

CUSTOMER EVALUATIONS IN AIRLINES SERVICE FAILURE
SITUATIONS:

AN ATTRIBUTIONAL APPROACH

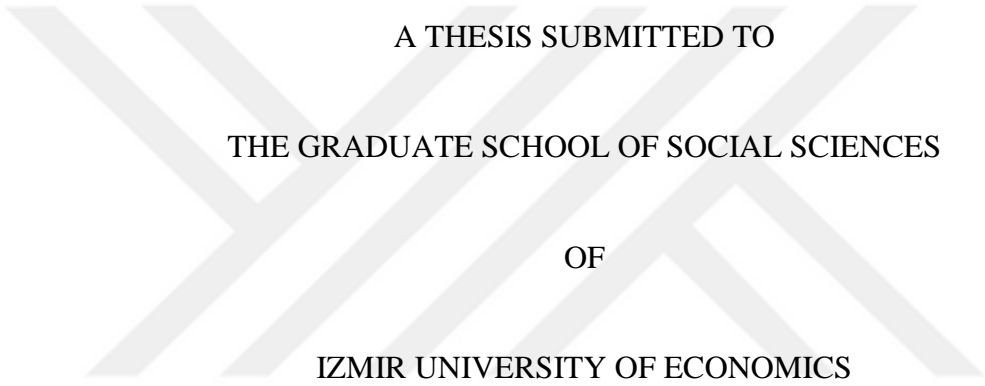


BİRCE DOBRUCALI

JUNE 2016

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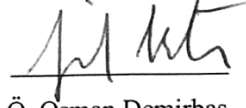
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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BİRCE DOBRUCALI

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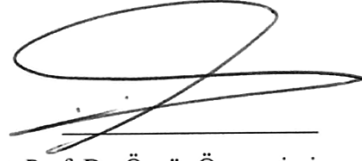
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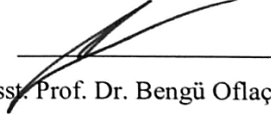
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ABSTRACT

CUSTOMER EVALUATIONS IN AIRLINES SERVICE FAILURE SITUATIONS: AN ATTRIBUTIONAL APPROACH

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June 2016

This thesis analyzes the roles of personality traits, passengers' loyalty typologies, and passengers' expectations in relation with business models of airlines, on two variables: attributions and repurchase intentions, following airline service failures.

Even though it is impossible to eliminate all failures in a service encounter because of their negative outcomes such as reduction/disappearance of repurchase intentions, airlines' strive at minimizing failures as much as possible. Hence, regarding cause of failure, it is important for airlines to analyze underlying subjective reasons, including personality traits, expectancies and attributional behaviors for minimizing the negative effects.

By analyzing survey results filled out by passengers, this study demonstrates the dynamics by which personality traits, loyalty typologies and expectancies of passengers affect attributions, and repurchase intentions.

Keywords: Airlines Service Failure, Expectancy Theory, Attribution Theory, Personality Traits, Airline Business Models, Repurchase Intentions, Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm, Cognitive Consistency Theory

ÖZET

HAVAYOLU HİZMET HATALARINDA MÜŞTERİ DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ: ATIF YAKLAŞIMI

Dobruçalı, Birce

Lojistik Yönetimi Yüksek Lisans, Lojistik Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yard. Doç. Dr. Bengü Oflaç

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Bu çalışma, havayolu yolcularının kişilik özelliklerinin, satınalma davranışlarının ve havayolu iş modellerine istinaden geliştirdikleri beklentilerin, yaşanan hizmet hataları sonucunda yolcuların atıf davranışlarına ve yeniden satınalma davranışlarına etkisini araştırmaktadır.

Hizmet sunumu sürecindeki hataların tümünü ortadan kaldırmak imkansız olsa da, bu hataların yeniden satınalma eğiliminin düşmesi ya da ortadan kalkması gibi olumsuz sonuçlar doğurmasından dolayı havayolu şirketleri hataları mümkün olduğunda en aza indirmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu nedenle, havayolu şirketleri için, hatalar sonucu ortaya çıkan olumsuz etkileri en aza indirgeyebilmek açısından, bu olumsuz etkilerin altında yatan karakter özellikleri, beklentiler ve atıf davranışları analiz etmek önem taşımaktadır.

Havayolu yolcuları tarafından yanıtlanan anketlerin analiz edilmesi sonucunda bu çalışma, yeniden satınalma davranışını kapsayan davranışsal amaçların ve atıf davranışlarının, karakter özellikleri, satınalma alışkanlıkları ve beklentiler gibi dinamikler tarafından etkilediğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Havayolu Hizmet Hataları, Beklenti Teorisi, Atf Teorisi, Kişilik Özellikleri, Havayolu İş Modelleri, Yeniden Satın Alma Davranışları, Beklentinin Onaylanmaması Kuramı, Bilişsel Tutarlılık Teorisi



To the memory of my grandfather



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I owe a debt of gratitude to my parents, Selma and Sedat Dobrucalı, for everything they did for me. My father's values, and unquestionable work ethic enlightened my way. His endless love and understanding is invaluable. I am also overwhelmingly grateful to my mother for her unconditional love, and all the sacrifices she has done for me. With their guidance, I became a strong woman. I am lucky to have them as my parents, and I am proud of being their daughter.

I appreciate my maternal grandparents, Münevver and Kadir Özotraç, who raised me, loved me and inspired me at every stage of my life. My grandmother's sacrifices, and faith in me made me a stronger person. I am dedicating this thesis to the memory of my grandfather. His tenacity, love for learning, and support enlightened my life. I want to emphasize that I am proud of being granddaughter of this honorable man. I know that he will always be watching me from up above and I hope that I can make him proud of me too. I am who I am because of their endless love and support, and their love and sacrifices are beyond any word of expression.

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Birce Dobrucalı

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI: Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index

AGR: Agreeableness

AVE: Average Variance Extracted

CFA: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CR: Composite Reliability

EXT: Extroversion

FCON: Flagship Airlines – Controllability Attributions

FEXP: Flagship Airlines – Expectations

FGA: Flagship Airlines – Generalizability Attributions

FNSA: Full Network Service Airlines

FRI: Flagship Airlines – Repurchase Intentions

FSHP: Flagship Airlines

FSTAB: Flagship Airlines – Stability Attributions

GFI: Goodness-of-fit Index

HBT: Habituality

LCC: Low Cost Carrier

LCON: Low Cost Carrier - Controllability Attributions

LEXP: Low Cost Carrier -Expectation

LGA: Low Cost Carrier - Generalizability Attributions

LRI: Low Cost Carrier -Repurchase Intentions

LSTAB: Low Cost Stability Attributions

LYL: Loyalty

NFI: Normed Fit Index

RMSR or RMR: Root Mean Square Residual

SEM: Structural Equation Modeling

SWC: Switching

TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction of the Main Concept and General Aims of the Study

In today's world, with increased mobility of the individuals, air transport has gained more importance due to the advantage of being the most time-saving medium of transportation. In the year 2014, the economic magnitude of the global airline industry reached USD 751 billion with 58 million employees (ATIG, 2015). Moreover, the total number of flights increased to 33.4 million, while total number of airline passengers reaching 3.31 billion (IATA, 2015).

The most rapid increase, in terms of number of airline passengers and air traffic, was expected in the Middle East countries, and in accordance with the expectations, Turkey tripled global average of sector growth rate by recording 14,5% growth (ATIG, 2015). Airline industry growth rate of Turkey is ranked as 7th in global competition, following China, US, India, Indonesia, Brazil and UK (IATA, 2015), providing the fact that airline transportation industry holds an important place for Turkish economy.

According to IATA's 2015 mid-year report, airline customers experienced increase in the value derived from air transport, benefited from lower fares due to lower oil prices, number of available destinations and flight frequencies. However, lower fares and increased options do not lower passenger' expectations regarding service quality. In addition, with Turkey's adaptation to the global spread of deregulation and globalization of aviation market in the year 1983, the civil aviation market in Turkey became more commercial and numbers of airline service providers has started to increase. Blended effects of deregulation and globalization of the industry and market conditions of today caused the competition between airline services providers toughen even more. Hence, companies have begun finding ways of differentiation from competitors and obtaining loyal customers. In accordance with this purpose, airlines offer frequent flyer programs, customized credit cards offering special lounge usage, and different in-flight services. However, due to the nature of the market, special loyalty programs and offers are not sufficient, especially for customers travelling to a destination to which more than one service

provider has flights with similar frequencies. At this point, customers consider previous experiences with the airlines (whether the customer experienced a service failure or not), and/or word-of-mouth information obtained from previous customers.

Due to the involvement of various customer interactions and/or the requirement of coordination among various service providers, eliminating all failures is considered as impossible (Vázquez-Casielles et al., 2007). Notwithstanding, service providers strive at minimizing failures as much as possible due to its critical results. A problem encountered in service industry may result in decreased repurchase intentions (Folkes et al., 1987), and consequently reduced profit ratios caused by expenses for replacing switched customers with new ones (Reichheld, 1996; Torres and Kline, 2006). Hence, even though service failure cannot be eliminated completely, service providers ought to analyze antecedents of customer reactions to service failures, in order to forecast results of any possible service failures.

This study explores the impact of service failures in the context of passenger airline transportation by considering customers' personality traits, purchasing habits, and expectancies in accordance with airline's business model on causal attributions and repurchase intentions.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to make contributions to the existing literature from three domains; conceptual, empirical, and managerial contributions.

Even though airline service failures are widely studied in service literature with the intention of building models that explain behavioral intentions following an airline service failure, this study focuses on the roles of personality traits, passengers' loyalty typologies and their expectations in relation with business models of airlines, and investigates their effects on attribution and repurchase intentions, following an airline service failure.

In the existing airline service failure literature, there exists a lack of understanding the role of personality aspects of passengers', their loyalty typologies

and expectations on their post-failure intentions following an airline service failure, and on attributions and behaviors. However, for taking either corrective or preventive actions, it is crucial for service providers to understand passengers and the altering causes that shape behavioral intentions.

Personality traits and loyalty typologies may affect attributions of passengers and their conjoint effect with the expectations for different airline business models can provide comprehension for the influences of service failures on repurchase intentions. This study also contributes to the awareness of the role of airlines' business models, the effect of attribution and loyalty typologies. By developing and examining the proposed research model both for low cost airlines and flagship airlines, this research is expected to provide more precise managerial implications for airline industry.

It is also important to understand consumers' attributions for airlines service failures. Passengers' expectations in accordance with airlines' business models, personality traits and loyalty typologies may alter the blame attributions. In this regard, this study contributes to the literature by redefining globality and universality attributions as generalizability attribution, and adapting its scale to service failure context.

The proposed research model contains several relationships that have not been previously tested and took place in the existing literature: 1) the direct effect of personality traits on blaming attributions in service encounter; 2) the difference in blaming attributions and repurchase intentions for different airline business models.

In regard to theory testing, the contribution of this study to the existing literature is expected to be two-fold. First, this research tests the empirical model in two airlines business models: flagship airlines and LCCs. Second, the study tests the relationships that have been examined in the past (i.e. the loyalty typologies-causal attributions; and causal attributions-repurchase intentions).

1.3. Research Questions

By simultaneously testing the effect of personality traits, expectations in relation with airlines' business model and loyalty typologies on causal attributions and repurchase intentions, four related research questions are also addressed:

RQ1: Following an airlines service failure, how do causal attributions effect repurchase intentions?

RQ2: Do repurchase intentions differ according to the airlines business models?

RQ3: Do expectations differ according to the airlines business models?

RQ4: Do attributions in regard to stability, controllability, and generalizability differ according to airlines business models?

RQ5: Do loyalty typologies, and personality traits have an influence on stability, controllability, and generalizability attributions?

RQ6: Do expectations have an influence on stability, controllability, and generalizability attributions?

RQ7: Do loyalty typologies have an influence on repurchase intentions?

RQ8: Do expectations have an influence on repurchase intentions?

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

Theoretical background starts with Chapter 2, in which services failures are explained from airlines perspective and factors affecting consumers' perception and responses are discussed. In addition to literature review on the categorization of services failures and provision of examples from the airlines service encounter, outcomes of failures are also discussed in this chapter. Moreover, literature review on independent variables of the study. Personality traits, loyalty typologies, expectancy theory, and passenger airline business models are explained within theoretical framework.

In Chapter 4, attribution theory and causal attribution dimensions are discussed in Cognitive Consistency Theory framework. Additionally, literature on Attribution Theory is reviewed in service failure context.

Chapter 5 includes hypotheses, methodology, characteristics of the survey participants, validity and reliability discussions, and statistical analyses. Besides, extensive explanations and review of literature on repurchase and word of mouth intentions are covered, and results of validity and reliability tests are explained.

Finally, Chapter 6 consists of discussion of the obtained results, their contribution to the existing literature, and practice. Furthermore, limitations of the study are explained, and recommendations for further research are provided.



CHAPTER – 2

SERVICE FAILURES IN AIRLINES CONTEXT AND FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION AND RESPONSES TO SERVICE FAILURES

2.1. Passenger Airline Business Models

Until 1970s, due to Chicago Convention, Article 5, a distinction among civil aviation service providers, could only be made between comprehensively regulated scheduled flights with granted exit and entry rights and non-scheduled flights with granted only overflight rights and the right of technical landing (German Aerospace Center, 2008). After 1970s, liberalization, deregulation and globalization of the aviation market in Europe resulted in the improvement of business models of low-cost carriers and full network service carriers (Ozenen, 2003; Vidovic et. al., 2013). With the global spread of this act, the aviation market became a more commercial environment. Thus, commercial collaborations started to show up and changed sectoral structure, and customers became the predominating force of the market (UBAK, 2010). Turkish civil aviation market has developed upon the entry law No.2920 of Civil Aviation Act into force in 1983, and within the same period, new airline service providers increased in number (Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication of Republic of Turkey, 2010).

After liberalization and deregulation, a distinction in terms of airline service provider business models came into existence. Within the passenger airline context, at the broadest level, there exists two airline business models; full network service airlines (FNSA), and low-cost carriers (LCC).

Full network service airlines offer a wide range of services to passengers, including multiple passenger classes (economy class, business class, first class etc.) and connected flights (Vidovic et al., 2013). In a similar vein, German Aerospace Center, defines FNSAs as; “Airlines that focus on providing a wide range of pre-flight and onboard services, including different service classes, and connecting flights” (German Aerospace Center, 2008). Due to their hub-and-spoke operation model, these airlines are also called “hub-and-spoke airlines” (Vidovic et al., 2013).

Core characteristics of FNSA include complex pricing structure, usage of primary airports, various class of seating (economic, business and first class), intensive usage of aircraft, free food and beverage delivery during flight, longer turnaround times and reliable customer service (O'connell, 2005; Williams, 2001).

Since in most cases, the flagship airlines, in other words national carriers, are representatives of traditional airlines (Turkish Airlines, British Airlines, Air France/KLM, Austrian Airlines etc.) (Vidovic et al., 2013) and they carry the characteristics of full network service carriers. Flagship airlines are defined as; airlines registered in a state, have privileges, are or were owned by the government, and hold their privileges even long after its privatization (Sull, 1999). Hence, it should be noted that all flagship carriers are FSNAs, whereas not all the FSNAs are flagship airlines even though both carry the same characteristics.

