AIRLINE CRISIS: THE EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Customer engagement refers to the emotional bond that develops between a customer and a service provider over time as a result of regular communication and interactions. Satisfaction, loyalty, and enthusiasm for the firm all contribute to engagement. (Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen's,2019).The main focus of this research paper, titled Airline crisis: The effects of communication on customer engagement during the covid-19 pandemic, was to examine the customer engagement strategies used by airline companies during a recession, as well as the outcomes that resulted from the communication strategies and information content.The study's information was acquired using an online survey questionnaire of 164 respondents from various airline service providers. The results show that the majority of respondents agree with the five dimensions, which are that they identify with the airline brand, they are enthusiastic, they are attentive to the information provided by the brand, and they agree in general that respondents like to interact and engage in brand community discussions.According to the data,the findings are that the respondents are extremely devoted to the airline brand but would only switch to another airline if the cost increased. Furthermore, the study reveals that respondents are quite delighted with the information supplied and indeed with the airline brand's communication efforts.

KEYWORDS: *Customer Engagement, Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, communication strategies, Airline service providers.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

"Stay strong. We will get through this crisis and keep the world connected." Alexandre de Juniac,
[International Air Transport Association] IATA's DG & CEO.

According to the International Air Transport Association (lATA) (2008), the airline sector is one of the largest in the world in terms of global airline revenues. Civil aviation has evolved as a significant contribution to human and economic growth in the majority of established and emerging nations.However, a pandemic induced by Covid-19 has had a significant influence on human health, as well as causing an economic catastrophe, and the aviation sector has been a heavily hit industry throughout this epidemic.

Source: Flight Trader twitter-: A before and after image showing impact of covid-19 pandemic on air traffic
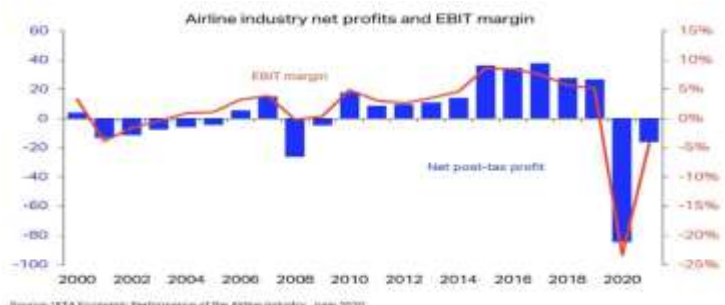
ehttps://twitter.com/flightradar24?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Because of travel limitations and a drop in demand, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the aviation sector. Indian airlines are estimated to report a loss of US$600 million (not including state-owned Air India) for the January–March quarter. The government of India is planning a rescue package for the aviation industry for as much as ₹120 billion (US$1.6

billion). A significant decreases in passenger numbers have resulted in flight cancellations or planes flying empty between airports, resulting in dramatically reduced income for airlines and forcing several to lay off staff or declare bankruptcy. To reduce business losses, some have sought to avoid refunding cancelled visits. Employees from airline manufacturers and airport operators have also been laid off. In addition, selected travellers are being provided a coupon that may be utilised in the future. The current situation is the worst that the world has ever seen. The current situation surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic is frequently referred to as unprecedented, so this study will investigate customer engagement through crisis communication. It is also expected that crisis communication, will emphasise customer satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, in a pandemic that is still ongoing in 2021.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Concept of Customer Engagement
The term "customer engagement" emerged when businesses were changing very rapidly to utilize the new capabilities of the Internet. Marketers were struggling to manage an expanded and complex marketing mix that included new media, including social media, and new technologies. Interestingly, the new emphasis on customer engagement (CE) primarily came from marketing practitioners, not marketing academics – although some academics were sensitive to this shift (Baumöl et al. 2016). In retrospect, many marketing academics associated CE with the distinctive capabilities of the Internet as a platform for enhanced reach, interactivity and speed – although some associated it (more broadly) with co-creation activities in a network or ecosystem. (Hollebeek,2019)

Customer Engagement refers to emotional attachment that a customer experiences with the service provider during the repeated communication and ongoing interactions during the service. Engagement occurs through satisfaction, loyalty and excitement about the company ((Hollebeek, Srivastava and Chen's,2019).

