight network)

Tiger Airways flight patterns which include flight schedules, flights frequencies and flight network. In this term of service, there were two questions related to the update of flight information and asking if the airline has provided enough broader network and smoother transfers or not.

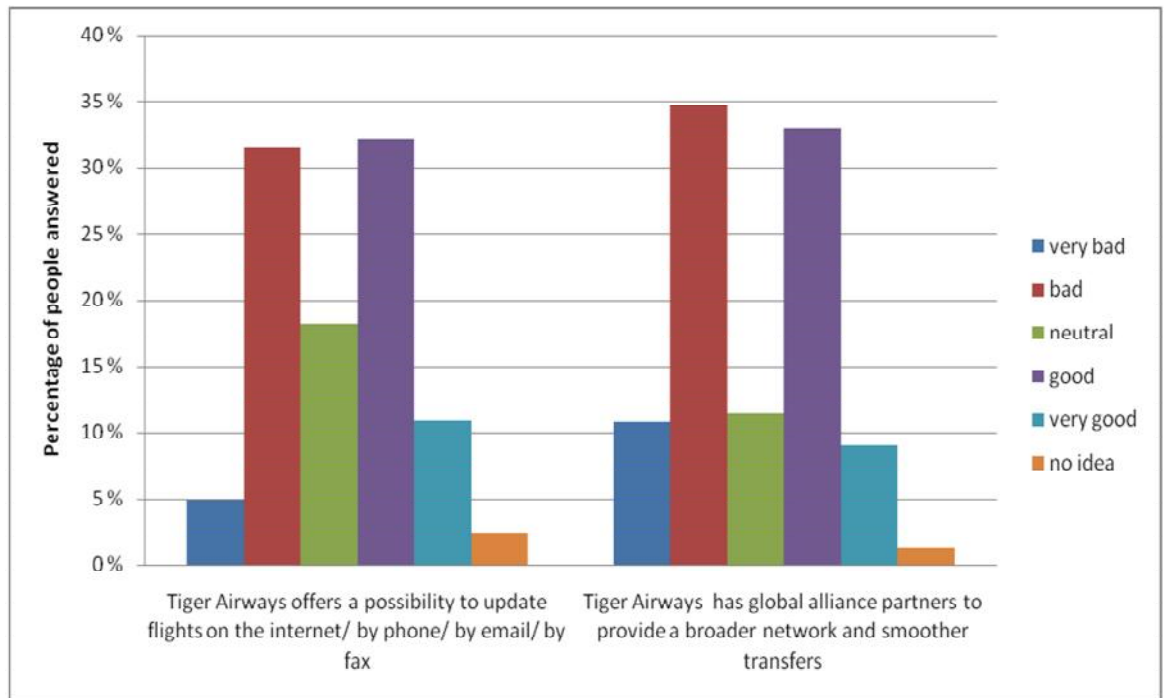


Figure 8: Tiger Airways flight patterns (N=171)

The first question in figure 8 was aimed to inquire passengers about Tiger Airways' possibility for flight information updated on the internet/by phone/by email/by fax. There was about 37% of respondents who chose very-bad and bad answers. However, an equivalent 41% of respondents gave their good and very-good level grades for Tiger Airways in this case. The rest 19% gave neutral-level grades and 3% chose "no-idea" answer. Similarly, when passengers were asked if Tiger Airways offered enough broader networks for smoother transfer or not, the number of satisfied and dissatisfied passengers are equivalent with the first question. It means that over half of passengers felt happy with this Tiger Airways service. However, there were

also a significant number of passengers who complained about this service, should be considered significantly.

5.2.4 Responsiveness (efficient service, prompt handling of request/ complaints)

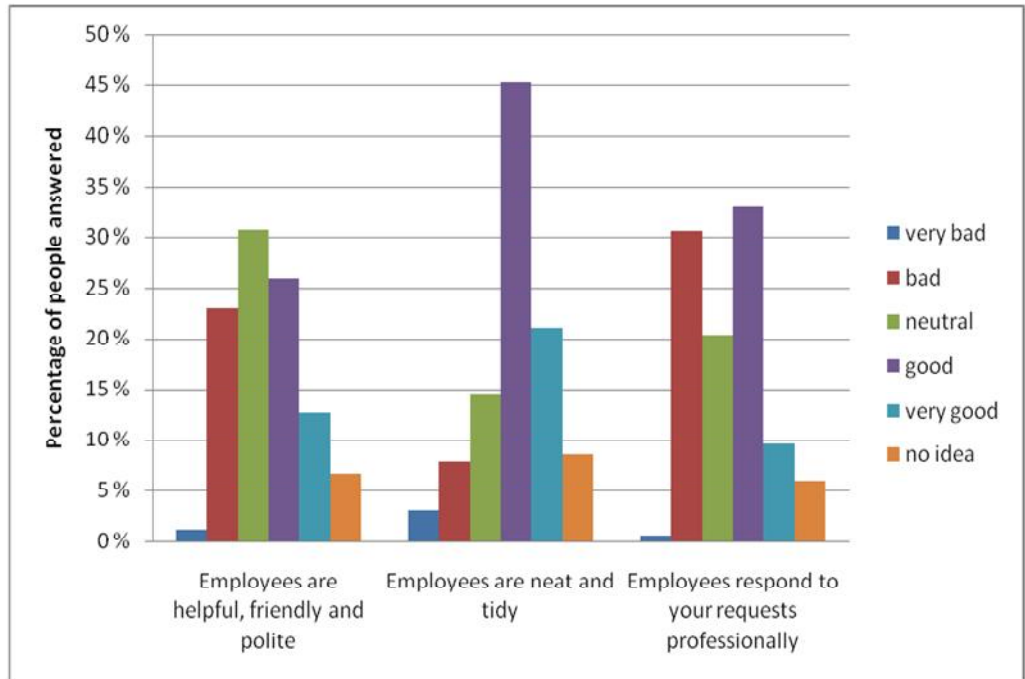


Figure 9: Tiger Airways responses (N=171)

The purpose of responsiveness is to find out what the customers thought about the Tiger Airways employees attitudes, professional skills and stylishness. There are four questions established for this case, and their results are displayed in the following figure.