In spite of flagship airlines, low cost carriers (LCCs), in other words *budget* or *discount airlines*, focus on cost leadership strategy and offer low-priced flight option to passengers by delivering no frills service, reducing expenses and using secondary airports with cheaper landing charges (Hunter, 2006). Main characteristics of LCCs can be listed as; cost leadership strategy, shorter turnaround times, bundling food and beverage delivery during flight, single seating class option, high aircraft utilization, minimum cabin crew with lower wage scales, point to point service and no connections offered (Mason, 2000; Doganis, 2001; Williams, 2001; Francis et al, 2004; O'connell, 2005). Pegasus Airlines, Ryanair, EasyJet, and Debonair can be counted as successful examples of LCC.

LCCs and Flagship airlines carry different characteristics in terms of marketing strategy, pricing strategy, operation model, product bundling, customer service, brand extension, operational activities, alliances, segmentation, and turnaround times. Characteristics which denominate the difference between low cost carriers and flagship airlines are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences between Low Cost Carriers and Flagship Airlines

| | LCCs | Flagship Airlines |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Brand | One brand: low fare | Brand extensions: fare and services |
| Marketing Strategy | Cost Leadership | Differentiation |
| Pricing Strategy | Low priced | Complex pricing strategy |
| Operation Model | Point to point, No connection | Hub and spoke/ Multi hub and spoke |
| Operational Activities | Focus on core activity | Extended: i.e. Maintenance, Cargo |
| Alliances | Not observed | Key strategic dimension |
| Product Bundling | Unbundled air services | Bundled air services |
| Airports | Mostly secondary airports | Primary airports |
| Class Segmentation | One seating class option | Various classes of seating |
| Turnaround Time | Short | Long |
| Customer Service | Generally underperforms | Reliable |

Source: Hunter, 2006; O'Connell and Williams, 2005; O'connell, 2005; Williams, 2001; Doganis, 2001; Mason, 2000; Francis et al, 2004

2.2. Airlines Service Failures

Service failure is defined as an occasion where a customer perceives a problem with service (Spreng et al., 1995; Palmer et al., 2000). Hess et al. (2003) explained service failure as the case where the provided service lacks the capability of meeting the expectation of customers.

Expectancy disconfirmation model states that the satisfaction of customers is dependent on their expectations, actualized performance, and disconfirmation of expectations and performance (Smith and Bolton, 2002). When considered from expectancy disconfirmation framework, failure may also be defined as a negative difference between expectation and actualized performance.

According to Bitner et al. (1990), service failures may be perceived by customers in numerous ways, such as slow service, delivery errors and service unavailability. In airlines context, various situations ranging from flight cancellation due to weather conditions to check- in officer's behavior towards passenger may be interpreted as a service failure. To put it another way, a service failure can be defined

as the case where customer's expectations cannot be met by the service provider (Lewis and McCann, 2004). Even though service providers struggle to achieve service quality by preventing failures, due to the existence of elements that are uncontrollable, such as customers, weather and unpredictable behaviors of employees, it is impossible to eliminate service failures (Lewis and Clacher, 2001).

Bitner et al. (1990) analyzes service failures by categorizing failure cases according to employee behaviors in regard to (1) fail in the core service, (2) fail to respond to the requests for specialized service, and (3) unacceptable employee actions encounter. In the first category, it is emphasized that the employee's approach to passengers in case of a failure in the core service, in this case flight, determines the perception of the passenger, and in accordance with employee's approach the passenger either evaluates the situation as a failure or not. Secondly, consumers expect the fulfillment of their special requests as long as they are legal and possible. For instance, if, despite the existence of vacant seats in business class, a stewardess rejects the demand of a passenger to move from economy class to business class due to the need of a larger space, passenger may evaluate the situation as a service failure. Thirdly, if an employee behaves in an unexpected way (rudeness, discrimination, inattentiveness) customers may perceive and evaluate the case as a failure. In further researches, problematic customers (Bitner et al., 1994), and policy failures (Hoffman et al., 1995) were added to this framework.

Johnston (1994) put forward the fact that the source of service failures may either be attributed to the service provider, or to customer. In the case where passenger buys an airline ticket to the wrong destination, the failure may be attributed to the customer. On the other hand, if the case is the cancellation of flight, the failure may be attributed to the airlines.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) identified two dimensions regarding service encounters; process dimensions and outcome dimensions. Failures regarding process dimension of a service encounter include the way of delivery of the core service such as misbehavior of a stewardess. Failures regarding the fulfillment of the core service are defined as outcome failures, like flight delays. According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), outcome dimension is the primary driver of

consumer evaluations. Therefore, it can be mentioned that outcome failures have more influence on passengers while evaluating the service.

Failures were examined under three dimensions by Armistead et al. (1995): customer error, service provider error, and associated organization error. Customer errors refer to the failures associated with actions customers take such as arriving later than check-in time. On the other hand, service provider errors denote failures associated with service providers such as lost luggage. Finally, failures caused by associated organizations include cases such as flight cancellation due to air traffic controllers' strike.

Consequently, service failures may be encountered in any dimension of service including communication difficulties, problems regarding the relationship between employees and consumers, and equipment and information systems errors (Lewis and Clacher, 2001), and may be examined from various conceptual frameworks by categorization.

2.3. Outcomes of Service Failures

Even though it is possible to recover service failures through a recovery process, by failing to fulfill promises given to customers, the relationship between customers and service providers gets damaged (Grönroos, 1990). Following a service failure, customers' reaction mainly include loyalty, exit, and voice (Ashraf et al., 2013).

The post-failure process begins when customers evaluate the consumed service, and ends with completion of both behavioral and/or non-behavioral reactions to the failure (Day, 1980). According to Kim et al. (2010), service failures act as a starting point for series of actions, and are followed respectively by customers' evaluation of the service failure, complaining behavior, and finally service recovery.

Singh (1988) examined customer reactions to service failures under three categories; (1) private responses (e.g., decrease in repurchase intentions, involvement in negative-WOM), (2) voice responses (e.g., asking for recovery), and

(3) third-party response (e.g., suing the service provider). Private responses either may be observed in customer's behaviors or may be directed to individuals around such as family, friends and colleagues. Voice responses are mainly being directed to service providers in order to obtain a recovery. On the other hand third-party responses are being directed to organizations that are not involved in service failure process such as courts. Since private responses to service failures is the hardest one to be recognized in short-term by service providers, this study investigates private responses with the aim of providing a useful insight for airline service providers.

In addition, it was found that service failures found to be result in dissatisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000), difficulty in customer retention (Rust and Zahorik, 1993), and consequently in decreased profit ratios (Rust et al., 1995). Moreover, it is stated that a consumer needs to have twelve positive experiences with a service provider in order to overcome negative effects of a single bad experience with the given service provider (Smith and Bolton, 1998).

2.4. Cognitive Consistency Theory

Cognition refers to a belief, an opinion, attitude or knowledge regarding something (Aronson, 2004; Littlejohn & Foss, 2005; O'Keefe, 2002). On the other hand, consistency is defined as harmony, balance and equilibrium (Brown et al., 2005). Starting from definitions of cognition and consistency, cognitive consistency may be explained as state of balance/harmony/equilibrium in opinions, attitude or knowledge regarding something – experiences, oneself, other people, substances etc.

Consistency theories appeared in the psychology literature in 1950s (Feldman, 1966) and reviewed under various names such as; cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), balance theory (Heider, 1958), and congruity theory (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). In spite of differences in their names, all these theories attempted to explain individuals' tendency of behaving in such a way to minimize internal inconsistency among social relationships, beliefs, feelings and actions (Feldman, 1966). In the broadest sense, cognitive consistency theory

suggests that individuals are seeking for consistency between attitudes and cognitions (Abelson, 1968; Yen et al., 2004).

Cognitive dissonance theory put forth by Festinger (1957) explores consumers' tendency to justify decisions post hoc. According to cognitive dissonance theory, in cases where consumption experience falls behind expectation of consumers, cognitive dissonance occurs (Yi and La, 2004). The degree of cognitive dissonance is dependent upon; (1) importance of the concern, (2) time spent on making a choice between two equally attractive option, (3) difficulty of reversing the decision, (4) attractiveness of the chosen alternative, (5) attractiveness of the refused alternative, (6) degree of similarity/difference between alternatives, and (7) number of options considered (Rice, 1997; Littlejohn and Foss, 2005; Griffin, 2006).

In the light of these consistency theories, it may be stated that, following a service failure, customers holding high expectations from service provider feel dissonance, and show tendency to justify service failure which is inconsistent with their beliefs. In order to preserve cognitive consistency, or in other words for providing equilibrium again for states of cognitive disequilibrium, consumers prefer vindicating service failure. In this study, it is assumed that following an airlines service failure, passengers' expectations will result in cognitive dissonance, and thus, passengers holding high expectations will show tendency to justify service failures.

Due to previously stated substantial differences between LCCs and flagship airlines, and individuals' tendency to minimize internal inconsistency, this study assumes that passengers' expectations, their attributions regarding the cause of the service failure and repurchase intentions following a service failure will be different from each other.

In relation with high ticket fares, differentiation strategy, and alliance membership of flagship airlines, passengers are expected to have higher expectations from flagship airlines, when compared with LCCs. Based on higher expectations from flagship airlines, passengers are expected to attribute failure to less stable causes for flagship airlines in order to provide cognitive consistency by justifying failure by attributing to a temporary cause for flagship airlines, and stable

cause for LCCs. In addition, passengers are expected to attribute failure to more stable causes for LCCs in order to retaining cognitive consistency balance. On the other hand, due to lower expectations from LCCs in relation with cost leadership strategy, and low ticket fares, passengers are expected to attribute failure to a more controllable, and non-generalizable cause for LCCs than for flagship airlines. Consequently, following a service failure, passengers are predicted to balance their cognitive consistency by ignoring the failure, keep expectation levels unchanged for the next purchase, and have higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines than for LCCs.

H1: Passengers have hold higher expectations for flagship airlines than for LCCs.

H2: Passengers perceive causes of LCC service failures to be more stable than causes of flagship airlines service failures.

H3: Passengers tend to perceive causes of LCC service failures to be more controllable than causes of flagship airlines service failures.

H4: Passengers tend to perceive causes of flagship airlines service failures to be more generalizable than causes of LCC service failures.

H5: Following a service failure, passengers have higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines than for LCCs.

2.5. Personality Traits

Personality traits are the basic psychological constructs that constitute individuals' personality (Harris and Mowen, 2001), and mainly expressed as enduring, cross-situational constancies in behavioral and response patterns of individuals (McCrae, 2009). These patterns have been used or analyzed in several academic studies and every study made distinctive contributions to the understanding of personal differences in behavior and experience (John and Srivastava, 1999).

First attempt for creating a shared taxonomy was made by Allport and Odbert (1936), by collecting around 18,000 trait adjectives from English dictionary which are used for describing individuals' behaviors that distract them from others and categorizing them into four main groups; personality traits, temporary states and moods, evaluative judgements of personal conduct and reputation, and physical characteristics and talents (John and Srivastava, 1999). Cattell (1943), used 4,500 traits from Allport and Odbert's list and by using semantic and clustering procedures, reduced them to 35 variables. Fiske (1949), constructed a simpler description by using 22 variables from Cattell and resembled commonly referred big-five factors of personality traits. Later, Tupes and Christal (1961) reanalyzed Cattell's (1957) bipolar variables (Goldberg, 1992). Personality traits were organized in hierarchical order, and at the broadest level psychologists identified five common traits, namely; agreeableness; openness to experience or intellect, imagination, or culture; extraversion or surgency, neuroticism; and conscientiousness or will to achieve (Carlo et.al., 2004). Even though there exists a dispute over the existing number of cardinal personality traits (e.g., Allport, 1961; Block, 1995), since the early 1960s, the five-factor model (FFM) had been widely recognized by psychologists (Tupes and Christal, 1992; Matzler et.al., 2005).

Within the context of five-factor model, extroversion refers to being sociable, cheerful and energetic (Mooradian and Swan, 2006), and distinguished by affiliation, positive affectivity, supremacy and ambition (Matzler et.al, 2005). Extraverts tend to reflect their emotions to other individuals in response to stressors (David and Suls, 1999). Additionally, extraversion facilitates the pursuit of pleasurable experience and individuals who score low on extraversion tend to be reserved, retiring and cautious (Roccas et. al, 2002).

In the same context, agreeableness refers to being straightforward, helpful, and trustful (David and Suls, 1999). Agreeable individuals are mainly described as pleasant, likeable, warm and considerate by others (Graziano and Tobin, 2009). While agreeable individuals mainly tend to be good-natured, gentle and cooperative, and attach importance to motivational goals of conformity and traditional values, individuals who score low on agreeableness tend to be suspicious, irritable and inflexible (Roccas et.al, 2002).

The personality traits of agreeableness and extroversion both represent socially oriented personality types (Ferguson et.al, 2009), related with support seeking (Amirkhan et.al., 1995) and subjective wellbeing (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998). Hence, in marketing context, personality traits of consumers have been examined in numerous aspects, such as customer satisfaction (Matzler et.al, 2005), dissatisfaction (Stephens and Gewinner, 1998), post-purchase behavior (Mooradian and Oliver, 1997), WOM (Ferguson et.al, 2009) and repurchase intentions (Preis, 2003; Gountas and Goutas, 2006).

There are some researches that examine the relationship between personality traits and social-cognitive processing variables, such as causal attributions (Rigby and Huebner, 2005). The most important research regarding this framework was conducted by Mitchell (1989), in which the fact that extroversion is found to be positively related with attribution styles for positive events, whereas negatively correlated for negative events is stated. Further, Cheng and Furnham (2001) found a consistent and statistically significant relationship between attribution styles (in terms of being positive or negative) and extroversion. Moreover, Rigby and Huebner (2005) concluded that there exists a negative relationship between negative attribution styles and extroversion. Mahasneh et al. (2013), explain this relationship on the basis of extroverts' optimism and their positive view of self, others and life. Due to positive affectivity characteristics of extroverts (Matzler et al., 2005) and extroverts' attribution styles for negative events, this research predicts that extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability and controllability attributions both for LCCs and flagship airlines.

H6.a: In flagship airline service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attribution.

b: In LCC service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attribution.

H7.a: In flagship airline service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability attribution.

b: In LCC service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability attribution.

Despite the insufficient attempts that take place in literature, a little attention has been given to the relationship between big five personality traits and causality attributions. Particularly, the relationship between agreeableness and blaming attributions in service encounter from service failure perspective has not been extensively examined.

John (1990) indicated the fact that adjective “forgiving” is associated with agreeableness. Moreover, Ashton et al. (1998) found that agreeableness is positively correlated with both empathy and forgiveness. Since agreeable individuals have tendency to be gentle, and good-natured (Roccas et.al, 2002), and agreeableness has a positive correlation with empathy and forgiveness (Ashton et al.,1998), this research predicts that agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability, and negative influence on controllability and stability. Agreeable passengers are expected to feel sympathy towards the service provider, and thus consider the cause as uncontrollable and temporary, and show tendency to not to interpret the cause as a specific, unique cause both for LCCs and flagship airlines.