2.2 Customer Engagement via Communication through Social Media
Social media allows firms to observe and analyse a number of user behaviour metrics towards brands that are not obvious or available with traditional marketing. Social media revolution has also enabled customers to interact with brands in ways that did not exist previously with conventional platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).Consumer engagement is an important part of assessing social media marketing performance, especially since there is no direct or clear linkage between every social media activity and financial metrics, so businesses must rely on key social media marketing metrics as proxies to gauge the effectiveness of the implemented tactic.(Paine, 2011; Jaakonmäki, Müller and vom Brocke, 2017).

2.3 Communication Crisis
As (Jaques ,2009) stated, the many definitions of crisis communication can be categorized into two types: one is to define the crisis as an event (Coombs, 2007, 2015; Fear Banks, 2011; Sohn & Lariscy, 2014); the other is to regard the crisis as part of a process (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Roux Dufort, 2007; Shrivastava, 1993). Results from previous research show that communication professionals appreciate social media for the ease and speed with which information can be accessed and delivered (e.g.Postman, 2013).The weight given to social media by communication professionals is illustrated by the fact that a majority of them perceive coping with the digital evolution and social media to be the most importan strategic communication issue of today and believe it will remain so for the next few years (Zerfass, Vercic, Verhoeven, Moreno, & Tench, 2014).An important condition for successful use of Facebook in crisis events is that the social media platform must have become an integral part of the target group's daily lives already before the crisis occurs (Dabner,2015). During a crisis an online social media presence makes it even more important for the customers. As it is the only way a customer can reach out to the airline company and communicate during a crisis. In yet another study, (Glocka, 2016) show, based on an online experiment related to the nuclear accident in Fukushima, that crisis communication on both Facebook and Twitter has greater credibility and leads to milder crisis reactions than communication via traditional news media.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
As Airlines is the most affected sector by this ongoing pandemic and this study will aim to achieve the following:
- To examine the communications strategies adopted by airline service providers during a crisis.
- To evaluate customer engagement strategy adopted by airline service providers.
- To examine the outcomes arising from the communication strategies and content about customer satisfaction and Customer Loyalty.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN
This research is a design for an exploratory study using self-administered questionnaires whereby respondents were required to answer structured and close ended questionnaire with the aim of identifying how the airline companies have engaged their customers via communication during a crisis, and in this case, it is a pandemic.

5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK
The framework for this investigation was taken from the work of (Soetal,2012), he identified five dimensions of customer engagement. First, the level of a consumer's perceived unanimity with or sense of belonging to the brand that is **identification.** Second Dimension is the level of attention which focuses and links with the brand that is **attention.** Third dimension isthe level of passion and interest with the brand which is **enthusiasm.** Fourth dimensionis a pleasurable condition for being very rigorous, happy and deeply absorbed when playing the role of customer of the brand that is termed as **absorption** and the last and Fifth dimension is the various levels of participation that a customer has with the brand termed as **interaction.**

6. SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

For this research an online questionnaire was used. The survey questionnaire was prepared online by the use of Google form. The link to the survey was then sent out to the target population through email and by use of the social networking platform Facebook,Instagram and twitter. The data gathered was then used for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software.

Questions	Purpose
Question no 1 to 5	Generic questions to understand history of the traveler.
Question no 7-14	Questions on customer engagement via communication on social media platforms
Question no 15 – 33	Question asked on customer engagement to understand how the customers were engaged with the help of 5 dimensions
Question no 34	The following question was asked on Customer Engagement Strategies adopted by your Airline service provider.
Question no 35- 47	Question was asked on customer loyalty to understand how loyal the customer is
Question no 48- 50	This question was asked to understand customer satisfaction
Question no 51- 55	Demographic questions were asked

6.1 Dimensions of Customer Engagement
Note: SD - Strongly Disgree, D - Disagree, N - Neither Agree nor Disagree (Neutral), A - Agree, SA Strongly Agree.