According to the results in figure 9, there were approximately 25% of passengers who complained about Tiger Airways employees because of their unfriendly attitudes. The rest of them were satisfied with Tiger Airways employees' behaviors. Moreover, for employees' professional skills in responding passengers' requests, it seems that the number of unsatisfied passengers increased to about 32% which is presented by the bad-level column. However, the number of passengers who gave their good grades for this term of service is significantly high.

It is proved by the total 43% of passengers in two columns of good and very-good grades. For Tiger Airways uniforms, most customers chose high grades.

Overall, there were not a lot of Vietnamese passengers who have strict consideration for Tiger Airways employees. However, 25% of disappointed passengers is also a noticeable warning for Tiger Airways employees to consider their working attitude.

5.2.5 Facilities (check-in/baggage handling service, in-flight facilities, waiting lounge)

Facilities comprise questions focusing on asking passengers about check-in/baggage handling service, in-flight facilities and waiting lounge. The results are showed on the following chart.

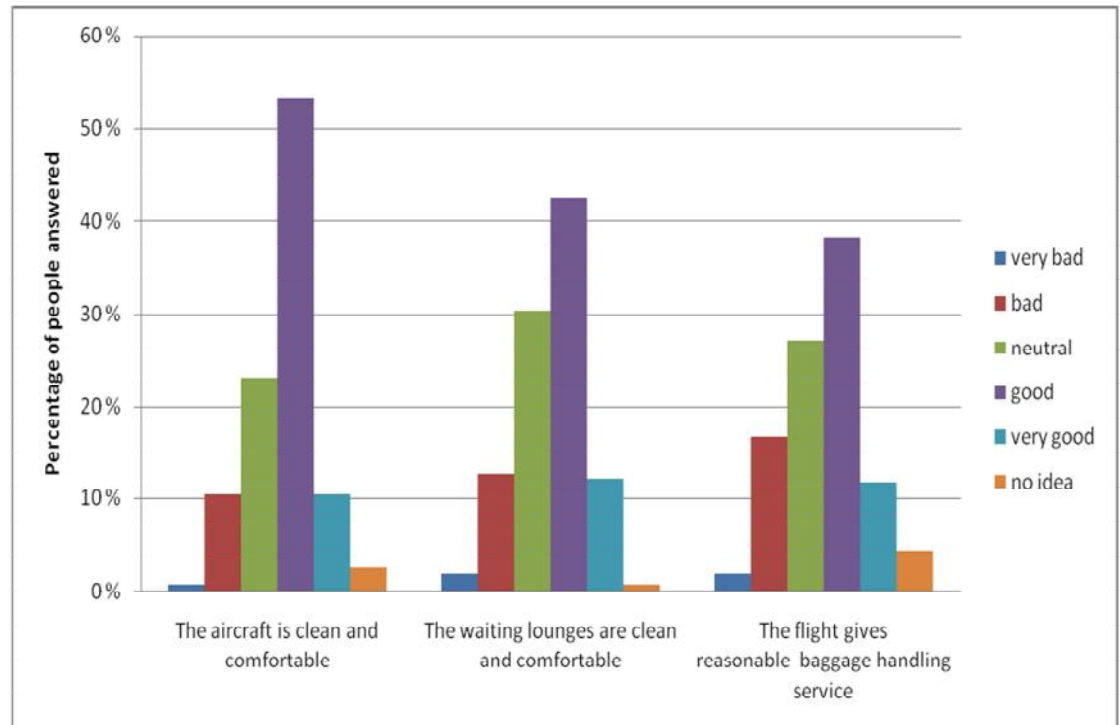


Figure 10: Tiger Airways' facilities (N=171)

Based on the results in figure 10, most passengers felt comfortable with Tiger Airway aircraft interiors because the total percentage of good and very-good column is approximately 63%. Approximately 10% of passengers were disgruntled and over 20% of those who gave their neutral-level grades. However, for waiting lounges, the number of disappointed customers increased slightly to around 15%, and satisfied ones took a small decrease of about 10% (from 63% to 53%). In addition, for baggage policy, the number of disaffected passengers continues to slightly rise to 17%, and of course the number of gratified ones took a little decrease to 38%.

Overall, about 10% - 16% of passengers complained about Tiger Airways aircraft interiors, waiting lounges and its policy for baggage allowed to bring.

5.2.6 Summary of the survey results

After being evaluated, results of questionnaires can be summarized by listing the reasons why Tiger Airways services caused Vietnamese passenger dissatisfactions. In the following, the reasons are set from strongest level to slightest level.

- Refund in late time (over 58% of passengers disappointed)
- Delay with no replacing flight immediately (around 45% of passenger disappointed)
- Broader network and smoother transfer (around 45% of passenger disappointed)
- Updating flight information (around 40% of passenger disappointed)
- Employee response to customer requests (around 31% of passengers disappointed)
- Special service for elderly, children and disabled (around 28% of passenger disappointed)
- Effective ways for guidance (around 25% of passenger disappointed)
- Employee attitudes (around 25% of passengers disappointed)
- Food and its prices (around 20% of passenger disappointed)
- Safety records (12% - 20% of passenger disappointed)
- Baggage policy (around 18% of passengers disappointed)
- Waiting lounges (around 13% of passenger s disappointed)

- Aircraft interiors (around 10% of passengers disappointed)
- Tiger Airway uniforms for employees (around 10% of passengers disappointed)

These results would be a significant red warning for Tiger Airways to improve certain areas of operation.

On the following chapter, an interview with a Tiger Airways employee has been analyzed to see how Tiger Airways think about its failures. The interview is displayed in the following section.