H8.a: In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attribution.

b: In LCC service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attribution.

H9.a: In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on stability attribution.

b: In LCC service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on stability attribution.

H10.a: In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attribution.

b: In LCC service failures, agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attribution.

2.6. Loyalty Typologies

Gremler and Brown (1996) defined loyalty in services context by mentioning three components: the purchase, attitude, and cognition, as; the degree to which consumers re-patronize from a specific service provider, hold an attitudinal tendency to this provider, and consider using only this specific service provider when a need for this service arises. In a similar vein, Oliver (1997) identified loyalty as a deep commitment of re-patronizing a preferred product or service consistently from the same supplier despite situational influences.

Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) classified customer loyalty into three perspectives; behavioral, attitudinal and composite perspective. Behavioral perspective defines loyalty by solely taking consistent repeat purchase behavior and purchase history of customers into consideration (Knox and Walker, 2001; Zins, 2001). On the other hand, attitudinal perspective describes loyalty by revealing customers' knowledge, emotional and mental structures, and psychological commitment, hence shaping customers' behavior (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993; Knox and Walker, 2001; Zins, 2001). Composite perspective, on the other hand, is blending both behavioral and attitudinal perspectives and puts forward four types of loyalty as; true, latent, spurious and low loyalty (Day, 1969). In this context, Knox (1996) identified four loyalty typologies, namely; loyals, habituals, variety seekers, and switchers. These four customer bases of organizations can be summarized as follows;

- *Loyals:* Committed customers who are involved in purchase and relationship, and mainly buy products or services from a narrow portfolio. Loyal customers tend to have a positive attitude towards a company or brand (Mandina, 2014).
- *Habituals:* Routine buyers with indifference in choice, who mainly buy products or services from a narrow portfolio. Habituals make

their buying decisions based on brand familiarity and keep on patronizing same brand out of habit (Assael, 1992).

- *Variety Seekers*: Customers who purchase products or services for different usage occasions and frequencies. They actively search for products or services and/or multiple sourcing, and buy products or services from a wide portfolio (Knox, 1998). In addition, variety seeking behavior is explained by experiential and/or hedonic motives instead of utilitarian ones (Hans et. al., 1996).
- *Switchers*: Customers who seek discounts and deals from a wide portfolio and do not feel any attachment to any brand or provider (Knox, 1998).

Possession of loyal customers, especially loyals and habituals, is of capital importance for organizations due to its influence on profits, hence widely discussed in scientific researches. In addition to increase in profits, other identified benefits include; positive word of mouth, increases in the value and number of purchases, and being less costly than attracting new customers (Gwinner et al., 1998; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2002). In a similar manner, Reichheld (1996) summarized benefits of loyalty for organizations under four titles; decreased cost of serving, and price sensitivity, positive recommendation of the organization and increase in time spent with the organization.

Since whether or not holding a sustainable competitive advantage in the services industry is dependent on customer loyalty, airlines are placing great emphasis on customer relationship management (CRM) (Chen and Hu, 2013). Frequent flyer programs can be mentioned as the best example of airlines' loyalty programs. For instance, considering the current competitive environment, Turkish Airlines offers various advantages to its customers with different loyalty degrees through four separate Miles&Miles frequent flyer cards. Main advantages of the frequent flyer program includes; award tickets, special toll-free phone numbers for customer service, last minute upgrade, free excess luggage, waiting lounges offering free food and beverage, reservation and boarding priority, meal selection etc. By offering very similar programs, the industry is attaching more importance to customer loyalty.

Oliver (1997) defined loyalty as a commitment to repatronize a good/service consistently, despite situational influences and efforts of marketing to cause switching behavior. Yi and La (2004) strengthened Oliver's statement by revealing the fact that expectation disconfirmation, or in other words information processing regarding to the current consumption, has less impact on loyal customers in terms of repurchase intentions, than non-loyal customers, and there is a tendency of loyal customers to perceive the failure as an episodic failure rather than a lasting problem. Moreover, Garbarino and Johnson (1999) found that existing trust and commitment affect future intentions for loyal customers. For airlines service encounter, it is predicted that loyalty has the same impact on consumers' repurchase intentions both for LCCs and flagship airlines, since the description of loyalty behavior emphasize the fact that situational factors and marketing efforts of other suppliers remain incapable to make loyal customers switch to another supplier. Hence, this research predicts that loyalty has positive impact on repurchase intention following a service failure.

H11.a: In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has positive influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In LCC service failures, loyalty has positive influence on repurchase intentions.

According to Tam et al. (2009), habits are performed in the absence of evaluations and habituals tend to repeat past purchase without consulting their intentions. In this regard, Aarts et al. (1998) put forward the fact that if an individual performs a behavior out of habit, there would be no need to perform reasoning. Moreover, Tuu et al. (2010) highlighted the existence of several researches indicating the fact that; as frequency of past behavior increases, the strength of satisfaction-repurchase relationship decreases. Thus, it may be noted that dissatisfaction resulting from a service failure may not affect repurchase intentions of passengers who have chosen that specific airlines service provider out of habit, and without performing a reasoning habituals may keep on re-patronizing that airlines. In airlines service failure context, it is predicted that, independently of

airlines' business model, habitual passengers will continue patronizing the same airlines even after experiencing a service failure.

H12.a: In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In LCC service failures, habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions.

In the existing service failure literature, switching behavior is mainly searched in the context of switching tendency after a failure, however, switching behavior is not examined as an antecedent of repurchase intentions following a failure. According to Moisescu (2006), switchers show no loyalty to any brand, and thus have tendency to switch brand with almost any buying situation. In addition, Knox (1998) claims that switchers do not feel any attachment to any provider. On the basis of these facts, this research assumes a negative correlation between switching behavior and repurchase intentions, and predicts that both flagship and LCC passengers who score high in switching (who are non-loyal customers) will have a decreased repurchase intention following a negative event, a service failure.

H13.a: In flagship airlines service failures, switching has negative influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In LCC service failures, switching has negative influence on repurchase intentions.

According to Yi and La (2004), the process regarding evaluation of a good/service differs for loyal and non-loyal customers. Mittal and Katrichis (2000) found that importance of attributions are different for loyal customers and non-loyals. Therefore, loyalty typologies are assumed to have different effects on causal attributions.

Commitment to re-patronize a good manufacturer or a service provider forms an accumulated experiential knowledge to a specific manufacturer/provider so that loyal customers show tendency to trust (Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000). Moreover, this experiential knowledge is being accompanied by high confidence level to the manufacturer/service provider (Yi and La, 2004). Concordantly, when loyal customers face with situations that are disconfirming with their beliefs, they show tendency to perceive causes of such situations as temporary, and uncontrollable (Fournier, 1998). Loyal customers found to perceive the cause of negative events to be ungeneralizable (Choi and Cai, 2010). However, on the contrary of this research which blends globality and universality attributions, Choi and Cai (2010) solely considered globality attributions of tourists and defined it as generalizability of a specific failure for all destinations. For airlines service encounter, this research assumes that loyalty has a positive influence on generalizability of an airlines service failure for all passengers and all airlines. In accordance with these facts, it is assumed that, independent from of airlines' business model, loyalty has negative influence on controllability and stability attributions, whereas it has positive influence on generalizability attribution following an airlines service failure.

H14.a: In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has negative influence on controllability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, loyalty has negative influence on controllability attributions.

H15.a: In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions.

H16.a: In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has positive influence on generalizability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, loyalty has positive influence on generalizability attributions.

Even though the existing literature remains incapable of explaining the relationship between habituality and causal attributions in service failure context, it is possible to make assumptions based on the similarities of, and differences between loyalty and habituality. Both loyalty and habituality result in high spending, high patronage frequency and low brand switching tendencies (Wood and Nael, 2007; Liu-Thompkins and Tam, 2013). Due to these characteristics, marketers generally tend to treat these loyalty typologies in the same way (Liu-Thompkins and Tam, 2013). Despite the overall tendency to treat these two loyalty typologies, there exists an important difference between habituality and loyalty. Loyalty is built upon accumulated experiential knowledge and trust (Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000), whereas habits are performed without reasoning and in absence of evaluations (Tam et al., 2009). Concordantly, it is predicted that passengers who patronize a specific airlines out of habit are expected to perceive the negative event to be associated with a temporary, and uncontrollable cause. In other words, in a similar vein with the loyalty case, habituality is expected to have negative influence on controllability and stability attributions. On the other hand, since habituals are patronizing a specific provider without reasoning and evaluation of past experiences with the given provider, a negative experience may cause them to perceive failure to be associated with an ungeneralizable cause. The lack of being built-upon-trust relationship between the provider and passenger may cause passenger to perceive the failure to be due to a specific cause. Accordingly, this study assumes that habituality has negative influence on controllability and stability attributions, whereas it has negative influence on generalizability attributions.

H17.a: In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on controllability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, habituality has negative influence on controllability attributions.

H18.a: In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on stability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, habituality has negative influence on stability attributions.

H19.a: In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions.

b: In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions.

Switching is used as a measure to determine loyalty degree, and stated to have a negative relationship with loyalty (Raju et al., 1990). Since switchers do not feel any attachment to any brand or service provider (Knox, 1998), this type of customers are categorized as non-loyal customers in the literature. According to Kwon and Jang (2012), non-loyal customers have low confidence in relation with short period of past experiences with a service provider, consequently are highly sensitive to failures and tend to believe that failures are controllable. Moreover, Choi and Cai (2010) stated that attributing the cause of a failure to unstable causes and consider it as a temporary cause is a tendency shown by loyal customers. Starting from this point of view, this research anticipates existence of a positive influence of switching behavior on controllability and stability attributions both for LCCs and flagship airlines.

H20.a: In flagship airlines service failures, switching has a positive influence on controllability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, switching has a positive influence on controllability attributions.

H21.a: In flagship airlines service failures, switching has a positive influence on stability attributions.

b: In LCC service failures, switching has a positive influence on stability attributions.

2.7. Expectancy Theory

Expectation is a belief or an estimation regarding the input's result in a certain level of performance (Teas, 1981). Customer expectation may also be defined as individualistic standards against which quality of received service is judged (McDougall and Levesque, 1998). Swan and Trawick (1980) named these individualistic standards as "desired expectations", and defined as performance level for which customer wanted. Along similar lines, Miller (1977) termed customers' "wished for" performance level as "ideal expectations".

Customer expectations drew wide attention and sizably discussed in various research settings, mainly under customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (CS/D), and service quality literature. According to disconfirmation model, customers judge their expectations of how service should be performed against the actual, delivered service (Oliver, 1993). Customer expectations have direct effect on customer satisfaction (Anderson, 1994), since in determining satisfaction, CS/D provides an adjustment over the base that customer expectations built (Oliver, 1980). There exists two approaches for defining customer expectations in CS/D approach; expectations-as-predictions and expectations-as-ideal. Expectations-as-predictions approach defines expectations as customers' prediction regarding probabilities of the existence of positive and/or negative events during transaction (Oliver, 1981; Zeithaml, 1993 et al.).

Customers' expectations of a service is either determined before the first transaction with the company (through WOM or advertisements), or determined by personal experience from previous encounters with the company (Davis and Heineke, 1998). Other contributing factors are service provider's image (Grönroos, 1984), and promises (Zeithaml et al., 1993).

Since customer-perceived service improvements enhance and explain organizations' profitability better than quality focused attitude (Buzzell and Gale, 1987), customer perceptions and expectations holds an important place for service

providers. In the airline industry, understanding expectations of customers is crucial for meeting customers' desired service quality (Gilbert and Wong, 2003).

Wittman (2014) stated that LCC passengers hold lower expectations regarding to quality of received service because they have paid less for tickets. In a similar vein, Bhadra (2009) has put forth the fact that expectations regarding level of service and ticket fares have a positive relationship, and full network service carrier passengers, who pay more for their tickets, have higher expectations. Therefore, hypotheses regarding the relationships of expectation, repurchase intention, and expectation, causal attributions are developed separately in order to see the differences among these relationships that arise from different airlines business models.

Flagship airlines passengers are expected to have high expectations for flagship airlines with reference to fact that expectations and ticket fares have a positive relationship (Bhadra, 2009). Thus, following a flagship airlines service failure passengers are expected to acquit flagship airlines in order to ensure cognitive consistency. Vindication of flagship airlines is expected to result in repatronization of given flagship carrier in the future. Therefore, this study assumes that following a flagship airlines service failures, expectations will have a positive influence on repurchase intentions.

H22.a: In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has positive influence on repurchase intentions.

When the perceived performance falls short of expectations, disconfirmation occurs (Oliver, 1977). In this context, expectations play a vital role, due to the fact that disconfirmation of expectations have critical consequences such as decreased repurchase intentions as a result of dissatisfaction (Spector, 1956; Anderson et al., 1993). Therefore, this study assumes that following LCC service failures, higher expectations results in decreased repurchase intentions. In other words, it is assumed that in LCC service failures, expectations have negative influence on repurchase intentions.

H22.b: In LCC service failures, expectation has negative influence on repurchase intentions.

The relationship between expectations and service performance evaluation is suggested both by the disconfirmation paradigm, and service quality literature, and it is put forward that generated reference points for determining expectations have an impact on causal attributions regarding service failures (Yen et al., 2004). In a similar vein, Boulding et al. (1993) stated the fact that an individual's expectations affect the way they perceive the reality. Consequently, it can be stated that expectations in relation with airlines' business model have different type of relationship with causality dimensions regarding service failure.

In accordance with the positive relationship between ticket fares and level of expectations (Bhadra, 2009; Wittman, 2014), flagship airlines passengers are expected have higher expectations for service experience. According to cognitive consistency theory, with a desire of balance between attitudes and cognitions, they interpret data in such a way to reinforce their attitudes (Ajzen et al., 1979; Yen et al., 2004). Moreover, high expectations serve as buffer in cases of poor service experience (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Boulding et al., 1993). Thus, following a service failure, consumers who entered the encounter with high expectations ignore data which is inconsistent with their expectations, and be less likely to attribute failure to the service provider (Yen et al., 2004). In the light of these facts, this study assumes that in flagship airlines service failures, expectations will have a negative influence on stability, and controllability attributions.

H23.a: In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has a negative influence on stability attributions.

H24.a: In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has a negative influence on controllability attributions.

Oliver (1981) suggested that customers' level of expectation acts as a baseline for formation of judgements. Starting from this point, it can be assumed

that consumers' attributes regarding cause of a negative event, such as a service failure, is being formed around their expectations. When a LCC falls behind expectation of passengers, and thus expectancy disconfirmation occurs, passengers are expected to show tendency to attribute failure to causes related with LCC. Therefore, it is expected that following a LCC service failure, expectations will have a positive influence on stability and controllability attributions.

H23.b: In LCC service failures, expectation has a positive influence on stability attributions.