6.2 Sampling Process
The time Period of study: April 2020 - March 2021 (1 Year). A convenience sampling method was used. This method is characterized by selecting respondents that are most easily and readily available and can provide the information required to take part in the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2008).

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
7.1 Profile of Respondents
The total number of respondents to the survey questionnaires were 164.The data was collected by an online survey by google form.The total data sets collected were 55 question which had open ended as well as close ended question on the basis of 5-point Likert scale to study the dimensions of customer engagement, customer engagement via communication strategies and customer satisfaction. The breakdown of respondents by gender is 111 male respondents (67.7%) and 53 female respondents (32.3%).The total no of respondents were 164 out of which a larger section of respondents belongs from the age category 31 to 40 years with 71 respondents. 66 no of respondents answering this survey belongs from the age category 18 to 30 years. And only 6 respondents belong from the age category 51 to 60 years. Most of the respondents belongs from the entrepreneurial section of occupation.

7.2 Respondents Flight Preference
Name of the airline frequently flied by the respondents fromApril 2020 to March 2021

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Malindo	2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	Air India	55	33.5	33.7	35.0
	AirAsia	8	4.9	4.9	39.9
	Qatar Airways	8	4.9	4.9	44.8
	IndiGo	21	12.8	12.9	57.7
	Emirates	32	19.5	19.6	77.3
	Singapore Airlines	4	2.4	2.5	79.8
	Ethihad	13	7.9	8.0	87.7
	Lufthansa	12	7.3	7.4	95.1
	Spicejet	2	1.2	1.2	96.3
	Vistara	4	2.4	2.5	98.8
	Virgin Atlantic	2	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	163	99.4	100.0	
Total		164	100.0		

From the above table the statistics depicts the airline preference by the respondents and the 164 respondents and one respondents dint answer, the respondents prefer the airlines and named Malindo, Air India, Air Asia, Qatar Airways, Indigo, Emirates, Singapore Airlines, Ethihad, Lufthansa, Spice Jet, Vistara, Virgin Atlantic airways. The statistics drawn had a positive mean of 4.87.The data of the respondents frequently flying with their most preferred airline from April 2020 to March 2021 shows an average mean of 1.68 with standard deviation .863. 53 percent of the responds during this period have travelled internationally for 1 to 2 times.The most preferred airline amongst the respondents is Air India with the frequency 55 and 33.5% the reason could be as most of the respondents in this data set are from Indian origin and from the below analysis also it can be assumed that most of the respondents do believe that they are satisfied with the services provided by Air India and from the statistics it can be seen that

the least preferred airline amongst the respondents is Spicejet airline and Virgin Atlantic airways with merely 1.2 % preference.The respondents were also asked if they hold a membership with the above selected most preferred airline the statistics show that the frequency was noted at 76 respondents with 46.3 percent with a yes that means 46.3% of the respondents did have a membership with the airline they most preferred and 53.7% of the respondents with a frequency 88 voted for no that means 53.7% respondents dint have a membership with their most preferred airline.

7.3 Discussion of Customer Engagement via Communication Strategies

The main objective of this research was to find out how the airline companies are communicating with their customers specifically during a crisis and what are the different communication strategies adopted by the airline service provider.

Question.Please select the top 3 communication platforms (either online or offline) on which you normally receive messages/Information from the above selected airline company.