5.3 Interview with the chief and an employee of Tiger Airways

The purpose of inviting an interview is to know how Tiger Airways thinks about the large number of its customer dissatisfactions, and has it prepared any strategy to recover the failures

However, there is only one interview which was taken from an employee who is working at Tan Son Nhat airport – the biggest airport in Vietnam. It was difficult to invite Tiger Airways employees for interviews, because in fact Tiger Airways has no branch in Vietnam. There is only one office located in Ha Noi to sell Tiger Airways tickets to customers. Tiger Airways hires employees from SAGS for performing services such as check-in, baggage transport, and checking boarding passes for getting in to aircrafts, etc, in internal airport.

Company Saigon Ground Services (SAGS) is a unit under Southern Airport Corporation. Its function is management, mining equipments, supplying and organizing ground services to ensure safety and quality for international airlines at Tan Son Nhat airport. SAGS supplies international airlines services such as receiving and delivering goods, warehouses and parking, check-in, transportation means (for passengers, cargos, baggage), technical energy support (filling oil, electricity, gas, etc) and so on. (Southern Airports Corporation, 2011)

The interview was taken from Ms Ngo Thi Thu Hong – an employee of SAGS. She is one of those who represent Tiger Airways employees to help passengers in services such as check-in and getting in to aircrafts. Through emails, Ms Hong responded that actually she is just

responsible for helping Tiger Airways passengers in check-in service and taking them to get in to aircrafts. She does not know clearly about how Tiger Airways faces its customer disappointments. However, playing as a Tiger Airways employee with experience and knowledge about this airline, she said that Tiger Airways provides limited services because it is a low-cost airline. Customers need to know that they purchase a service with low-price. Therefore, they should not require or expect for high quality of service. If they want higher level of services, they need to pay more or choose other higher-quality airlines such as Vietnam airlines, or Singapore airlines. Moreover, for complaints of unclean aircraft interiors, she provided information that there is only 45 minutes or 60 minutes for each transfer, so Tiger Airways employees do not have much time for cleaning aircraft interiors. They have to do this work quickly and it results in inconvenience for passengers. For Tiger Airways employees' attitudes, she explained that employees have to express the matters firmly and clearly, because there were some passengers who tried to entreat to get more kilograms for their baggage, whereas Tiger Airways policy for baggage volume is limited. This problem causes conflicts between Tiger Airways employees and its passengers. In conclusion, she hoped passengers would be sympathetic for these uncomfortable situations. Furthermore, she wished customers should not require a quality of service which is over an amount of money they paid for. For her consideration about Tiger Airways, she thought Tiger Airways is a quite good airline, at least not as low-quality service as what passengers commented. That is all information that Ms Hong provided.

Moreover, according to the website "Travelconsumerdaily.com", Tiger Airways' chief executive Tony Davis said that passengers should know that they have to pay extra fees if their baggage is over the amount of kilograms Tiger Airways stipulated, and if they come to check-in late, they are not allowed to get on board. That is Tiger Airways business model and that is why Tiger Airways can give them budget prices. They cannot pay the A\$28 fare and then expect a high-quality product. (Knowledge@Australian School of Business, 2010)

In conclusion, after analyzing the three sources (internet sources, questionnaires and the interview), it can be concluded that passengers have their reasonable reasons for their complaints, and Tiger Airways employees also have their reasonable explanations. Hence, the researcher has to consider carefully in giving suggestions for Tiger Airways to improve its

customer satisfaction. It requires reasonable suggestions which provide benefits for both sides, Tiger Airways itself and its passengers.

5.4 Variation, validity and reliability of the research

Variation or variable diminishes the consistent and exact amount of any research processes' results which compare with the originally purposes. In other words, outputs of research processes are not identical in repeatability because of variations' effects on them. The goal of a research could not be achieved without identifying variables and obtaining ways to decrease them. When variation is understood before executing the research, the solution can be issued with more homogeneous and accurate standard which helps to reduce time for inspection and testing, as well as minimizing rejection, failure and cost of performance. Moreover, for businesses, recognizing the effect of variation is necessary to gain more satisfied customers and more profitable. For any research processes, it gives advantageous chances to attain the target solution. (Syque Quality, 2002-2011)

In order to avoid the effect of variation, this research was started with the definite plan including steps which organized and developed logically and reasonably from the task of identifying the problem to the task of obtaining a correct way to solve the problem. The problem in this study is Tiger Airways customer complaints about its services. This motivated the idea to give better suggestions to the airline to decrease its customer discontents through a research. A survey with online questionnaires was executed to gain Tiger Airways customers' opinions. The contents of questionnaires were produced by according to reasons of Tiger Airways customer complaints spreading on the internet. Each reason was used to create a questionnaire or a group of questionnaires. Therefore, the results collected from questionnaires highly matched with what the research had been predicted. The goal for suggestions prepared for Tiger Airways did not vary significantly from the original one. Only the goal number of respondents was not satisfied (171/500 people); but this problem was also anticipated because the respondents were Tiger Airways customers in Vietnam, not general population. In conclusion, this research was highly successful in minimizing the influence of variables.

Validity of this research is high because of the considerably valid data collection with validate extraneousness of theories and truthful performance of the survey with questionnaires and interviews.

The theories such as customer satisfaction, research method, and airline management were selected from books in library, online books and credible sources on the internet. These involved the research purpose of providing good suggestions for Tiger Airways. Firstly, customer satisfaction was analyzed distinctly and concisely to emphasize an important role of customers to businesses. The purpose was to alert gently Tiger Airways about how the increased number of its discontented customers affects its business existence in future. Secondly, the survey was adhered to theories from books and airline questionnaire samples from internet sources to select a relevant way for questionnaires, sample size, sampling method and data collection. In other words, research method theory and literatures correlating airline surveys were learnt carefully to select the most proper mean for the Tiger Airways survey. Thirdly, books and internet sources about airline management were conducted to provide good and pertinent suggestions for the airline.

The survey was determined conscientiously to achieve the most appropriate way for delivering to the right respondents. The answers of the survey were inspected and tested to eliminate wrong ones before being analyzed. The program for analyzing the survey's results was also evaluated to get an eligible one. Moreover, the interview with an employee of Tiger Airways was performed in reality via email. The interview with the chief of the airline included in this research was taken from a credible online article. Therefore, the thesis was issued with a high level of validity.