H24.b: In LCC service failures, expectation has a positive influence on controllability attributions.

CHAPTER – 4

CONSUMERS' ATTRIBUTIONAL APPROACH TO SERVICE FAILURES

4.1. Attribution Theory

In social psychology literature, attribution has two main denotations as; (1) explanation of the reason of a behavior, (2) inferences or ascriptions, and both denotations include an assigning process, as in (1) occurrence is assigned to a cause, and in (2) quality is assigned to the actor on the basis of an observed behavior (Malle, 2011). Attribution theory deals with individual's perceptions of cause-and-effect relationships, and the correlation between consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Folkes, 1988). In other words, attribution theory focuses on explanation of the reason of an event's, a state's, or an outcome's occurrence and the consequences of causality (Weiner, 2000). Causal attributions league together and form underlying factors, and subsequently these factors form causal factors that allows greater understanding (Cort et al., 2007). Based on the causal attribution, individual's inferences about themselves or their environment can be predicted (Mizerski, 1978). In brief, attribution theory focuses on individual's causal explanations in regard to their own behavior and others' actions, particularize underlying factors that stimulate them to examine causally relevant information, examines the way of processing information to relate the causes to the occurrences and the cognitive and behavioral consequences (Monson and Snyder, 1977).

Attribution theory was first revealed with Heider's (1958) book titled as "The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations", which intended to discover the linkage of common sense concepts, including terms, such as "intend", "want", "can", "ought", used by individuals for describing behavior of individuals (Malle and Ickes, 2000). Moreover, Heider stated the importance of understanding individuals' explanations of the world, and divided causes into two categories namely as; personal causes and environmental or situational causes (Folkes, 1988). Heider's combination of empirical observation and conceptual, and linguistic analysis was a milestone in the literature (Malle and Ickes, 2000).

Even though the attribution theory was first revealed by Heider (1958), the theory caught wide attention with the research of Kelley (1967) on the analysis of the attribution process (Weiner, 2000). Kelly aimed to highlight the choice between internal and external attributions, and procedure of inferring these attributions. By putting covariance model in forth, Kelley (1967) intended to develop a method for analyzing individual's cognitive procedure by which a choice is made. Kelley (1973) unveiled that sorts of causal inferences originate from multifaceted configurations of events reshaping over time, across circumstances, and individuals.

Jones and Davis (1965) concerned about antecedents of attributing intentions or dispositions, following an action. The research introduced Dispositional Inference Theory, specifying circumstances under which perceiver infers a stable disposition, such as a personality trait or attitude, from an actor's behavior. The authors aimed to elucidate perceiver's illations about the intention of an actor in a specific action and the process of finding adequate reasons for actor's action, since the perceiver's explanation halts when an intention is assigned to be reasonable.

Weiner (1972, 1974), expanded Heider's single dimensional (internal and external) taxonomy by adding novel causal dimensions such as stability and controllability, and Kelly's model served as a basis for Weiner's classification. In posterior research, Weiner (2000) argued that product purchases conclude attainments either with positive or negative attributional conclusion, and this conclusion influences consumer-related behavior prior to the next choice, especially after a failure. Besides, Weiner (2000) claimed that expectancies after repeated positive or negative experiences are hard to change, therefore expectancy from a future purchase will be little changed, and this mechanism is responsible for loyalty.

4.2. Causal Attribution Dimensions

Classification of causes in accordance with their causal properties is built upon the base created by Rotter's (1996) research in which individuals are categorized as internals and externals. Based on Rotter's research, Heider (1958), put forth the fact that any occurrence in environment may lead individuals to search for causes basically by making distinction as internal (personal) causes and external

(environmental) causes. Once locus dimension has arrived to the literature, Weiner et al. (1971) put forward that a second dimension is required due to the inability of locus of causality dimension in differentiating internal and stable causes from internal and unstable causes and/or external and unstable causes from external and stable causes. The identification of this fact revealed stability dimension. Following the study of Weiner et al. (1971), Rosenbaum (1972) suggested that a third dimension, controllability, is required since individuals have control over the effort expenditure. Rajeski and Brawley (1983) criticized existing perspective on attribution and mentioned the need for broader conceptual approach. Subsequently, Rees et al. (2005) have proposed dimensions of globality and universality.

Locus is the extent to which a cause is located in the customer or in the seller/manufacturer (Folkes, 1984, Hess et al., 2003). When a failure occurs, the cause of the failure may be seller/manufacturer related (i.e. selling the same seat on a plane to two different passengers), or buyer related (i.e. cancelling a flight ticket before few hours remaining to flight and not getting money return due to policy of airlines allowing only full fee refund for cancellations before 48 hours before the flight).

Weiner (1980), defines stability dimension as the evaluation of causes either as temporary or permanent over time. In other words, stability can be explained as the extent to which a cause is perceived as variable over time or enduring over time (Hess et al., 2003). Failures with enduring causes occur more frequently, and influence consumers' expectations regarding future performance of firms (Folkes 1984; Weiner, 2000).

The third dimension, controllability refers to making causal distinction between failures that are under volitional control and are constrained (Folkes, 1984). Controllability is customers' belief regarding whether seller/manufacturer could prevent a failure from occurring (Hess et al., 2003).

Globality is the extent to which the cause is perceived to be relevant to various diverse situations rather than being specific to limited situations (Seligman et al., 1979). Abramson et al. (1978) stated that individuals who attribute failure to global causes expect causes of failure to be present and expect uncontrollability after a longer time period and across more diverse settings when compared with

individuals who attribute failure to specific causes. On the other hand, universality is the extent to which the cause is perceived to be unique to an individual or common to all people (Rees et al., 2005). According to Coffee and Rees (2008) universality and globality both refers to generalizability of the cause of an occurrence; making generalization across situations (globality) and across people (universality). In this research, in airlines service failure context, universality and globality attributions are combined and examined as a single variable. Assume a failure case where a passenger's flight is cancelled to Amsterdam Schiphol Airport due to unfavorable weather conditions in Amsterdam. In this case, all flights of all airlines service providers from all departure airports would be cancelled. Therefore it is not possible for the passenger to perceive this problem as a passenger-specific or airlines-specific problem and make negative evaluations about the airlines service provider. Another example may be experiencing a flight delay in a peak period such as the period before Christmas, Thanksgiving or national holidays. For those periods, delays are generalizable across airlines and destinations due to high density of flights to all destinations and therefore it is not possible for passengers to perceive the cause of a failure neither as person-specific nor situation specific. Therefore, it is coherent for airlines service context to combine and examine universality and globality attributions as a single variable due to their similarity in terms of generalizability perception for time, situation, and uniqueness of airlines service failure.

Consequently, causes of a failure may be categorized by their locus (consumer-related vs seller/manufacturer-related), stability (permanent vs temporary), controllability (causes under volitional control vs constrained causes), and generalizability (generalizable vs specific).

According to Smith and Bolton (1998), customers who use a particular type of service provider evaluate an event related to that type of service provider. On that note, it may be stated that following a service failure, passengers' reactions in terms of repurchase intentions and causality attributions can vary according to business model of airlines.

Repurchase intention after experiencing a service failure is examined in causal attribution context. To what extent customers believe that cause of the failure was controllable by the firm reflects customers' beliefs that the service firm could

have prevented the negative event (Hamilton, 1980; Hess et al., 2003). Folkes et al. (1987) indicated that these beliefs regarding controllability dimension of causal attributions influence repurchase intention indirectly through anger. A firm's perceived control over an experienced failure increases consumer's anger (Folkes, 1984) and response to anger is either denial or exclusion of a benefit normally enjoyed (Averill, 1983). Hereat, anger leads to reduction of willingness to fly with the same airline again (Folkes et al., 1987). In this research, it is predicted that controllability attributions following a service failure will have a negative influence on repurchase intentions both for LCCs and flagship airlines.

H25.a: In flagship airlines service failures, controllability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In LCC service failures, controllability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions.

Perceived stability of a failure cause also influences consumers' intention to repurchase. When compared with customers who attribute cause of a failure to unstable causes, customers who perceive the cause of a failure to be stable are more confident that the same failure will reoccur (Weiner, 1986). Concordantly, Folkes (1984) indicated that these inferences regarding the stability of a failure's cause impact customers' repurchase behaviors. For instance, if a flight delay is due to a stable reason, passengers are less willing to prefer the same airlines again, whereas if it is due to an unstable reason, passengers are more willing to repurchase service from the same airlines (Folkes et al., 1987). Hence, stability attribution is expected to have a negative influence on repurchase intentions both for LCCs and flagship airlines.

H26.a: In flagship airlines service failures, stability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In LCC service failures, stability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions.

According to Hess et al. (2007), individuals who attribute the cause of a failure to be global, feel more dissatisfied with the service provider. In addition, globality attribution leads to negative evaluations (Hess, 1999). In other words, in the literature it is stated that when customers attribute cause of a failure to be relevant to various diverse situations, they make negative evaluations about the provider, and feel dissatisfied. Depending upon the proven positive relationship between satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Yi, 1990), it may be stated that attributing cause of a failure leads decreased repurchase intentions. On the other hand, the existing literature lacks researches regarding the role of universality attributions on repurchase intentions following a service failure. This research assumes a positive relationship between generalizability attributions and repurchase intentions. It is anticipated that passengers who attribute failure to a generalizable cause that is not person- or situation-specific (e.g. cancellation of all flights to a specific destination due to a problem regarding weather conditions), will not make negative evaluations regarding to their service provider. Generalizability perception is predicted to be not influential on expectations for future experiences, and thus it is predicted that generalizability attributions have a positive influence on repurchase intentions both for flagship carriers and LCCs.

H27.a: In flagship airlines service failures, generalizability attribution has a positive influence on repurchase intentions.

b: In flagship airlines service failures, generalizability attribution has a positive influence on repurchase intentions.

CHAPTER – 5

METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

The proposed research model is tested by surveying individuals living in Izmir. Resulting from the fact that the degree to which fundamental constructs are captured by the respondents is a significant issue appertaining to construct validity (Viswanathan, 2005), individuals younger than 18 years old are not targeted and not included as respondents in this study. Two interviewers, who were trained for preventing any possible interviewer biases, were charged for gathering data from the field. Data is collected from different provinces of Izmir, namely; Alsancak, Narlıdere, Balçova, Konak and Bornova, for obtaining balanced data regarding to the demographic characteristics of participants.

5.1.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used in cases where research model is specified a priori, and tests if proposed relationship between observed and latent variables does in fact exists (Sureshchandar et. al., 2002). In other words, CFA is an analysis procedure designed for testing hypotheses regarding the relationship between latent variables, whose number and interpretation are given formerly, and observed variables (Mulaik, 1988). CFA requires a robust theoretical foundation for research model development, evaluation of the proposed research model, scale development and validation (Brown, 2016). A priori designed research model that is built upon that strong theoretical works are tested statistically against sample data via CFA, as in psychology and marketing fields (Doll et. al., 1994).

The application of CFA contains six main steps; defining the research model, collecting measurements, obtaining the correlation matrix, fitting the model to the data, evaluating model appropriateness, and comparing with other models (DeCoster, 1998). The most important test in CFA context is goodness-of-fit test which is used for testing the adequacy of the model to the sample data. Outcomes of goodness-of-fit test, namely ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom, and

normed fit index (NFI) are being used for comparing models, whereas absolute indexes such as chi-square, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and root mean square residual (RMSR) are being used for the evaluation of individual models (Doll et. al., 1994). It should be noted that goodness-of-fit test is highly sensitive to the sample size (Bolen, 1989).

Within marketing and consumer research contexts, CFA is extensively used for various purposes including construct validation, scale improvement, measurement invariance and multitrait-multimethod validation (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996). In this study, CFA is being employed in order to evaluate validity of measures.

5.1.2. Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling (SEM) can be described as a set of methodologies that aspire to represent hypotheses about the means, variances and covariance of observed data with regard to a smaller quantity of structural parameters defined by an assumed underlying model (Kaplan, 2000). SEM combines multivariate regression and factor analysis (Weiner and Craighead, 2010). A structural model consists of two parts; (1) measurement models linking observed variables to latent (non-observed) variables, and (2) a structural part linking latent variables to each other through simultaneous equations (Jais, 2007). Moreover, fit-statistics evaluate if the model fits the data, and if fit results are coherent with acceptable thresholds, it can be stated that assumed model and relationship between variables are supported by the data, and, in cases where measurement model's fit is of interest, SEM acts as a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Nachtigall et al., 2003).

SEM has been widely used in a number of disciplines, including psychology, consumer behavior, services marketing, and service satisfaction (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). This analysis tool was introduced to marketing scholars by the research of Bogozzi in 1977 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The reason lying behind the extensive application of SEM in many disciplines is its capability of solving

research problems in terms of causal relationships between latent constructs and showing these relationships via a path diagram (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

According to Steenkamp and Baumgartner (2000), since marketing science aim to provide explanatory statements about different types of marketing phenomena, it requires measurement developments including theory and covariance-based testing technique such as SEM. Besides, this kind of techniques enables translating informal causal relationship theories, which are common in social sciences, into data analysis (Fox, 2002).

In this research, firstly a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been carried out in order to test measurement model's fit. Thereafter, due to existence of various latent variables such as personality traits, and loyalty typologies, SEM is utilized, since it enables analyzing latent variables, their relationships, and holds an illustrative power of path diagrams (Nachtigall et al., 2003).

5.1.3. Independent Variables

In the present study, measures of independent variables are gathered from the related literature. Multi-item scales are employed in order to increase the quality of the measurement. Ratings were made on a 5-point-Likert scale with points ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree".

Independent variables of this study consists of extroversion and agreeableness, expectation, habituality, loyalty and switching. All of the independent variables measured via previously structured measurement scales obtained from the literature.

5.1.3.1. Measures of Independent Variables

Measures of extroversion and agreeableness are obtained from Goldberg's (1992) study on big five personality traits. Measures belonging to each of the variables contain ten items. Five out of ten measurement items belonging to extroversion are reverse coded, and in a similar vein, six out of ten items for

measuring agreeableness are coded reversely. Aforementioned reverse coded items were eliminated due to low factor loadings.

Expectation measures are gathered from the study of Voss et al. (1998), which aims to determine the roles of expectations, price and performance play in determining satisfaction in service encounter. The used measures for expectation is originally rooted in SERVQUAL, which is a widely accepted scale used for identifying customers' service quality perceptions. Voss et al. (1998) developed five expectation measurement items based on service quality dimensions identified by Parasuraman et al. (1988). In this study, those five measurement items are employed for determining expectations of passengers. In order to test the change in expectations of passengers are changing in relation with airlines' business models, respondents were asked to answer questions regarding expectations twice; in case of flying with a LCC, and in case of flying with a flagship airlines.

Habituality measures are obtained from the study of Limayem et al. (2007) which investigates the way habits limit predictive power of intention regarding information systems usage. Measures rooted in study of still Limayem et al. (2003), which aims to build a measurement scale on habitual usage. For developing an adequate measurement scale, researchers gathered items from ten previously published researches belonging to different theoretical backgrounds, including drug addiction, consumption habits, and health. The researchers concluded the scale development process by rephrasing and eliminating problematic phrases, and the finalized scale came down to ten items. In this research, habituality scale is gathered from the study of Limayem et al. (2007), in which compacted three item measurement scale is employed.