The figure indicates the communication platforms where the respondents normally receive messages from their selected most
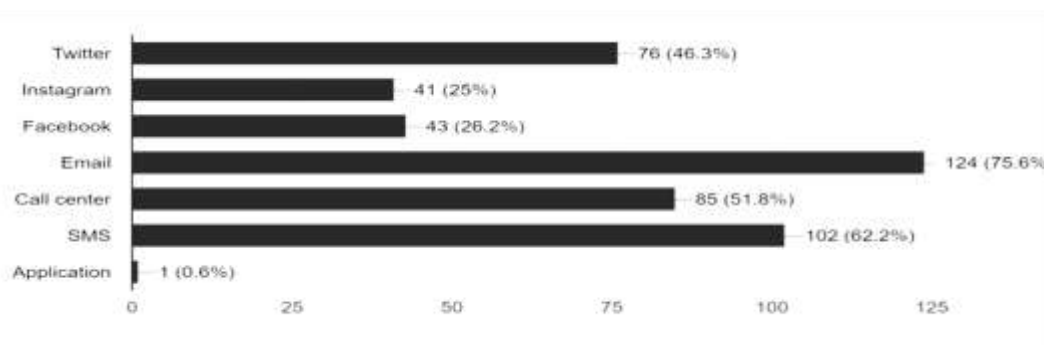
preferred airline. Which shows an interesting statistics that majority of the respondents that is 75.6 % respondents receive messages from their airline service provider through emails. And next 62.2 percent respondents receive communication in SMS form. And the least messages communicated by the airlines to the respondents are on social media platform like Instagram and Facebook.Majority of respondents are following the airline service provider on social media but it could mean the information is bias or the respondents are receiving content or information but are not receiving any personalized information on social media. Also when asked whether the respondents follow the airline service provider on social media and which platform then most of the respondents selected Instagram. Respondents were also asked about the content and characteristics of the communicated message.97 respondents believe that the communicated message was informative. 4 respondents reacted that the communicated message was kept them informed about the flight changes. 14 respondents also reacted that the communicated message was clear and simple to understand. 13 respondents reacted that the airline kept them informed about the passenger's flights, 12 respondents reacted that the airline gave them regular information about the destination they are travelling to. Majority of the respondents have reacted in a positive manner and was happy with the communicated message by the airline brand but 9 respondents were unhappy saying that the airline company did not give them information about the destination they are flying to and also reacted that the airline companies was lacking information. When asked how the respondents feel towards the communicated message majority of the respondents, nearly 81.1% respondents feel happy that their airline provides with updates frequently. And 9.8 % of the respondents also feel anxious as their airline company does not frequently provide with updates.Also when asked the respondents what is most recent message communicated with you on a frequent basis on any of the communication platforms by the airline company you most prefer.so the respondents replied that they received information on cancellation of flights, rescheduling, fare rates , covid-19 related information, hygiene and health and all the safety measures adopted by the airline company was communicated to the respondents.

7.4 Discussion of Customer Engagement

Descriptive Statistics test was run on the main objectives of the research that is customer engagement on a five-point likert scale which are strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. Customer engagement is sub divided into 5 main dimensions.

Likert scale measurement and statistics of Customer Engagement Dimensions

Items –Dimensions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.IDENTIFICATION	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
When someone criticizes this brand, it feels like a personal insult	13(7.9%)	11(6.7%)	24(14.5%)	110(66.7%)	6(3.6%)
I am very interested in what others think about this brand	17(10.3%)	13(7.9%)	18(10.9%)	108(65.5%)	8(4.8%)
This brand's successes are my successes	7(4.3%)	15(9.1%)	22(13.4%)	115(70.1%)	5(3.0%)
When someone praises this brand, it feels like a personal compliment	4(2.4%)	13(7.9%)	102(61.8%)	40(24.2%)	5(3.0%)
2 ENTHUSIASM					
I spend a lot of my discretionary time thinking about this brand	12(7.3%)	86(52.1%)	24(14.5%)	38(23%)	4(2.4%)
I am enthusiastic about any news of the airline brand	8(4.8%)	9(5.5%)	24(14.5%)	116(70.3%)	7(4.2%)
My travel days would not be the same without this airline brand.	5(3.0%)	14(8.5%)	23(13.9%)	87(52.7%)	35(21.2%)
I am enthusiastic about this brand	4(2.4%)	11(6.7%)	34(20.6%)	107(64.8%)	8(4.8%)
3 ATTENTION					
I like to learn more about this brand	4(2.4%)	13(7.9%)	21(12.7%)	116(70.3%)	10(6.1%)
Anything related to this brand does not grab my attention	4(2.4%)	13(7.9%)	105(63.6%)	37(22.4%)	5(3.0%)
I spend a lot of time thinking about this brand	6(3.6%)	90(54.5%)	34(20.6%)	29(17.6%)	5(3.0%)
I focus a great deal of attention on this brand	8(4.8%)	9(5.5%)	38(23.0%)	103(62.4%)	6(3.6%)
4 ABSORPTION					
When I am interacting with the brand, I forget everything else around me	41(24.8%)	54(32.7%)	32(19.4%)	31(18.8%)	6(3.6%)
When I am interacting with brand, I get carried away	11(6.7%)	13(7.9%)	99(60%)	37(22.4%)	4(2.4%)
When interacting with the brand, it is difficult to detach myself	12(7.3%)	5(3.0%)	30(18.2%)	109(66.1%)	8(4.8%)
When interacting with the brand intensely, I feel happy	6(3.6%)	13(7.9%)	24(14.5%)	114(69.1%)	7(4.2%)
5 INTERACTION					
In general, I like to get involved in brand community discussion	7(4.2%)	7(4.2%)	27(16.4%)	115(69.7%)	8(4.8%)
I am someone who enjoys interacting with others in the brand community	7(4.2%)	15(9.1%)	24(14.5%)	113(68.5%)	5(3.0%)
I am someone who do not like actively participating in brand community discussions	5(3.0%)	11(6.7%)	34(20.6%)	107(64.8%)	7(4.2%)