Reliability of this research is limited because of the thesis' weaknesses. The weaknesses were caused by the shortage of time and risks of online-questionnaires. The time interval for completing the thesis was within 5 months, and the time for delivering online-questionnaires was within 1 month and a half. The finite time interval delimited the work of searching more sources for making the thesis more reliable, and it caused the moderate number of total answers collected from questionnaires (just 171 answers selected). Moreover, the reliability is diminutive because of some disadvantageous hazards of online-questionnaires. The Vietnamese market was opted for performing the survey. Since the distance for distributing questionnaires

is very far, online-questionnaires have become the most effective method. Although this method was considered as a good mean for the survey, some risks occurred during the process. People are normally afraid that online-questionnaires could be some viruses, so they refuse to join the survey. In addition, some people just attended the survey for fun, and they gave empty answers which took time to remove. The website for making online-questionnaires sometimes had errors, and respondents could not access to answer. These problems of online-questionnaires were a big challenge for making the thesis with the high reliability.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR TIGER AIRWAYS

The chief and an employee of Tiger Airways explained that their business model follows LCC which provides customers low-cost air travel, so it is unreasonable that customers require for service they do not pay for. On the contrary, based on results from questionnaires and internet resources, passengers in Vietnam and over the world always complained about Tiger Airways services.

In the researcher' opinion, although Tiger Airways company gave a reasonable explanation for its customer dissatisfactions, Tiger Airways should review its failures and evaluate appropriate ways to recover them .With the high number of disgruntled customers, it is difficult for Tiger Airways to survive for a long-time because customers are the lifeblood of every business. In addition, 'customer retention'' in marketing theories advises businesses to keep 100 existent customers instead of seeking 100 new ones. The costs for retaining the existent customers would be lower than that for losing these existent customers and acquiring others to replace. (Kotler et al 2008, 385) Moreover, it is important for businesses to take care of defect rate and to overtake strategies to decrease it. (Kotler et al, 2008, 386) Tiger Airways' financial report in 2010 showed 34% increase of passengers. (Media release 1, 2001) However, has Tiger Airways reviewed how many existent customers and new customers in the amount of 34% increase? Tiger Airways may take a high-level of risk in losing its existent customers with the large number of passenger dissatisfactions.

In addition, it does not mean that profitable businesses do not have the number of disappointed customers. Because the number of disgruntle customers cannot make businesses fail to success immediately, customer dissatisfaction normally forgoes a decrease number of existent customers and reduction in sales and profitability. Hence, customer satisfaction is a good leading indicator for businesses being successful in further time. (Best, 2004, 11) In order to exist in future Tiger Airways should obtain strategies to reduce the number of its discontented customers.

Because Tiger Airways is a low cost airline, the suggestions focus on the most common problems to provide the airline appropriate strategies to recover the failures of its services. The top problems are about uncomfortable delays, refunds for each delay in late time, flight information update, extra charges and unprofessional employees as well as their attitudes. These failures were caused by the lack of strategies for delays, customer services and employees' capabilities in work. In order to solve aforementioned failures, it should have special strategies for responding delays in advance, improving customer service, and continuous training periods for employees.

6.1 Strategies for delay response in advance

Flight delays are situations that cause commonly much stresses for both airlines and passengers. Every year, air companies have to pay billions of dollars for flight delays. Moreover, passengers interfere with their timetable events because of flight delays. According to Department of Transportation since 1998, there was a 62% increase of flight delays and cancellations in New York, whereas just a 38% increase of scheduled operations. (Cooney, 2008 & Kubitschek, 1999-2011)

Flight delays are caused by different reasons such as carrier delays, weather, security, technology problems, air traffic clearances, or passengers. Carrier delays are caused by checking problems, cleaning aircraft interiors, loading baggage, adding fuel, etc. There were many flight cancellations because of bad weather conditions such as blizzards, hurricanes and tornadoes which endangered flight safety seriously. Problems with mandatory evacuations also cause postponements because security forces need time to clear terminals. Moreover, technology problems are one of the reasons causing flight cancellations. Besides, air traffic is a factor contributing to the increased number of flight delays. In some cases of no parking bays in the peak time, planes spend time to fly around until they get the permission to land safely. Passengers themselves also delay their flight because of many reasons such as getting lost in the complex terminals, being absorbed in shopping, spending time to look for their missing baggage, etc. (Just about flying 2004-2009 & Kubitschek, 1999-2011)

For any reasons causing flight delays, passengers expect airlines to update flight status quickly, and to give them alternative travel plans. However, airlines commonly fail to provide their passengers timely and accurate flight status information. (E-Elliott, 2010) The proposed rule of The Transportation Department for the future of air travel was issued to protect passengers' affords. In other words, the rule aims to enhance airline passenger protections. The Department requires airlines must promptly inform passengers about the unexpected problems causing flight delays. Moreover, the airlines need to improve customer services for responding to customer complaints, and for compensating passengers at each delay. (Connell University, 2011) Therefore, the following strategies for delays could be good suggestions for Tiger Airways in responding to its customers.

Announcing flight delays or cancellations to customers promptly is an effective way to reduce customer disappointments when any unexpected delays happen. There were many cases that flight monitors and boards at check-in gate showed a flight to arrive on time, but in fact the flight was delayed because of no aircraft at the gate. Also, when passengers came to check-in gates and they were informed that their flight had left 5 minutes ago, so they missed the flight. However, actually FAA air traffic knew that the flight was delayed. (Mead, 2000, 16)

Based on common problems happening inside airports, a suggestion for Tiger Airways is to establish a framework for documenting and defining the reasons of delays and cancellations. The demand for this performance is to create a better communication system for updating flight information about delays or cancellations frequently. It requires high-quality of communication technologies and media in various ways. One good way is to create procedures which are used to contact passengers at their home, work, or through telephone number. Another essential way is to establish a special room where passengers are informed about the accuracy, reliability and timeliness of flight status, delays or cancelation. In the special room, the employees are responsible for explaining passengers about the reasons of delays such as extremely bad weather, crew unavailability, or maintenance problems. (Mead, 2000, 16-17)