Loyalty scale is acquired from the study of Bourdeau (2005) that aims to identify antecedents and outcomes of attitudinal loyalty. Since the developed scale was for measuring loyalty towards online retailers, measurement items were rephrased, and "online retailer" expressions were replaced with "airlines". Three out of five items were eliminated during analysis process due to low factor loadings.

Measures regarding switching behavior is obtained from Bansal and Taylor's (1999) work that gathered various studies from marketing and psychology literature in order to develop a model of service provider switching behavior. Bansal and

Taylor (1999) developed a switching behavior measurement scale by blending various studies from literature, and attained a four-item scale. Two out of four items were eliminated during translation from English to Turkish. This is due to the fact that when translated in Turkish, two eliminated items and two remaining items have exactly the same meaning.

Table 2. Sources of Independent Variables

| Variable | Source | Number of Items |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Extroversion | Goldberg (1992) | 5/10 (Reverse coded items are eliminated) |
| Agreeableness | Goldberg (1992) | 6/10 (Reverse coded items are eliminated) |
| Expectation | Voss, Parasuraman, Grewal (1998) | 5 |
| Habituality | Limayem, Hirt and Cheung (2003, 2007) | 3 |
| Loyalty | Bourdeau (2005) | 3/5 (2 items are eliminated during analysis process) |
| Switching | Bansal and Taylor (1999) | 2/4 (2 items are eliminated in translation process) |

5.1.4. Dependent Variables

Measures of dependent variables are obtained from the related literature. Multi-item scales are employed in order to increase the quality of the measurement. Ratings were made on a 5-point-Likert scale with points ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”.

Dependent variables of proposed research model includes stability, controllability, generalizability, and repurchase intentions. As is the case with independent variables, each of the dependent variables was measured via previously validated scales obtained from the literature. Measures of stability, controllability, and generalizability attributions were posed twice to respondents, once for LCCs and once for flagship airlines, in order to see if airlines’ business model plays a role on failure attributions.

5.1.4.1. Repurchase Intentions

Repurchase intention, which is a behavioral component of brand loyalty (Nacif, 2003), refers to customers' reaction to a dissatisfying service experience in terms of willingness of patronizing the firm in the future (Oliver and Swan, 1989).

Conceptualization of repurchase intention hinges upon the investigation of brand loyalty in terms of attitudinal and behavioral criteria. Day (1969) stated the behavioral component as customers' actual purchase behavior, and defined attitudinal component as customers' relative brand preference and/or attachment to brand attributes. Furthermore, the author revealed four decision making phases and highlighted the fact that true loyalty exists when customers prefer the same brand at every phase (Nacif, 2003). Four phases of brand loyalty according to Day (1969) are as follows;

- *Cognitive Loyalty Phase*; in which customers develop a brand preference based on available information about product/service performance.
- *Affective Loyalty Phase*; in which customers' experiences with a given brand that eventuated in satisfaction starts being included in brand preference.
- *Conative Phase*; in which, frequent positive brand affect towards a given brand leads to behavioral intentions.
- *Action Loyalty Phase*; in which, the behavioral intentions stated conative phase are transformed into repurchasing behavior.

The last two stages, conative and action loyalty phase, where behavioral intentions are formed and turn into repurchase behavior, play a vital role for firms. According to Torres and Kline (2006), building long lasting relationships with customers by retaining them is more profitable than acquiring new customers. Furthermore, willingness of customers to keep on doing business with the same firm holds both economic and non-economic advantages for companies (Mostert et al., 2009). Economic advantages include ability of forecasting future sales, reduction in marketing and acquisition costs of customers, and willingness of customers to pay premium prices, while non-economic advantages include improvement of product

and service offerings (Rosenburg and Czepiel, 1983; Payne, 1993; Reichheld, 1996; Ahmad and Buttle, 2001; Kassim and Souiden, 2007). For given reasons, repurchase intention holds important place in transportation sector including air travel service providers. Thus, the underlying cause of frequent flier programs is the airlines' tendency to not solely concerning initial choices of customers, but also future repurchase behaviors (Harris and Uncles, 2007).

5.1.4.2. Word of Mouth

Word of mouth (WOM) is defined as a person-to-person, informal conversation, regarding a certain product, service or brand, which does not contain any commercial bias (East et.al, 2008). WOM may either be positive and constructive, by encouraging usage of a specific product or service, or be negative and destructive complaint, by discouraging usage of a specific product or service.

Since individuals find it more accessible and diagnostic, negative WOM found to be more influential on consumer behavior than printed sources (Herr et al., 1991). Its nature of being a vivid way of interpersonal communication, makes WOM easily attract attention, hold information and increase the accessibility of the information from memory (Nisbett and Ross, 1980; Herr et al., 1991).

According to Ziethaml et.al (1996), WOM holds a special place for services due to their nature of being intangible, riskier, harder to rely on, and difficult to standardize. It is found that, when compared with consumers of goods, consumers of services tend to have a greater confidence in personal sources of information (Murray, 1991). Additionally, negative effects of service failures spread as consumers share their dissatisfying experiences with other individuals (Kim et.al, 2010). Keaveney (1995) supported this fact by putting forward that 50% of service provider substitutions were found in this way.

WOM has been linked with extroversion (Mooradian and Oliver, 1997), and features of extroversion such as sociability (Lau and Ng, 2001), and opinion leadership (Weimann, 1999). Additionally, WOM is found to be motivated by sociability and desire by helping others (Lau and Ng, 2001). Moreover, higher agreeableness is linked to knowledge sharing and better interpersonal relationships

(Mooradian et.al, 2006). Hence, it can be interfered that WOM has a relation with both extroversion and agreeableness traits.

Another contribution made for understanding the antecedents of WOM revealed the fact that, consumers who tend to blame the institution rather than themselves or their own behavior are more likely to involve in negative WOM behavior (Richins, 1983). According to Brown and Beltramini (1989), other factor triggering negative WOM behavior involves what extent consumers perceive failure as controllable by the company.

Folkes (1984) and Folkes et al. (1987) analyzed complaining behavior from attributional perspective. They highlighted the fact that causal attribution dimensions; locus of control, controllability and stability of a failure influence the complaining frequency. Additionally, by analyzing responses of airline passengers awaiting delayed flights, Folkes et al. (1987) found that the affective variable, anger, acts a mediator between same causal attribution dimensions and complaining behavior or repurchase intentions from the same institution.

5.1.4.3. Measures of Dependent Variables

Scale items regarding stability attribution are gathered from the study of Vázquez-Casielles et al. (2007), examining the relationship between the quality of past service performance, and passengers' responses to service failures in airline industry context, by developing a model. Vázquez-Casielles et al. (2007), have developed a 4-item stability measurement scale by combining and adapting to airlines context scales previously used by Russell (1982), Hess et al. (2003), and Poon et al. (2004).

Attributions regarding controllability stability attributions are acquired from the study of Nikbin et al. (2011), which aims to discover the role of failure attributions and firm reputation on customers' responses to service failures. Three items were employed in this study.

Due to ambiguity in existing literature regarding definitions, scope and discrepancy between globality and universality attributions in service encounter,

this study employed a mixed scale by adapting and blending existing globality and universality measurement scales. Globality attribution measurement scale is gathered and adapted from Hess et al. (2007), and universality attribution measurement scale is obtained and adapted from Coffee and Rees (2008). By adapting those measures to airlines encounter and blending them, five items are generated. One item out of these five items was eliminated in analysis process due to low factor loadings.

Measures of repurchase intentions are gathered from the study of Nikbin et al. (2011), which aims to discover the moderating role of attributions between reputation of firm and behavioral intentions of customers. Four items, from which one item was eliminated due to low factor loadings, was employed in this research.

Table 3. Sources of Dependent Variables

| Variable | Source | Number of Items |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Stability | Vázquez-Casielles, Rio-Lanza, Diaz-Martin (2007) | 4 |
| Controllability | Nikbin, Ismail, Marimuthu, Abu-Jarad (2011) | 3 |
| Generalizability | Adapted from Adler and Adler (1985) and Hess et al. (2007) | 4/5 (1 item is eliminated during analysis process) |
| Repurchase Intentions | Nikbin, Ismail, Marimuthu, Abu-Jarad (2011) | 3/4 (1 item is eliminated during analysis process) |

5.1.5. Preliminary Research

According to Churchill and Iacobucci (2005), conducting a pilot study before data collection plays a key role in ensuring questionnaire construction. Dillman (2000) listed advantages of conducting a pre-test as; identifying if respondents have difficulty in understanding, interpret measures that are different from the researcher's intention, misleading exists, and vague statements are made.

Since the participation of at least ten individuals is suggested by Fink (1995), in this research, a pre-test was conducted by inviting 15 respondents to participate

and share their insights. Academicians and doctoral, master's degree and bachelor students of Izmir University of Economics participated to the pilot study. Academicians, doctoral and master's degree students were chosen from different management and business areas due to their expertise in their field.

Valuable feedbacks regarding grammar, wording and design of the survey were provided. Since the original language of the items were English, items translated to Turkish and they were rephrased after the pilot test in a more straightforward manner based on advices obtained from the respondents. Particularly, extroversion and agreeableness items were rephrased in order to make questions more comprehensible for the respondents. Secondly, the design of the survey was changed in accordance with respondents' suggestions. Line spaces were enlarged, and information asked regarding the reason of travelling with airlines and flight frequencies were moved from the beginning of the survey to the end. In addition, a definition and examples for "flagship airlines" were provided in order to make the term more understandable for respondents.

5.1.6. Sample

Due to the fact that SEM is a test that heavily relies on the sample size (Ghazali, 2011), sample size should be carefully determined. Kline (2005) states that a sample size which contains less than 100 samples is not accurate to test SEM models. According to the existing literature both the samples including observations around 100-200 (Loehlin, 2004) and 250-500 (Schumaker and Lomax, 2004) are widely used for SEM models. Therefore, 600 surveys were delivered in order to obtain accurate number of completed surveys. Survey was filled by a total of 547 respondents, from which 512 valid surveys gathered. 35 of 547 surveys were rejected due to incomplete surveys or invalid answers.

Among the 512 respondents, 43,4% (n=222) were males, and 56,6% (n=290) were females. 2,5% (n=13) of the sample had primary school, 10% (n=51) had secondary school, 41,6% (n=212) had high school education levels. 11,3% (n=58) of the respondents had associate degrees, 27,7% (n=142) were university graduates, 4,7% (n=24) had master's degree, while 2,1% (n=11) had PhD degrees.

16% (n=82) of the respondents were belonging to the age group of 18-24, while 27,1% (n=139) of the respondents between the ages of 25 and 31, and 29,1% (n=149) of the respondents were in age range of 32-38. 17% (n=87) of the respondents were between the ages 39-45, and 7,2% (n=37) were between 46- 52 ages. Solely the total of 18 (3,5%) respondents were above the age of 53.

14,5% (n=74) of the respondents reported their income levels as 0-1000 TL per month. 27,5% (n=141) were in the 1001-2000TL income range while 31,8% (n=163) were in the range of 2001-3000 TL. 20,3% (n=104) of respondents stated the income range as 3001-5000 TL, while 3,7% (n=19) were in the range of 5001-7500 TL, and 2,1% (n=11) of the respondents had more than 7500 TL as income per month.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

| | | <i>N=512</i> | <i>%</i> |
|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <i>Gender</i> | Female | 290 | 56,6 |
| | Male | 222 | 43,4 |
| <i>Education</i> | Primary School | 13 | 2,5 |
| | Secondary School | 51 | 10 |
| | High School | 213 | 41,6 |
| | Associate Degree | 58 | 11,3 |
| | Undergraduate Degree | 142 | 27,7 |
| | Master's Degree | 24 | 4,7 |
| | PhD Degree | 11 | 2,1 |
| <i>Age</i> | 18-24 | 82 | 16 |
| | 25-31 | 139 | 27,1 |
| | 32-38 | 149 | 29,1 |
| | 39-45 | 87 | 17 |
| | 46-52 | 37 | 7,2 |
| | 53 and above | 18 | 3,5 |
| <i>Monthly Income</i> | 0-1000 | 74 | 14,5 |
| | 1001-2000 | 141 | 27,5 |
| | 2001-3000 | 163 | 31,8 |
| | 3001-5000 | 104 | 20,3 |
| | 50001-7500 | 19 | 3,7 |
| | 7501 and above | 11 | 2,1 |

5.2. Validity and Reliability of the Study

5.2.1. Validity

Since all of the measurement scales are obtained from previous studies, and all are purified previously, exploratory factor analysis was not conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed in order to assess convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measures.

CFA revealed that reverse coded measurement items were not perceivable for respondents, hence reverse coded measurement items were eliminated before further analysis. In addition, due to poor factor loadings of their measurement items, negative WOM and locus of control were eliminated from independent variables, and variety seeking behavior was eliminated from dependent variables. The reason of poor factor loadings of locus measures may be due to the fact that most causes of failures are perceived by consumers as located in the seller and thus excluded by researchers due to this ambiguity (Folkes et al., 1987; Hess et al., 2003).

Overall fit of the data to the hypothesized model was tested both for low cost carriers and flagship carriers. CFA for LCCs delivered a chi-square value of 1335.05 ($df = 483$, $p = .000$; $\chi^2/df = 2.764$). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .059, comparative fit index (CFI) = .916, and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .903, goodness of fit index (GFI) = .862, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = .830, and root mean square residual (RMR) = .063, which all indicated a good model fit. Solely the normed fit index (NFI) = .876 was slightly below .90.

On the other hand, CFA for flagship carriers delivered a chi-square value of 1192.302 ($df = 482$, $p = .000$; $\chi^2/df = 2.474$). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .054, comparative fit index (CFI) = .931, and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .920, goodness of fit index (GFI) = .879, adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) = .851, and root mean square residual (RMR) = .052, which all indicated a good model fit. Only the normed fit index (NFI) = .890 was to a minor extend below .90. Subsequently, CFA provided evidence of acceptable model fit and assured that the data fits to the proposed measurement model (see Table 5).

Table 5. Goodness of Fit Statistics Resulting From Confirmatory Factor Analysis

| Fit Index | Low Cost Carriers | Flagship Carriers | Criteria |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| χ^2 | 1335.05 | 1192.302 | |
| df | 483 | 482 | |
| χ^2/df | 2.764 | 2.474 | < 3 |
| P | .000 | .000 | <0.05 |
| CFI | .916 | .931 | >0.90 |
| NFI | .876 | .890 | >0.90 |
| GFI | .862 | .879 | > 0.85 |
| AGFI | .830 | .851 | > 0.80 |
| TLI | .903 | .920 | >0.90 |
| RMR | .063 | .052 | < 0.07 |
| RMSEA | .059 | .054 | < 0.07 |

Goodness of Fit of the Structural Model

5.2.2. Reliability

The reliability of measurement scales was verified by calculating the composite reliability (CR) of the constructs and the average variance extracted (AVE) both for low cost carriers and flagship carriers. All measurement scales presented good properties, as the CR was above 0.8 and the AVE was above 0.5 for each construct. Results for Low Cost Carriers are shown in Table 6, and the results for Flagship Carriers are stated in Table 7.