The above statistics shows that most of the persons are positive about the brand value and their success. Also, large number of people are enthusiastic about the brand related information and news. The data shows plethora of people are interested to know about brand while people find difficult to stick their attention with the brand. Most of the people feel happy while interacting with the brand and it's hard for them to isolate from it. People like to involve in the brand related discussion and enjoy interacting within the brand.

Mean, Standard deviation Values of customer engagement

Items –Dimensions	Mean Value	Standard Deviation	Mode
1.IDENTIFICATION			
When someone criticizes this brand, it feels like a personal insult	3.52	0.969	4
I am very interested in what others think about this brand	3.47	1.065	4
This brand's successes are my successes	3.59	0.864	4
When someone praises this brand, it feels like a personal compliment	3.18	0.717	3
2 ENTHUSIASM			
I spend a lot of my discretionary time thinking about this brand	2.61	1.000	2
I am enthusiastic about any news of the airline brand	3.64	0.850	4
My travel days would not be the same without this airline brand.	3.81	0.969	4
I am enthusiastic about this brand	3.63	0.783	4
3 ATTENTION			
I like to learn more about this brand	3.70	0.800	4
Anything related to this brand does not grab my attention	3.16	0.709	3
I spend a lot of time thinking about this brand	2.62	0.923	2
I focus a great deal of attention on this brand	3.55	0.853	4
4 ABSORPTION			
When I am interacting with the brand, I forget everything else around me	2.43	1.162	2
When I am interacting with brand, I get carried away	3.06	0.819	3
When interacting with the brand, it is difficult to detach myself	3.59	0.919	4
When interacting with the brand intensely, I feel happy	3.63	0.837	4
5 INTERACTION			
In general, I like to get involved in brand community discussion	3.67	0.815	4
I am someone who enjoys interacting with others in the brand community	3.57	0.866	4
I am someone who do not like actively participating in brand community discussions	3.61	0.803	4

The above table shows the means and the highest percentage value of the likert scale which test the five main dimensions of customer engagement to understand the first dimension of customer engagement that is identification with the most preferred airline brand these questions were asked and the data was derived as follows. When asked to the respondents When does someone criticizes this brand, it does feel like a personal insult the average mean value recorded was 3.52 with standard deviation of 0.969. And 66.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement. The next question was asked whether the respondents are interested what others think about the same brand then the average mean value was recorded at 3.47 with std deviation at 1.065 and 65.5% of the respondents agree with the statement. To understand weather the respondents, resonate with brand successes as their own successes then 69.7% of the respondents agreed. To further add when the respondents were asked that when someone praises the brand, do they feel like it is personal compliment, then the average mean value was recorded at 3.18 with standard deviation at the value 0.717 and 61.8% respondents were neutral with the following statement.