Baggage loading punctually is also a good way to decrease delays. Passengers always expect to see their baggage on conveyor belts at every destination airport, but the misrouted baggage delivering commonly happens at airports. Passengers spend time in looking for their bags, and they miss their flights or the flights can take off. (Mead, 2000, 17)

Tiger Airways should invest to improve baggage scanning technologies which provide facilities for returning baggage to passengers. Moreover, creating staff forces for responding to passenger claims is necessary for reducing ‘wasted time’ of finding missed bags. Offering toll-free telephone number for passengers to ask about their missed bags is also a good way in this case. For the unanticipated situations of delayed baggage delivers, Tiger Airways should establish a plan to guarantee its customers that the lost baggage would be returned within 24 hours. (Mead, 2000, 18)

Providing prompt ticket refunds for any delays and cancellations is what passengers really expect from airlines. One of top reasons of Tiger Airways customer disaffections is the refunding time. Most of them were significantly irritated because they had to wait 6-7 months for refunds of delayed flights. According to Federal regulations for airline, it is agreed that the refunds have to be provided promptly within 20 days from purchasing tickets by cash and check. However, Tiger Airways has not followed this regulation to make the repayment to its passengers. Thus, Tiger Airways should comply with Federal requirements to refund passenger in reasonable time. (Federal register, 2010)

Offering benefits during delays is also a smart strategy to compensate for passengers’ inconveniences. In this case, Tiger Airways should improve a close relationship between FAA and the Airlines’ operations Control Centers, who deal directly with passengers, to produce a distinct and concise statement of its policy for compensations from any delays. For example, Tiger Airways provides passengers a list of benefits to compensate for every delay. The list with appropriate assistance is as following:

- Refreshments such as free meals
- Accommodation for overnight delay time
- Offering telephone reservation free of charge within 24 hours

In the case of long on-aircraft delays such as airplanes taking many hours to wait for parking bays to land, or aircraft on the ground but no access to the terminal, Tiger Airways should provide passengers food, water, restroom facility as well as medical treatment. This strategy will reduce passenger stresses when flight delays happen to them. (Mead, 2001, 20)

6.2 Better customer service

Customer service aims to bring customers back to a business or to maintain relationship between the business and its customers. Customer service creates the chances of brief personal encounter between a passenger and the service in question. In today's competitive market, customer service is considered as a competitive edge for businesses to reduce the number of their competitors. Businesses can utilize strategy of promotion such as discounts, slash prices or additional gifts, but if the businesses do not try to retain existent or loyal customers, it would be difficult for them to be profitable in long-term. (Ward, 2011)

The aforementioned philosophy is a good advice for Tiger Airways. Tiger Airways with its strategy of low-cost airline can attract many new customers easily. However, unless Tiger Airways can bring some of them back, the airline will not survive for prospective time. Hence, a suggestion for the airline is to improve its customer services in three places such as inside aircrafts, inside airports and outside airports.

Customer services inside the aircrafts include taking passengers to the right seats, recording safety, serving meals, handling passengers requests, and updating information during flight (weather, temperature or height, and where revenue flight hours at risk). The way how professionally employees express themselves during the flight corresponds directly to how comfortable passengers feel during many hours on flights. Furthermore, customer services should have special services for situations such as assisting parents with small children, elderly or disabled. (American Airlines, 2010) Based on questionnaire results, 28% of passengers gave bad-level grades for Tiger Airways for special services. Tiger Airways is a low-cost airline, so a particular service may be an unreasonable requirement compared to the price of tickets.

However, a question for Tiger Airways is how to face the case of parents with babies who disturb passengers around by crying loudly. The parents may receive the glares or rude comments from some fastidious passengers. This problem requires strategy to soothe babies during flight. The purpose is to protect babies and give quiet atmosphere for passengers. Thus, Tiger Airways should prepare some entertainments for babies, although Tiger Airways is a low-cost airline. Some attractive objects which can be used for entertaining babies are books, colour pencils for drawing pictures, candy, or toys. Moreover, allowing employees to save some time to play with babies is also a good way for keeping babies in a good mood. (Holiday extras, 2011)

Customer services inside the airports are necessary for providing passengers assistances such as baggage delivery and baggage claim, necessary services during extraordinary delays, and guidance for giving passengers smoother transfers.

Baggage is a noticeable problem which causes passengers' stresses and at the same time results in postponed flights. It takes lots of time for passengers to look for their luggage at airports without any assistance from airlines. Customer services should assist passengers to find their bags advantageously, as well as to solve cases of lost baggage, missing baggage or damaged baggage.

For unexpected delays, customer services again play an important role. Passengers always feel strongly unhappy when their flights are delayed. Tiger Airways should organize staff force to assist passengers during misrouted time such as notifying customers of delay information promptly, giving compensation in advance, providing accommodations or other flights replacing or places for taking refunds. For providing smoother transfers, customer services are considerably needed to assist passengers. According to questionnaire results, 45% passengers would have needed a guide to take them to check-in gates or show them to use the machine for printing boarding passes. This requirement was also found out from internet sources which were used to collect Tiger Airways customer complaints.

Also, passengers who do not know how to print their boarding passes with the machine, have to pay more money for getting help from Tiger Airways employees. Again, Tiger Airways faces

customer disappointments. Tiger Airways should remove unreasonable extra fees for printing boarding passes at service tables. Customer services should be responsible for this performance.