In addition, Fornell–Larcker Ratio (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) was used for testing discriminant validity. During discriminant validity testing process, an item from agreeableness scale and another item from expectation scale were eliminated. After the elimination of these two measurement items from two different scales, since composite reliabilities were found to be above 0.7 threshold (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010), reliability was ensured. Moreover, both maximum shared square variance (MSV) and average shared square variance (ASV) values are found to be less than average variance extracted (AVE) values, all of the average

variance extracted (AVE) are found to exceed the square of the correlation between construct, AVE values found to exceed 0.5 threshold, and thus, discriminant validity was ensured (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010).

Table 6. Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted, and Discriminant Validity for Low Cost Carriers

| Construct | CR | AVE | MSV | ASV | ATR | PT | EXP | LT | RI |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| ATR | .939 | .609 | .271 | .119 | .781 | | | | |
| PT | .938 | .603 | .271 | .123 | .521 | .777 | | | |
| EXP | .902 | .699 | .061 | .047 | .246 | .232 | .836 | | |
| LT | .936 | .652 | .131 | .069 | .345 | .362 | .147 | .807 | |
| RI | .897 | .813 | .052 | .029 | .160 | .187 | .229 | -.059 | .902 |

Notes: 1. CR: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, MSV: Maximum Shared Squared Variance, ASV: Average Shared Square Variance 2. ATR: Attribution, PT: Personality Traits, EXP: Expectation, LT: Loyalty Typologies, RI: Repurchase Intention

Table 7. Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted, and Discriminant Validity for Flagship Carriers

| Construct | CR | AVE | MSV | ASV | ATR | PT | EXP | LT | RI |
|------------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| ATR | .932 | .579 | .167 | .078 | .761 | | | | |
| PT | .926 | .556 | .167 | .106 | .409 | .646 | | | |
| EXP | .931 | .771 | .108 | .048 | .217 | .328 | .878 | | |
| LT | .935 | .648 | .119 | .063 | .302 | .345 | .143 | .805 | |
| RI | .923 | .858 | .031 | .019 | .069 | .175 | .136 | .149 | .929 |

Notes: 1. CR: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, MSV: Maximum Shared Squared Variance, ASV: Average Shared Square Variance 2. ATR: Attribution, PT: Personality Traits, EXP: Expectation, LT: Loyalty Typologies, RI: Repurchase Intentions

5.3. Research Model

It is proposed that, following an airlines service failure, personality traits of extroversion and agreeableness, expectations, and loyalty typologies (loyalty, habituality, variety seeking and switching) may have influences on causal attribution behavior (controllability, stability, and generalizability), and repurchase intentions.

The role of expectations on causal attribution regarding a service failure, and the influence of these causal dimensions on repurchase intentions are hypothesized separately both for LCCs and flagship airlines. Figure 2 designates the research model and hypotheses developed for low cost carriers, whereas Figure 3 shows the research model and hypotheses developed for flagship airlines.

Based on the research model constructed on the basis of research questions, 27 hypotheses are presented and tested in this study both for flagship airlines and LCCs.

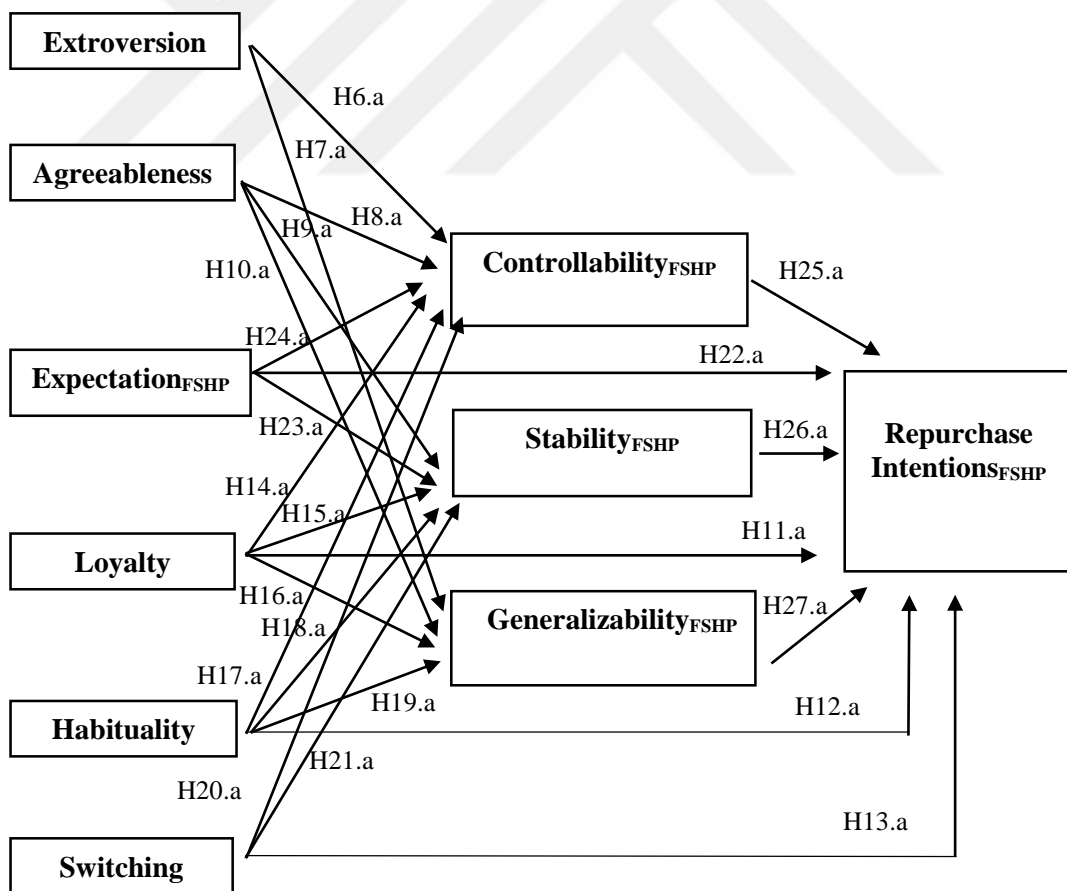


Figure 1. Research Model for Flagship Airlines

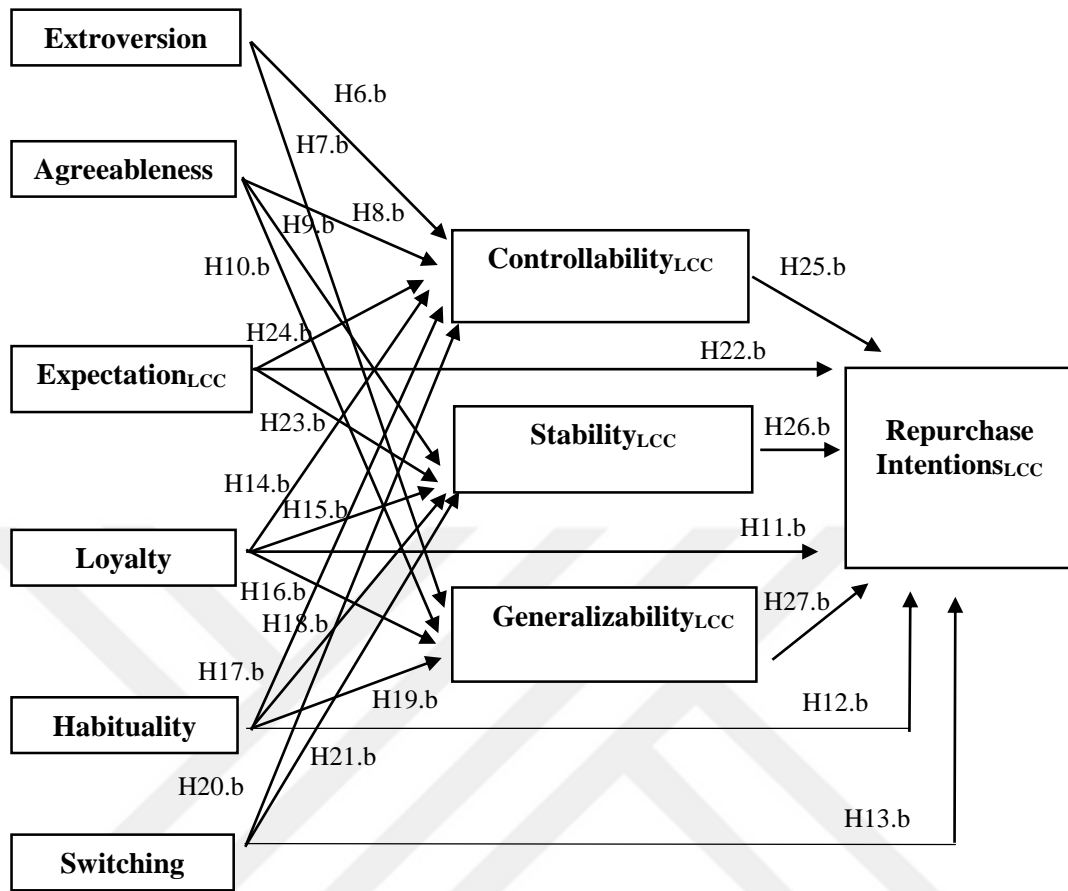


Figure 2. Research Model for LCCs

CHAPTER - 6

ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Findings

6.1.1. Results of Paired Sample T-Test

The first hypothesis, (H1), stating that passengers hold higher expectations for flagship airlines (M= 4,2642, SD= 0,82445) than for LCCs (M= 3,3838, SD= 1,17299) was supported, $t(511) = -17,626$, $p < 0.001$. In addition, hypothesis H2 stating that passengers perceive causes of LCC service failures to be more stable (M= 3,2729, SD= 0,78347) than causes of flagship airlines failures (M= 3,1123, SD= 0,88893), was supported, $t(511) = 5,684$, $p < 0.001$.

Hypothesis H3, which states that passengers tend to perceive causes of LCC failures to be more controllable (M= 3,6211, SD= 0,88474) than causes of flagship airlines service failures (M= 3,6611, SD= 0,89733), was not supported, $t(511) = -1,473$, $p > 0.001$. Besides, hypothesis H4, which is stating that passengers tend to perceive causes of flagship airlines service failures to be more generalizable (M= 3,2207, SD= 0,90464) than causes of LCC service failures (M= 3,2056, SD= 0,85700), was not supported, $t(511) = -,697$, $p > 0.001$. On the other hand, hypothesis H5, which posits that following a service failure, passengers have higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines (M= 2,3584, SD= 1,09470) than LCCs (M= 2,1494, SD= 1,03209), was supported, $t(511) = -4,619$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 8. Paired Samples Statistics and Correlations

| Paired Samples Statistics | | | | | | Paired Samples Correlations | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------|------|------|
| | | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | | N | Correlation | Sig. | |
| Pair 1 | LEXP | 3,3838 | 512 | 1,17299 | ,05184 | Pair 1 | LEXP | 51 | ,402 | ,000 |
| | FEXP | 4,2642 | 512 | ,82445 | ,03644 | Pair 1 | FEXP | 2 | | |
| Pair 2 | LSTAB | 3,2729 | 512 | ,78347 | ,03462 | Pair 2 | LSTAB | 51 | ,714 | ,000 |
| | FSTAB | 3,1123 | 512 | ,88893 | ,03929 | Pair 2 | FSTAB | 2 | | |
| Pair 3 | LCON | 3,6211 | 512 | ,88474 | ,03910 | Pair 3 | LCON | 51 | ,762 | ,000 |
| | FCON | 3,6611 | 512 | ,89733 | ,03966 | Pair 3 | FCON | 2 | | |
| Pair 4 | LGA | 3,2056 | 512 | ,85700 | ,03787 | Pair 4 | LGA | 51 | ,846 | ,000 |
| | FGA | 3,2207 | 512 | ,90464 | ,03998 | Pair 4 | FGA | 2 | | |
| Pair 5 | LRI | 2,1494 | 512 | 1,03209 | ,04561 | Pair 5 | LRI | 51 | ,538 | ,000 |
| | FRI | 2,3584 | 512 | 1,09570 | ,04842 | Pair 5 | FRI | 2 | | |

Table 9. Results of Paired Samples t-Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|---------|---------|---------|-----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | | |
| Pair 1 | avgLEXP – avgFEXP | -,88037 | 1,13021 | ,04995 | -,97850 | -,78224 | -17,626 | 511 | ,000 |
| Pair 2 | avgLSTAB – avgFSTAB | -,16064 | ,63949 | ,02826 | ,10512 | ,21617 | 5,684 | 511 | ,000 |
| Pair 3 | avgLCON – avgFCON | -,04004 | ,61525 | ,02719 | -,09346 | ,01338 | -1,473 | 511 | ,141 |
| Pair 4 | AvgLGA – avgFGA | -,01514 | ,49125 | ,02171 | -,05779 | ,02752 | -,697 | 511 | ,486 |
| Pair 5 | avgLRI – avgFRI | -,20898 | 1,02382 | ,04525 | -,29788 | -,12009 | -4,619 | 511 | ,000 |

6.1.2. Results of SEM

With structural equation modeling (SEM) and paired samples t-test, proposed structural model was assessed and hypothesized relationships among variables were tested by using AMOS 16.0 and SPSS PASW Statistics 18.

For LCCs, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) was calculated as .850, and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI) value was found to be .821, indicating that 82% of variance and covariance in the data observed were predicted by the proposed model. Moreover, normed Chi-square value (χ^2/df) was calculated as 2.789, and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) as .901, both were consistent with the required threshold levels. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be .059, which indicates a good fit by being close to 0.05 threshold level (MacCallum et al., 1996).

For flagship airlines, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) was calculated as .872, and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI) value was found to be .843, demonstrating that 84% of variance and covariance in the data observed were predicted by the proposed model. Additionally, normed Chi-square value (χ^2/df) was calculated as 2.632, and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) as .923, both were consistent with the required threshold levels. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was found to be .057, which indicates a good fit by being close to 0.05 threshold level (MacCallum et al., 1996).

Table 10. Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for LCC and Flagship Airlines

| Fit Index | Low Cost Carriers | Flagship Carriers | Criteria |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| χ^2 | 1637.09 | 1276.55 | |
| df | 587 | 485 | |
| χ^2/df | 2.789 | 2.632 | < 3 |
| P | .000 | .000 | <0.05 |
| CFI | .901 | .923 | >0.90 |
| NFI | .855 | .882 | >0.90 |
| GFI | .850 | .872 | > 0.85 |
| AGFI | .821 | .843 | > 0.80 |
| RMR | .079 | .066 | < 0.07 |
| RMSEA | .059 | .057 | < 0.07 |

Hypothesis (H6.a) predicts that in flagship airlines service failures, extroversion has negative influence on controllability attribution. This hypothesis is not supported (estimate: .208; C.R. < 1.96; p: .522). On the other hand, the SEM analysis supported the hypothesis (H6.b) stating that extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attribution following a LCC service failure (estimate: -.278; C.R. < 1.96; p: .049).