The second dimension of customer engagement that was tested for descriptive statistics is Enthusiasm among the respondents for their most preferred airline to travel internationally. The first question asked was if they spend a lot of discretionary time thinking about the Airline brand then it resulted that 52.1 % of the respondents disagree and they do not spend much time thinking about the airline brand which recorded an average mean value of 2.61 with standard deviation of 1.000. The next question was asked whether the respondents were enthusiastic about any news then it resulted from the analysis that 70.3% respondents were enthusiastic. A mean value of 3.81 with standard deviation of 0.961 was recorded when asked if their travel days would not have been the same without this airline brand then 52.7% of the respondents agreed. And last but not least 64.8% of the respondents agreed that their enthusiastic about their most preferred airline.

The third dimension of customer engagement is Attention. The first question asked under this dimension is whether they would like to learn more about this brand here the mean value was recorded at 3.70 with standard deviation of 0.800 and 70.3% respondents agreed that they would like to learn about the airline brand. The next question was asked to check whether the respondents were really attentive while filling the online survey form wherein a negative question was asked to check their attentiveness with any information about the brand that does not grab their attention and 63.6 % of the respondents were neutral and bias. The last question under this dimension was asked whether they focus a great deal of attention on this brand and 62.4 % respondents agreed.

The fourth dimension of customer engagement is to test the absorption the first question asked here was when the respondents interacted with the brand, they forgot everything else around them so the mean value was recorded at 2.43 with standard deviation of 1.162 and 32.7 % Disagreed with the statement. Also, here the standard deviation shows that the customer responses are not uniform which need to be addressed by the airlines companies by organizing various engagement programs or activities. To add further a similar nature of question was asked whether while interacting with the brand they found it difficult for them to detach themselves with the brand, the mean value was recorded at 3.59 with standard deviation of 0.919 and 66.1% of the total respondents agreed with the statement. The mean value for whether the respondents feel happy was recorded at 3.63 with standard deviation of 0.837 wherein 69.1 % of the respondents agreed to this statement.

The fifth dimension was to test customer engagement is interaction and the first question asked here was in general if the respondents liked to get involved with the brand community discussion and 69.7% of the respondents agreed. Also 68.5% respondents agreed that they really enjoy interacting with others in the brand community which recorded at mean value of 3.57. As from the average and standard deviation we dint get a clear picture so we also looked for the exact answer in mode statistical data because some places the standard deviation showed a lot of deviation from the mean. Mode means the number that appears most frequently in the data set. And the data set was numbered as flows in the likert scale. Numeric 1 was denoted for strongly disagree, 2 was denoted for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 was denoted for agree and 5 was denoted for strongly agree. From the theory of identification, it can be seen from the mode value which counts 4 that most respondents agree and identify with the brand. In the second dimension enthusiasm, here most of the respondents agree which shows a count of 4 and are enthusiastic about the brand but when asked do they spend most of their discretionary time thinking about the brand which shows a high dispersion in standard deviation so therefore we crossed check with the mode value count of 2 where the respondents disagree and show a bias answer in the theory of enthusiasm. The mode count was noted at 4 for absorption which depicts that the respondents agree and they absorb the data while only when asked when they interact with brand, they forget everything else around which a recorded a count of 2 mode value which shows the respondents disagree. A count of 4 the mode shows that in general, most respondents agree and like to get involved in brand community discussion.

7.5 Customer Satisfaction
Likert scale measurement and statistics of Customer Satisfaction

MEASURES	Strongly Disagree Freq (%)	Disagree Freq (%)	Neutral Freq (%)	Agree Freq (%)	Strongly Agree Freq (%)
I am satisfied with the communication efforts by the airline company.	3(1.8%)	11(6.7%)	27(16.4%)	116(70.3%)	7(16.4%)
I am satisfied with the customer engagement strategies adopted by the airline service provider.	6(3.6%)	12(7.3%)	27(16.4%)	113(68.5%)	6(3.6%)
I will surely travel in future with the same airline brand as.	1(.6%)	13(7.9%)	29(17.6%)	115(69.7%)	6(3.6%)