Customer services outside the airports are responsible not only for selling flight tickets but also for explaining ticket conditions, flight information and the airline's policy. The task of employees in customer services is initially to explain Tiger Airways' policy for compensations for delays to customers. This performance is very important to avoid customer dissatisfactions when any uncomfortable delays happen to them in the prospective time. Moreover, it is essential to introduce the flight ticket conditions to customers, i.e. baggage volume and departure/arrival time, and to explain add-ons services to them, i.e. in-flight meals, entertainment, extra baggage or extra legroom. Commonly, add-ons services with extra charges of LCC airlines cause customer dissatisfaction because customers were not informed about them beforehand. This problem leads the conflict between customers and LCC airlines. (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2011) In order to avoid the conflict, Tiger Airways employees should notice customers to clearly understand the ticket conditions and some additional services that they have to pay for more. Moreover, customer services are also a place for customers to require their compensation as well as to inquire any questions or to give complaints. It is very uncomfortable when any flights are delayed without any responses from the airline staff. This common situation happened to Tiger Airways customers and they were intensively disgruntled. For example, there is only one office representing Tiger Airways to sell flight tickets to Vietnamese passengers in Ha Noi. It causes inconveniences for Vietnamese customers to ask questions when any problems happen to them. Ho Chi Minh - the biggest city in Vietnam is a potential market for Tiger Airways to establish an office, because there is a high demand for air travel there.

A suggestion for Tiger Airways is to establish places or offices where customers can receive compensations ask questions and give feedback. In other words, Tiger Airways should create offices in countries where they have flying routes because the lack of these offices causes disadvantages customers who seek for information.

6.3 Continuous training periods for employees

For complaints about Tiger Airways employees, most passengers from internet resources expressed their discontents with the sluggish responses of Tiger Airways employees to notify them of delay information and to refund them late. Moreover 31% of Vietnamese passengers also gave bad-level grades for Tiger Airways employees' slow responses. Besides, the results of questionnaires display that 25% of passengers were disaffected with Tiger Airways employees' attitude. Therefore, training periods for employees are extremely significant for Tiger Airways to recover its failure in services.

The purpose of training periods is to help Tiger Airways employees improve their attitudes of communication skill and ability to solve problems such as customer complaints, delay responses, baggage claims, crying babies, etc. Moreover, the aim of training is to enhance employees' abilities to use computer to manage customer information database through company network advantageously. In the case of delays, Tiger Airways employees are required to have adequate capacities to use communication system to receive updated information and to announce it to passengers promptly. Also, the lack of managing customer information database is one of the reasons for long check-in time. Hence, improving Tiger Airways employee's ability to use computer should be included computer skills.

6.3.1 Communication skills

Communication skills help Tiger Airways face encounters between its employees and its customers. In other words, these skills lead to the number of customer satisfactions; because when Tiger Airways employees handle all conversations with customers professionally in any situations, customers are pleased. For training employee communication skills, Tiger Airways should consult the efficient seven C's of communication because they have a strong impact on the composition of all messages, which Tiger Airways employees convey to customers. The seven C's of communication skills include courtesy, clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, consideration, and completeness. (Sen, 2007, 72)

Courtesy is not only to use phrases ‘thank you’ and ‘please’ many times, but also requires employees to be good listeners who pass on information to create a harmonious understanding of what customers give. On the other hand, courtesy is an authentic and veritable expression which is derived from employees’ respect and care for customers. In order to be courteous in communication, employees should be sincere, avoid anger or superior ecstasy of happiness, abstain from preaching, and use positive words as well as ignore negative and discriminative ones. (Sen, 2007, 72-75)

Clarity requires employees to select simple, correct and familiar words as well as short sentences when communicating with customers. Clarity requires the employee’s skill to use technical or professional words to provide clients information with distinct expression, and not to use general words or jargon which cause ambiguity. Hence, foreknowledge about what kind of words the clients will accept can help Tiger Airways employees avoid conflicts with customers. Clarity is useful for Tiger Airways employees to introduce ticket conditions and add-ons services to customers, as well as to record safety and to update information during flights. (Sen, 2007, 75)

Conciseness implies to advice speakers or writers to eliminate all redundant words. Normally, receivers or audiences ignore long messages. Moreover, lengthy messages sometimes cause misunderstanding for those who take a glance to skim the information. Time is one of the most valid things for business, so conciseness is really an essential skill in communication. (Sen, 2007, 76)

Concreteness aims to utilize figures, facts, names, examples and vivid nouns for expressing the ideas or information more precisely and factually. Concreteness helps to avoid vague communication. Also, this skill gives audiences advantageous chances to understand messages and remember them easily. Concreteness is one of necessary communication skills for Tiger Airways employees in explaining about Tiger Airways delay compensations. (Sen, 2007, 77)

Correctness targets to select the right level of using grammar, message composition and proper words for the right receivers' level in communication. In other words, correctness adapts the appropriate tone for announcing a message. Conveying information with the correct tone contributes to the success of communication. Thus, Tiger Airways employees need to learn this factor to make clearer notification to their passengers. (Sen, 2007, 77)

Consideration presents employees' attitudes of how they communicate different factors with customers such as prices, delivery dates, specifications, and other benefits. It means that the sender needs to remember these various factors and convey them to customers in a polite way. Again, consideration is another important skill which Tiger Airways employees should use when responding passengers' questions, requests or complaints. (Sen, 2007, 78)

Completeness does not imply to provide the entire information comprising additional things, but it advises speakers and writers to associate the seven C's in communicating messages with audiences. Completeness is how distinct the target information is announced to receivers. (Sen, 2007, 78-79)

With the efficient use of the seven C's in communication, Tiger Airways employees are able to avoid conflicts which cause passengers dissatisfactions. Moreover, if any unheralded situations make customers irritated; the seven C's is a useful tool for soothing them.

6.3.2 Ability to solve problems

Besides using the seven C's in communication, problem solving skill is also considered as a significantly necessary factor for Tiger Airways employees to resolve. There have been a huge amount of theories, books and articles dissecting the ways of how to solve problems in customer services. Six following steps are aimed to give good suggestions for Tiger Airways employees to manage problems in any cases.