The hypothesis regarding the negative influence of extroversion on generalizability attributions following a flagship airlines service failure (H7.a) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: -1.587; C.R. < 1.96; p: .366). Likewise, the results did not support the hypothesis H7.b which states that extroversion has negative influence on generalizability attributions following LCC service failure (estimate: -.275; C.R. < 1.96; p: .093).

Hypothesis H8.a, which estimates that agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attributions following a flagship airlines service failure, was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: -.208; C.R. < 1.96; p: .630). Similarly, hypothesis H8.b which posits that agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failures was not supported (estimate: .593; C.R. > 1.96; p: .003).

Hypothesis regarding negative influence of agreeableness on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H9.a) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: -.061; C.R. < 1.96; p: .781). In a similar vein, hypothesis H9.b stating that agreeableness has negative influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure was not supported (estimate: -2.075; C.R. < 1.96; p: .556).

Hypothesis H10.a, which posits that agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported due to insignificance of path (estimate: 2.075; C.R. < 1.96; p: .365). Likewise, hypothesis H10.b stating that agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attributions following LCC service failure (estimate: .443; C.R. < 1.96; p: .054).

The hypothesis regarding positive influence of loyalty on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure (H11.a) was not supported (estimate: -1.783; C.R. < 1.96; p: .516). Likewise, hypothesis H11.b which states that loyalty has positive influence on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure was not supported (estimate: -.937; C.R. < 1.96; p: .164).

Hypothesis H12.a which assumes that habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: .892; C.R. < 1.96; p: .517). Concordantly, hypothesis H12.b stating that habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure, was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: .443; C.R. < 1.96; p: .186).

Hypothesis regarding the negative influence of switching on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure (H13.a) was not supported (estimate: .530; C.R. < 1.96; p: .618). Likewise, the negative influence of switching on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure (H13.b) was not supported (estimate: .303; C.R. < 1.96; p: .209).

Negative influence of loyalty on controllability attribution following flagship airlines service failure (H14.a) was supported (estimate: -8.289; C.R. < 1.96; p: .003). However, hypothesis estimating that loyalty has negative influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failure (H14.b) was not supported (estimate: 3.264; C.R. > 1.96; p < .001).

Hypothesis H15.a which assumes that loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, was supported (estimate: -3.910; C.R. < 1.96; p: .004). Similarly, hypothesis stating that loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure (H15.b) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: -30.851; C.R. < 1.96; p: .484).

Positive influence of loyalty on generalizability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H16.a) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: 35.713; C.R. < 1.96; p: .219). However, the hypothesis which

posits that loyalty has a positive influence on generalizability attributions following LCC service failure (H16.b) was supported (estimate: 4.079; C.R. > 1.96; $p < .001$).

Hypothesis stating that habituality has negative influence on controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H17.a) was not supported (estimate: 4.002; C.R. > 1.96; $p = .005$). On the other hand, habituality found to have negative influence on controllability attributions (H17.b) following LCC service failure (estimate: -1.876; C.R. < 1.96; $p < .001$).

Negative influence of habituality on flagship stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H18.a) was not supported (estimate: 1.985; C.R. > 1.96; $p = .005$). Similarly, hypothesis stating that habituality has negative influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure (H18.b), was also not supported (estimate: 15.491; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .488$).

Hypothesis H19.a which states that habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported (estimate: -19.317; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .214$). On the other hand, hypothesis H19.b which states that habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions following LCC service failure, was supported (estimate: -2.273; C.R. < 1.96; $p < .001$).

Positive influence of switching on controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H20.a), was supported (estimate: 3.405; C.R. > 1.96; $p = .001$). On the other hand, hypothesis positing that switching has a positive influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failure (H20.b) was not supported (estimate: -.893; C.R. < 1.96; $p < .013$).

Hypothesis stating that switching has positive influence on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H21.a) was supported (estimate: 1.736; C.R. > 1.96; $p < .001$). On the other hand, hypothesis indicating that switching has positive influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure (H21.b) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: 11.977; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .468$).

Positive influence of expectations on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure (H22.a) was not supported (estimate: -.209; C.R. <

1.96; $p = .409$). Likewise, hypothesis stating that expectations has a negative influence on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure (H22.b) was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: .046; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .132$).

Hypothesis stating that expectation has a negative influence on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure (H23.a) was supported (estimate: -.336; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .034$). On the other hand, hypothesis H23.b which posits that expectation has a positive influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure was not supported (estimate: -.340; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .708$).

Hypothesis H24.a which posits that expectations have negative influence on controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: -.434; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .204$). On the other hand, hypothesis H24.b which states that that expectations have positive influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failure, was supported (estimate: .206; C.R. > 1.96; $p = .010$).

Negative influence of flagship controllability attributions on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure (H25.a), was not supported (estimate: .227; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .328$). Similarly, negative influence of controllability attributions on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure (H25.b), was also not supported (estimate: .018; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .669$).

Hypothesis H26.a stating that stability attributions has negative influence on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported (estimate: .005; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .974$). Likewise, negative influence of stability attributions on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure (H26.b), was also not supported (estimate: .084; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .525$).

Positive influence of generalizability attributions on repurchase intentions following flagship airlines service failure (H27.a), was not supported due to insignificance of the path (estimate: .003; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .992$). Hypothesis H27.b which states that generalizability attribution has a positive influence on repurchase intentions following LCC service failure, was also not supported (estimate: -.016; C.R. < 1.96; $p = .771$).

Results of hypotheses testing are summarized in Table 13. Additionally, results of SEM for LCCs are given in Table 11, for flagship airlines in Table 1.

Table 11. Results of SEM for LCCs

| Paths | | | Unstandardized Factor Loadings | Standardized Factor Loadings | Standard Error | C.R. | p |
|-------|---|-------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|------|
| LSTAB | ← | EXT | 1,271 | 1,460 | 2,259 | ,563 | ,574 |
| LCON | ← | EXT | -,278 | -,248 | ,141 | -1,971 | ,049 |
| LGA | ← | EXT | -,275 | -,259 | ,164 | -1,678 | ,093 |
| LSTAB | ← | AGR | -2,075 | -1,712 | 3,521 | -,589 | ,556 |
| LCON | ← | AGR | ,593 | ,380 | ,199 | 2,977 | ,003 |
| LGA | ← | AGR | ,443 | ,300 | ,230 | 1,930 | ,054 |
| LSTAB | ← | HBT | 15,491 | 25,370 | 22,357 | ,693 | ,488 |
| LCON | ← | HBT | -1,876 | -2,384 | ,463 | -4,052 | *** |
| LGA | ← | HBT | -2,273 | -3,056 | ,553 | -4,106 | *** |
| LSTAB | ← | LYL | -30,851 | -41,147 | 44,091 | -,700 | ,484 |
| LCON | ← | LYL | 3,264 | 3,378 | ,908 | 3,593 | *** |
| LGA | ← | LYL | 4,079 | 4,467 | 1,089 | 3,746 | *** |
| LSTAB | ← | LEXP | -,340 | -,515 | ,909 | -,374 | ,708 |
| LCON | ← | LEXP | ,206 | ,242 | ,079 | 2,593 | ,010 |
| LGA | ← | LEXP | ,189 | ,235 | ,091 | 2,074 | ,038 |
| LSTAB | ← | SWC | 11,977 | 19,808 | 16,501 | ,726 | ,468 |
| LCON | ← | SWC | -,893 | -1,146 | ,358 | -2,495 | ,013 |
| LGA | ← | SWC | -1,133 | -1,538 | ,428 | -2,648 | ,008 |
| LRI | ← | LSTAB | ,084 | ,152 | ,132 | ,635 | ,525 |
| LRI | ← | LCON | ,018 | ,043 | ,043 | ,427 | ,669 |
| LRI | ← | LGA | -,016 | -,036 | ,056 | -,291 | ,771 |
| LRI | ← | EXT | -,006 | -,013 | ,055 | -,112 | ,911 |
| LRI | ← | AGR | ,065 | ,098 | ,078 | ,841 | ,401 |
| LRI | ← | HBT | ,443 | 1,317 | ,335 | 1,324 | ,186 |
| LRI | ← | LYL | -,937 | -2,266 | ,673 | -1,391 | ,164 |
| LRI | ← | LEXP | ,046 | ,126 | ,031 | 1,506 | ,132 |
| LRI | ← | SWC | ,303 | ,908 | ,241 | 1,256 | ,209 |

Table 12. Results of SEM for Flagship Airlines

| Paths | | | Unstandardized Factor Loadings | Standardized Factor Loadings | Standard Error | C.R. | p |
|-------|---|-------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|------|
| FSTAB | ← | EXT | ,070 | ,072 | ,166 | ,423 | ,672 |
| FSTAB | ← | AGR | -,061 | -,047 | ,220 | -,278 | ,781 |
| FCON | ← | HBT | 4,002 | 5,189 | 1,441 | 2,777 | ,005 |
| FGA | ← | LYL | 37,513 | 40,913 | 30,550 | 1,228 | ,219 |
| FGA | ← | FEXP | 3,228 | 2,621 | 2,752 | 1,173 | ,241 |
| FGA | ← | SWC | -13,716 | -18,528 | 11,555 | -1,187 | ,235 |
| FGA | ← | HBT | -19,317 | -25,810 | 15,543 | -1,243 | ,214 |
| FGA | ← | AGR | 2,075 | 1,450 | 2,291 | ,906 | ,365 |
| FGA | ← | EXT | -1,587 | -1,492 | 1,755 | -,904 | ,366 |
| FCON | ← | SWC | 3,405 | 4,463 | 1,045 | 3,257 | ,001 |
| FCON | ← | FEXP | -,434 | -,342 | ,341 | -1,271 | ,204 |
| FCON | ← | LYL | -8,289 | -8,773 | 2,782 | -2,980 | ,003 |
| FCON | ← | AGR | -,208 | -,141 | ,431 | -,482 | ,630 |
| FCON | ← | EXT | ,208 | ,190 | ,325 | ,641 | ,522 |
| FSTAB | ← | HBT | 1,985 | 2,889 | ,711 | 2,793 | ,005 |
| FSTAB | ← | LYL | -3,910 | -4,646 | 1,369 | -2,856 | ,004 |
| FSTAB | ← | FEXP | -,366 | -,324 | ,172 | -2,126 | ,034 |
| FSTAB | ← | SWC | 1,736 | 2,555 | ,517 | 3,355 | *** |
| FRI | ← | FSTAB | ,005 | ,004 | ,166 | ,032 | ,974 |
| FRI | ← | FCON | ,227 | ,193 | ,232 | ,979 | ,328 |
| FRI | ← | FGA | ,003 | ,003 | ,352 | ,010 | ,992 |
| FRI | ← | EXT | -,085 | -,066 | ,152 | -,561 | ,575 |
| FRI | ← | AGR | ,367 | ,212 | ,197 | 1,858 | ,063 |
| FRI | ← | HBT | ,892 | ,986 | 1,378 | ,648 | ,517 |
| FRI | ← | LYL | -1,783 | -1,609 | 2,748 | -,649 | ,516 |
| FRI | ← | FEXP | -,209 | -,140 | ,254 | -,825 | ,409 |
| FRI | ← | SWC | ,530 | ,592 | 1,064 | ,498 | ,618 |

Table 13. Summary of Hypotheses Tests

| Hypothesized Parameter | | Result | Supported / Not Supported |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| H1 | Passengers have hold higher expectations for flagship airlines than for LCCs. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| H2 | Passengers perceive causes of LCC service failures to be more stable than causes of flagship airlines service failures. | Significant Positive | Supported |
| H3 | Passengers tend to perceive causes of LCC service failures to be more controllable than causes of flagship airlines service failures. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H4 | Passengers tend to perceive causes of flagship airlines service failures to be more generalizable than causes of LCC service failures. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H5 | Following a service failure, passengers have higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines than for LCCs. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| H6.a | In flagship airline service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attribution. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attribution. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| H7.a | In flagship airline service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability attribution. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability attribution. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H8.a | In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attribution. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on controllability attribution. | Significant Positive | Not Supported |

| | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| H9.a | In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on stability attribution. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, agreeableness has negative influence on stability attribution. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H10.a | In flagship airline service failures, agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attribution. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, agreeableness has positive influence on generalizability attribution. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H11.a | In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, loyalty has positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H12.a | In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, habituality has positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H13.a | In flagship airlines service failures, switching has negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, switching has negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H14.a | In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has negative influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, loyalty has negative influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Positive | Not Supported |
| H15.a | In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions. | Significant Negative | Supported |

| | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| .b | In LCC service failures, loyalty has negative influence on stability attributions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H16.a | In flagship airlines service failures, loyalty has positive influence on generalizability attributions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, loyalty has positive influence on generalizability attributions. | Significant Positive | Supported |
| H17.a | In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, habituality has negative influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| H18.a | In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on stability attributions. | Significant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, habituality has negative influence on stability attributions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H19.a | In flagship airlines service failures, habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, habituality has negative influence on generalizability attributions. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| H20.a | In flagship airlines service failures, switching has a positive influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Positive | Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, switching has a positive influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Negative | Not Supported |
| H21.a | In flagship airlines service failures, switching has a positive influence on stability attributions. | Significant Positive | Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, switching has a positive influence on stability attributions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |

| | | | |
|-------|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| H22.a | In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| b | In LCC service failures, expectation has negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H23.a | In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has a negative influence on stability attributions. | Significant Negative | Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, expectation has a positive influence on stability attributions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| H24.a | In flagship airlines service failures, expectation has a negative influence on controllability attributions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, expectation has a positive influence on controllability attributions. | Significant Positive | Supported |
| H25.a | In flagship airlines service failures, controllability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, controllability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H26.a | In flagship airlines service failures, stability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In LCC service failures, stability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| H27.a | In flagship airlines service failures, generalizability attribution has a positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Positive | Not Supported |
| .b | In flagship airlines service failures, generalizability attribution has a positive influence on repurchase intentions. | Nonsignificant Negative | Not Supported |

6.2. Discussion of the Results

This study specifies seven sets of relationships in airline failures. This study focuses on the role of personality traits, expectations, and loyalty typologies in causal attributions by taking causal attributions, loyalty typologies and expectations as the antecedents of repurchase intentions following a failure. Therefore, the first set of relationships specifies the relationships between personality traits and causal attributions, the second set identifies the relationships between expectation and causal attribution, and the third set specifies the relationships between loyalty typologies and causal attributions. The fourth set of relationships analyzes the relationships between causal attributions and repurchase intentions. The fifth and sixth sets of relationships respectively specify relationships between expectations and repurchase intentions, and loyalty typologies and repurchase intentions. Finally, as the seventh set, this study focuses on the differences among airlines business models regarding causal attributions, expectations, and repurchase intentions.