Mean, Standard deviation Values of customer satisfaction

MEASURES	MEAN	STD DEVIATION	MODE
I am satisfied with the communication efforts by the airline company.	3.60	0.823	4
I am satisfied with the customer engagement strategies adopted by the airline service provider.	3.62	0.824	4
I will surely travel in future with the same airline brand as I am completely satisfied.	3.68	0.698	4

The above table shows the findings and analysis of customer satisfaction towards their most preferred airline. The first question asked was if the respondents were satisfied with the communication efforts by the airline company it recorded at average mean of 3.60 with a standard deviation value of 0.823 which showed that for 70.3% of the respondents were satisfied with the communication efforts. To add 68.5% respondents were also satisfied with the customer engagement strategies adopted by the airline service provider. And at the end 69.7% of the respondents agreed that they will surely travel in future with the same airline brand and are completely satisfied. The mode value shows a count of more which means that majority of the respondents agree and are satisfied with the airline service provider.

8. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION
Findings in terms of Communication platform adopted by the airline services provider on social and non-social media

It was found that Indians made up the majority of respondents, and that Air India was their preferred airline, while Spice Jet was their least favorite. It's also worth noting that the majority of respondents were non-members, whereas just 46% of respondents were members. As it turns out, the majority of respondents still prefer to communicate with the airline via email and SMS. On social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, airlines transmit the fewest messages to respondents. Nevertheless, the survey reveals that respondents do follow airlines on social media sites.Overall, respondents were happy with communication,

with the majority stating that it was informative. The latest finding on communication engagement reveals that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the message they received since they receive regular updates from the airline.

Findings in terms of evaluation of customer engagement strategy adopted by the airline service provider.

The results of the survey show that respondents do identify with the company's image. When a brand is attacked, people react emotionally or are curious in what others think about it.

The study also revealed that while respondents are passionate about the brand, they don't want to spend a lot of their free time thinking about it, according to the results.Respondents are delighted when dealing with the brand, but they do not ignore everything else while interacting with the brand. Most respondents like interacting with their favourite brands and others in the brand community.Customers are generally loyal to the brand, according to research. The results suggest that respondents would like to retain their relationship with the airline service provider they prefer the most, according to the survey. They will have nothing but good things to say about the airline. If anybody asks for their opinion, they'll suggest this airline service provider. Respondents will urge their friends and family to do business with their favourite airline service provider, according to the survey.

Findings in terms of customer satisfaction as an important outcome

According to the findings, respondents are satisfied with the airline service provider's communication efforts. It is also discovered that respondents are pleased with the degrees of consumer interaction used. However, the data show that they are not completely pleased, therefore there is room for the airline service provider to come up with fresh offers and services to ensure that consumers are satisfied in the long term.This present study confirms that engaged customers are more likely to be loyal customers. Thus, in order to engage customers with the brand and gain a competitive advantage, marketing professionals should focus more on employing innovative customer engagement strategies as well as know the most influential variables driving customer engagement.

9. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

As with any study there are a few limitations in this research work that should be taken into consideration in future studies. In this study only univariate data analysis was done as a measurement tool whereas in future studies the statistical analysis can be done using Annova, regression analysis and t-test can be run to check the implication of communication strategies and also examine customer engagement levels with other variables like customer retention etc. In this study the statistical tool univariate analysis was limited to only descriptive statistics, in future studies the results and findings can also be drawn by using Annova and T- test analysis. In this research work the findings were drawn from 165 respondents and most of the respondents were based from Indian origin. In future the studies can also be conducted using more variables and respondents from different origins.

Customers' preferences for particular types of airlines might potentially be investigated in the future. To find out what the latest trends and strategies are that airlines are doing to keep their consumers engaged for a long time, a research may also be done. Airline service providers will be able to better understand what they need to do in order to make consumers regular flyers and pleased customers. Second, future studies should combine this construct of five dimensions employed in this study work with other constructs like as trust, commitment, and customer receptivity in order to get a deeper understanding of the idea of customer engagement strategies in the airline service industry.

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