- 1) Do not say " I am sorry" or " I apologize" or any other variation before pointing out the reasons of problems. Some theories advice that employees should always apologize to

disgruntled customers and remember phrase ‘ ‘ customer is always right’’. However, in case problems appear; any customers certainly think that they are right when any employees initially say ‘ ‘sorry’’. And then, they automatically wrest the opportunity to get a power of authority for inquiring any compensation. Therefore, any phrases of apologies should not be said before identifying problems. (Ludwig, 2010)

- 2) Identify problems are an apparent issue for figuring out the reason customer discontents. When a customer is yelling for some disaffected things, employees should be self-possessed to analyze whether the problem was caused by products, services or production, or other variations. Sometimes customers themselves cause the problem but they normally put the blame on the company. In this case, if employees do not know clearly why the problems occur, they could be tendered to state some intangible things. It relates to the lack of communication. Thus, defining problems is needful to do before choosing an appropriate solution to solve them. (Ludwig, 2010)
- 3) Selecting an immediate solution for the problem is a considerable step after defining its reason. Providing a solution for customers is better than doing nothing. (Ludwig, 2010)
- 4) Being confident is an important factor in customer services as well as in service failure recovery. The lack of confidence causes bad customer service. Confidence is also useful in identifying problems and selecting a suitable solution to resolve. Also, being intelligent and using positive body language to talk about the problem without showing any frustration is better than to follow a rigid policy strictly to solve the problem. (Ludwig, 2010)
- 5) Escalating the problem is essential when a befitting solution is selected to solve the problem, but the customer is still upset. It means that employees should specify the perilous level of the problem for customers. Recovering failures in customer services is commonly successful when an employee is powerful to tell customers about the reasons causing problems. For example, Tiger Airways provides another flight to replace the delay for passengers but they are still discontented. In this case, employees should explain more

reasons causing delays, and tell them how dangerous if the flight departures at the right time. This performance lessens passenger disaffections. (Ludwig, 2010)

- 6) The follow up service is also important after the problems have been resolved. The purpose is to give a clear explanation and a promise that the problem will not recur in the future. (Ludwig, 2010)

The six aforementioned steps are a good reference for Tiger Airways employees to consult for comforting customers when any problems occur. Capability to solve problems not only lessens displeasures of customers, but also puts Tiger Airways employees under stress when they face any uncomfortable or disadvantageous situations.

6.3.3 Ability to use computers

Ability to use computers is indispensable to Tiger Airway employees, because the shortage of employees' capability to use computers may cause problems such as long check-in time, late refunds, or late response concern. Hence, Tiger Airways should organize continuous training courses for its employees to improve the skills.

Continuous training courses should be aimed to improve employees; not only in basic computer skills such as word processing or desktop publishing, but also in different areas such as spreadsheet, database and information evaluation. Spreadsheet and database training is targeted to teach employees how to use information from an existing database, to search a dataset for specific information, to create or to copy formulas, etc. (Computer skills checklist, 2011)

“Connecting” provides employees skills of telecommunications, email and web browsing. Telecommunications include lessons of determining network from company system, resetting network password, linking to internet and understanding the goal of password security. Email targets to give skills such as creating free e-mail accounts and group addresses, as well as using

e-mails, address book, etc. Web browsing comprises the ways of how to manage and use internet such as downloading or finding information, accessing and using resource, changing the web page as the home page, and so on. ‘‘Connecting’’ is indispensable to Tiger Airways employees in communicating with customers throughout technique means. (Computer skills checklist, 2011)

Evaluating information includes skills of using online research, and managing social, legal and ethical issues. Online research aims to teach employees how to search materials using keywords, identify primary sources of information, utilize the strength of search tool, and evaluate the information for accuracy, credibility, timeliness and so on. Moreover, controlling social, legal and ethical issues gives knowledge such as understanding safe and proper use of technology hardware, the way of network security, and so on. (Computer skills checklist, 2011)

Tiger Airways should select the right skill among different skills of using computer according to the positions of each employee individually. Besides apart from creating continuous training periods for employees, Tiger Airways should pay attention to the goal of gratifying employees. The service-profit chain argues that the growth of profitability closely depends on the growth of customer loyalty. These loyal customers are those who are served by satisfied, loyal and productive employees. In other words, satisfied customers are produced by happy employees. It means an employee who is gratified with the work being undertaken, will enthuse to give a higher quality in serving customers; then customers would be satisfied This proved that there is a connection between the provision of quality service and employee satisfaction. Factors which generate employee satisfaction in the workplace are salary, advantageous chances, respectful treatment, team work, and the individual of employee’s perception in meeting his/her customers’ requirements. (Fojt, 2006, 38)

In conclusion, the goal of providing the suggestions is to help Tiger Airways to improve its customer satisfaction. Hopefully the three suggestions of strategies for delays, customer service improvement and continuous training courses will be good references for Tiger Airways to reduce the number of discontented customers.

7. CONCLUSION

The idea for starting this thesis is because passengers' complaints about budget airlines have been rising year by year. Since this problem occurred, it has been one of hot news on online newspapers and journals in the recent years. (Newbon & Johnson, 2002) Tiger Airways, one of low-cost airlines, has also been holding a high number of disgruntled passengers. Thus, this research aimed to figure out the reasons why Tiger Airways customers were disgruntled with its services, and to provide good suggestions for Tiger Airways to improve its customer satisfactions. The entire studies of this research related to the purpose of the thesis.

Two places were chosen for gathering Tiger Airways customers' complaints. One was from internet sources and the other was to use questionnaire and interview which were performed in the Vietnamese market. Internet is a highly advantageous way for searching news. Vietnam is a potential market for Tiger Airways, so it is requisite for Tiger Airways to know why Vietnamese customers complained about its services.

Questionnaire and interview were selected as the appropriate methods for this research because it met the requirement of collecting Tiger Airways customers' opinions about its services. Before making questions for Tiger Airways customer satisfaction survey, many questionnaire samples of airline services on the internet sources were consulted to see how airline surveys were designed. By associating questionnaire theories with real problems of Tiger Airways services, the survey was issued with 27 questions focussing on inquiring Tiger Airways respondents for every term of its services. Interview was utilized to ask Tiger Airways employees how they think about their customers' complaints.

Customer satisfaction theories were studied as essential knowledge for giving Tiger Airways good suggestions to improve its customer pleasures. The theories were consulted mostly from marketing books.

After collecting answers from the survey and information from internet, Excel program was used to analyze the results. The results from questionnaires and internet sources displayed that most passengers felt unhappy with delays, late refunds, unreasonable extra fees, low employees' attitude, no guidance at each transfers, long check-in time, weakly special services

for small children, elderly and disabled, etc. On the other hand, the results from the interviews showed that Tiger Airways employees gave explanations against their customer complaints. The staffs intended to notice customers that Tiger Airways is a budget airline, so customers should not expect high-quality service which is over what they have paid for.

Based on opinions of Tiger Airways employees and its passengers, the suggestions were considered carefully to give benefits for both sides. According to customer satisfaction theories, an increased number of discontented customers results in a decreased amount of profitability. Also, it is difficult for the company to survive for a long time without customers. Therefore, the researcher decided to suggest the airline to recover its service failures; despite the fact that Tiger Airways is just a low-cost airline. The suggestions concentrated on the most common problems which have caused customer discontents. They included strategies for delays, customer service improvement and continuous training periods for employees.

In today's extremely competitive marketplace, Tiger Airways with the high number of customer discontents, this research could be a reminder for the airline to consider about its service failures. Furthermore, customer satisfaction theories and the suggestions in this thesis were aimed to notice Tiger Airways about how important customers influence its profitability in long term and to advise the airline to fulfil the holes of its services. Hopefully, there would be more and more theses or other works which could suggest LCC airlines to establish intelligent strategies for reducing passenger dissatisfactions.

In conclusion, this thesis gave the opportunity for the writer to review marketing knowledge, especially to deeply understand about customer satisfaction theories. The writer can utilize marketing knowledge to do the research as a real one, although it was just a research without getting any benefits from Tiger Airways. Moreover, after the thesis, the writer can improve many skills such as writing, reading, using Excel, and being more professional to use internet for searching sources as well as to manage a big work as a thesis or a project. These skills are very important for any employees in real jobs.

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APPEDICES

THE MODEL OF ONLINE QUESTIONS WHICH WAS USED FOR TIGER AIRWAYS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

THE SURVEY FOR COLLECTING CUSTOMER'S OPINIONS ABOUT TIGER AIRWAYS

1. Choose your age group from the alternatives bellow

- 18-27
- 28-40
- 41- 65
- 66+

2. Did you fly with Tiger Airways?

- Yes
- No

3. Your travel purpose is:

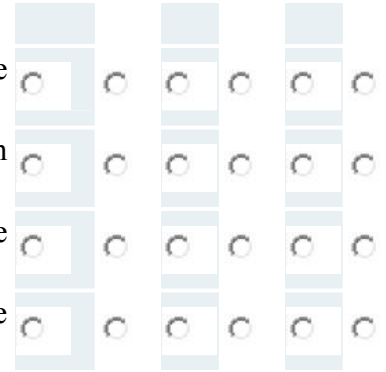
- business
- tourist
- visit friends/relatives
- studying/teaching
- others

17. You can easily find the machine for printing the boarding pass.

18. Tiger Airways offers a possibility to update flights on the internet/ by phone/ by email/ by fax.

19. Tiger Airways has global alliance partners to provide a broader network and smoother transfers.

20. Employees are professional in creating a safe atmosphere.



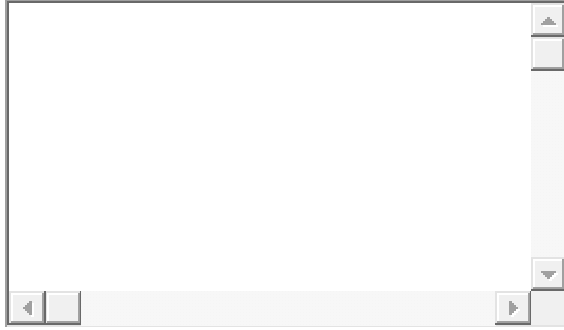
5. Would you choose Tiger Airways for your next trip?

- Yes
- No

6. If not, the reasons are: (you can choose more than 1 answer)

- poor service
- unclean aircraft interior
- distasteful food
- unclear guidance for transfer/check-in/boarding pass printing
- unreasonable excess cost
- inconvenient delay
- or others, please specify

7. You would like to give Tiger Airways some suggestions:

A large empty rectangular box with a scroll bar on the right and bottom, intended for writing suggestions.

KHẢO SÁT TÌM HIỂU Ý KIẾN HÀNH KHÁCH VÉ TIGER AIRWAYS

1. Chọn nhóm tuổi của anh/chị

- 18-27
- 28-40
- 41- 65
- 66+

2. Anh/ chị đã từng bay với Tiger Airways chưa?

- Có
- Không

3. Mục đích du lịch là:

- công việc
- du lịch
- thăm bạn bè/ người thân
- học hành
- lí do khác

18. Chuyến bay cập nhật đầy đủ thông tin trên mạng internet/quia điện thoại/email/fax.

19. Tiger Airways liên kết nhiều đối tác để tạo sự thuận tiện cho việc chuyển chặng và mạng lưới bay rộng hơn.

20. Nhân viên rất chuyên nghiệp trong việc tạo ra môi trường an toàn.



5. Anh/chị sẽ chọn Tiger Airways cho lần sau?

- Có
- Không

6. Nếu không, lí do là: (Anh/chị có thể chọn hơn 1 mục trả lời)

- dịch vụ kém
- nội thất máy bay không thoải mái
- thức ăn không ngon
- không có sự hướng dẫn rõ ràng khi chuyển chặng/tìm máy in thẻ máy bay
- những chi phí phụ bất hợp lý
- sự chậm, trì hoãn
- lí do khác, xin mời kể ra:

7. Xin vui lòng cung cấp cho Tiger Airways những ý kiến tốt hơn:

A large empty rectangular box with a scroll bar on the right and bottom, intended for providing feedback. The scroll bar is located on the right side of the box, and the bottom edge of the box has a horizontal scroll bar. The box is currently empty, indicating that no feedback has been provided yet.