6.2.1. Personality Traits and Causal Attributions

Agreeable passengers were expected to relate both LCC and flagship airlines service failures with generalizable non-unique causes. However, hypotheses regarding positive influence of agreeableness on generalizability attribution were not supported due to insignificance of the paths. In addition, passengers who score high in agreeableness were expected to perceive the service failure as related with uncontrollable and temporary causes, both in cases of LCC service failure and flagship service failure. Hypotheses regarding negative influence of agreeableness on controllability and stability attributions following a flagship service failure, were not supported. Surprisingly, results indicate that agreeableness have positive influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failures. In other words, agreeable passengers are found to perceive LCC service failures as controllable by the airlines. According to Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm, disconfirmation of expectations may result in perception of failure to be related with external factors (Crocker et al., 1983). In case of a LCC service failure, passengers, whose expectations are disconfirmed, may perceive failure to be related with the service provider, and thus, may perceive to be controllable by the LCC.

Furthermore, hypotheses regarding negative influence of agreeableness on stability and controllability attributions following a LCC service failure were not supported due to insignificance of the paths.

Extroversion was expected to have negative influence on controllability and generalizability attributions following both LCC and flagship airlines service failures. Hypotheses positing that extroversion has a negative influence on generalizability attributions following flagship airlines and LCC service failures, were not supported due to insignificance of the paths. In a similar vein, hypothesis stating that extroversion has a negative influence on controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure was also not supported. On the other hand, results indicate that passengers who score high in extroversion are found to perceive LCC service failure as related with uncontrollable causes. Extroverts' optimistic approach to view of self, others, and life (Mahasneh et al., 2013), and their positive affectivity characteristics (Matzler et al., 2005) may be the fact behind this perception. By optimistically approaching to the LCC service failure, extrovert passengers may be perceiving the failure to be uncontrollable, and thus unpreventable, by the LCC.

6.2.2. Expectations and Causal Attributions

In relation with the effect of cognitive consistency, expectation was expected to have negative influence on stability and controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, whereas it was expected to have a positive influence on controllability and stability attributions following LCC service failure.

Hypothesis regarding negative influence of expectations on controllability attributions following flagship airlines service failure was not supported due to insignificance of the path. On the other hand, results indicate that expectations have a negative influence on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure. According to Bhadra (2009) and Wittman (2014), there is a positive relationship between ticket fares and expectation levels. Thus, it may be stated that passengers hold higher expectations for flagship airlines. High expectations due to premium pricing of flagship airlines may be resulting in refusal of blaming airlines

service provider. In addition, passengers may be believing that flagship airlines are charging premium ticket fares in exchange for unproblematic, quality service offer. Moreover, passengers holding high expectations for flagship airlines may justify service failure by attributing to an unstable, temporary cause. Cognitive dissonance felt following the service failure may result in tendency to vindicate service failure by attributing it to a temporary cause. Concordant with cognitive consistency theory which emphasizes that individuals interpret data in a way that supports their attitude (Ajzen et al., 1979), passengers with high expectations were found to attribute failure to an unstable cause, vindicate the failure by justifying it.

Positive influence of expectations on stability attributions following LCC service failures was not supported. However, results indicate that expectations have a positive influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failures. In other words, higher expectations from LCC were found to make passengers attribute service failures to be related with controllable causes. Falling short of expectations of passengers may be resulting in higher level of anger, and thus attribution of failure to controllable causes. As a result of anger, passengers may perceive failure as to be preventable by the LCC. In addition, expectancy disconfirm paradigm advocates that expectations of consumers act as a reference point for evaluation of service performance (Oliver, 1980), and reference points have an influence on causal attributions following a service failure (Yen et al., 2004). Furthermore, expectation disconfirmation results in a need to explain causation, and individuals show tendency to perceive disconfirmation to be related with external factors, rather than themselves (Crocker et al., 1983). Therefore, disconfirmation of high expectations due to a service failure may result in negativity effect, and make passengers attribute failure to controllable causes.

6.2.3. Loyalty Typologies and Causal Attributions

Loyal passengers of flagship airlines were expected to attribute both flagship airlines and LCC service failures to causes which are uncontrollable, unstable and generalizable due to their commitment based on their previous experiences with the airlines.

Passengers who are loyal customers of flagship airlines found to attribute failure to uncontrollable and unstable causes as hypothesized, whereas hypothesis regarding the positive influence of flagship loyalty on generalizability attributions was not supported. In analogy to the research of Fournier (1998) stating that events that are disconfirming with loyal passengers' beliefs lead attribution of failure causes as temporary and uncontrollable, loyal passengers of flagship airlines found to perceive the cause as an unstable and uncontrollable. In addition, the basis of passengers' loyalty may play a role in determination of causality attributions. Flagship airlines offer wide flight destination options with connected flights. Therefore, for passengers attaching importance to smoothly connected flights or domestic destinations that are not offered by other airlines, attribute the failures to uncontrollable and unstable causes. Moreover, when the flagship airlines' membership to alliances are considered, it is also rational for loyal customers of flagship airlines to perceive causes of failures as temporary and uncontrollable. Since in addition to airlines' own advertisements, alliances also run common advertisements (Holtz et al., 2007) emphasizing privileges offered by its members and prestige of being a member of the alliance, passengers may take alliance membership as a reference of flawless experience, and thus may perceive failure as an extraordinary case for a flagship airlines which was chosen to be impeccable for membership.

Loyal passengers of LCCs were expected to perceive the failure as uncontrollable, temporary and generalizable. Hypothesis regarding the relationship between LCC loyalty and stability attributions was not supported. The negative influence of loyalty on LCC controllability attributions was also not supported. Surprisingly, findings indicate that loyalty has a positive influence on LCC controllability attributions. The reason behind this finding may be the brand image of LCCs for passengers. Even loyal passengers may believe that LCCs are less capable of handling service failures when compared with flagship airlines. Low fares offered by LCCs may be perceived as an action taken by management due to less expertise or justification of not gaining full dominion over management. On the other hand, loyal passengers of LCCs found to attribute service failures to generalizable causes. The findings regarding positive influence of loyalty on generalizability attributions is consistent with theoretical background. Hence, it may

be stated that previous experiences with the airlines and trust of loyal passengers (Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000) lead them to perceive the cause of a failure to be generalizable and impersonal.

After experiencing a service failure, habitual passengers of flagship airlines were expected to perceive the cause of the failure as an uncontrollable cause which could have not been prevented. In a similar vein, habitual passengers of LCCs were also expected to perceive the cause of the failure as an uncontrollable cause. Hypothesis indicating that habituality has a negative influence on controllability attributions following LCC service failure was supported. Due to nature of habits, which are being performed by individuals without reasoning (Tam et al., 2009) and generally treated in a similar way with loyalty (i.e. Wood and Nael, 2007; Liu-Thompkins and Tam, 2013), it can be stated that the finding is consistent with theoretical background. It is proven that passengers who show tendency to prefer a given airlines out of habit attribute the cause of a negative event experienced with that airlines to circumstances which are uncontrollable by the service provider. The reason behind this manner of habitual passengers may be a blend of the previous experiences with given airlines and their trust to the airlines that is built upon habituality. Moreover, the basis of habituality may be another motive in this context. Passengers who have formed a habit of patronizing a specific LCC due to its success in business and risk management may attribute failures to uncontrollable causes.

On the other hand, findings indicate that habituality has a significant positive influence on flagship controllability attributions, and thus hypothesis stating that habituality has a negative influence on controllability attributions was not supported. The motive behind positive influence of habituality on controllability attributions may be the basis of habitual patronizing behavior, or the perception created by business model of the airlines. Passengers who are habitually patronizing a flagship airlines due to most frequently flied destination to which no other airlines offer, may patronize that airlines for this manner and owing to lack of any management excellence expectation or trust, attributing the failure to controllable causes. The other way around, the reason behind habituality of passengers may be their beliefs in the excellence of airlines' management including risk management. Passengers

may consider the failure as related with a circumstance which could be prevented by the management.

Passengers who prefer an airlines company, either it is a flagship or a LCC, out of habit were expected to evaluate the cause of a service failure as unstable. Hypothesis stating that habituality has a negative influence on stability attributions following LCC service failure was not supported. Similarly, hypothesis regarding negative influence of habituality on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure, was not supported. Surprisingly, passengers who patronize a given flagship airlines out of habit are found to attribute failures to stable causes after experiencing an airlines service failure. The reason behind this perception may be related with the nature of habits. Habit is defined as performance of a behavior without reasoning and evaluation (Tam et al., 2009). Thus, habitual passengers of flagship airlines may continue patronizing that airlines due to lack of reasoning and evaluation, in spite of previously experienced service failures, being aware of a stability of service failure. Another reason may be the basis of their habitual purchases. Passengers may automatically select a flagship airlines company due to absence of flight options supplied by other airlines to a frequently travelled destination. Therefore, even passengers who perceive failures to be stable for that flagship carrier, may select that flagship airlines out of habit due to lack of other options.

Findings indicate that passengers who patronize a LCC out of habit attribute failures to generalizable causes. When habituals' commitment to airlines in terms of repeated purchase is considered, their tendency to attribute the cause of the failure to non-specific and generalizable causes seems to be meaningful. In a similar vein with loyalty, previous experiences with the LCC and trust of passengers (Singh and Sirdeshmukh, 2000) may lead them to perceive the cause of a failure to be generalizable and impersonal. On the other hand, hypothesis stating that habituality has a negative influence on generalizability attributions following flagship airlines service failure was not supported due to insignificance of the path.

Passengers who score high in switching behavior were expected to attribute service failures to controllable and stable causes following both LCC and flagship airlines service failures. Positive influence of switching on stability attributions

following LCC service failure was not supported due to insignificance of the path. However, passengers who are high in switching behavior attribute service failures to stable and controllable causes following flagship airlines service failure. Since switchers lack commitment to service providers (Knox, 1998) and have low confidence due to having their short history with the airlines (Kwon and Jang, 2012), they were expected to be sensitive to failures and tend to believe that failures are related with controllable and stable causes. Thus, it may be stated that findings are consistent with theoretical background. On the other hand, unexpectedly, switching is found to have a significant negative influence on controllability attributions when a service failure is experienced with a LCC. Passengers who experience a negative event with a LCC perceive the cause of the failure to be uncontrollable, and therefore hypothesis regarding positive influence of switching on controllability attributions following LCC service failure was not supported.

6.2.4. Causal Attributions and Repurchase Intentions

Since a firm's perceived control over a failure increases consumer's anger (Folkes, 1984) which leads to exclusion of a benefit normally enjoyed (Averill, 1983) and results in reduction of willingness to fly with the same airline again (Folkes et al., 1987), controllability attributions were expected to have a negative influence on repurchase intentions following both LCC and flagship airlines service failures. In line with the findings of related literature, passengers who attribute service failures to controllable causes were expected to decrease repurchase intentions after experiencing a service failure. However, hypotheses stating that controllability has a negative influence on repurchase intentions were not supported.

Perception of a stable problem was expected to affect repurchase intentions negatively for both LCC and flagship airlines. However, hypotheses stating that stability attribution has a negative influence on repurchase intentions were not supported. Even though in related literature it is stated that customers who perceive the cause of a failure to be stable are more confident that the same failure will reoccur (Weiner, 1986), and concordantly, these inferences regarding the stability impacts customers' repurchase behaviors (Folkes, 1984), for airlines service

encounter, a relationship between stability and repurchase intentions was not observed.

Generalizability attributions were assumed to have a positive influence on repurchase intentions both for LCCs and flagship airlines. It was assumed that passengers who attribute an airlines service failure to generalizable causes do not blame airlines, and thus, continue patronizing given airlines. However, findings did not support the hypotheses regarding the positive influence of generalizability attributions on repurchase intentions.

In general, a relationship between causal attributions and repurchase intentions following service failure was not observed for airlines service encounter. The reason may be the nature of airlines and differences in services offered by diverse service providers. Convenience of flight hours, or flight destinations may cause passengers to continue patronizing a given airlines service provider independently of perceptions regarding the cause of service failure in terms of causal attributions.

6.2.5. Expectations and Repurchase Intentions

Expectations for flagship airlines were assumed to have positive influence on repurchase intentions following a flagship airlines service failure. After experiencing a negative event with a flagship airlines, due to their premium service quality expectations from the airlines, and passengers' tendency to justifying service failure in order to acquire cognitive balance again, passengers were assumed to be not affected from the negative event and continue patronizing the airlines. However, hypothesis stating that expectations for flagship airlines have a positive influence on repurchase intentions was not supported.

On the other hand, expectations for LCCs were assumed to have a negative influence on repurchase intentions following a service failure. Passengers were expected to have decreased repurchase intentions due to negativity effect caused by disconfirmation of expectations. Nevertheless, hypothesis stating that LCC expectations have a negative influence on repurchase intentions was not supported due to insignificance of the path.

For airlines service encounter in Turkey, a relationship between expectations and repurchase intentions following a service failure was not observed. Cultural motives behind behavioral intentions of Turkish passengers may be the reason of these findings. For passengers belonging to different cultural environments, expectations may have an influence on repurchase intentions following an airlines service failure, and the direction of the relationship in terms of being positive or negative may differ in accordance with the business model of the airlines. However, for Turkish passengers hypotheses stating a relationship between expectations and repurchase intentions following a failure were not supported.

6.2.6. Loyalty Typologies and Repurchase Intentions

Loyalty was expected to have a positive influence on repurchase intentions following both LCCs and flagship airlines service failures. Loyal customers who score high in commitment to a given airlines were expected to be not affected from experiencing a negative event with that provider, and continue patronizing that airlines. However, hypotheses regarding the positive influence of loyalty on repurchase intentions were not supported. Even though, literature contains researches conducted in different settings (i.e. Yi and La, 2004) indicate that information processing regarding to the current consumption has less impact on loyal customers in terms of repurchase intentions, for airlines service encounter a relationship between loyalty and repurchase intentions was not observed.

In a similar vein with loyalty, habituality was expected to have a positive influence on repurchase intentions following both LCCs and flagship airlines service failures. Passengers who are habitually patronizing an airlines service provider were expected not to be affected from a negative event and keep on patronizing that airlines service provider automatically when a travel is needed to be planned with airlines. However, hypotheses regarding these relationships were not supported due to insignificance of paths. Despite the existence of researches in various settings indicating that habituals tend to repeat past purchase without consulting their intentions (Tam et al., 2009), and frequency of past behavior has a negative influence on the strength of satisfaction-repurchase relationship (Tuu et al.,

2010), for airlines setting, a relationship between habituality and repurchase intentions was not observed.

Switching was expected to have a negative relationship with repurchase intentions following both LCCs and flagship airlines service failures. Passengers who are less committed to the airlines, and are willing to switch service provider easily, were assumed to switch to another airlines after experiencing a negative event with airlines. However, findings do not support negative influence of switching on repurchase intentions both for LCCs and flagship airlines. For airlines service encounter, a relationship between switching behavior and repurchase intentions following a service failure was not observed.

6.2.7. Airlines Business Model Effect on Attributions, Expectations and Repurchase Intentions

Based on the business model of the airlines, passengers' expectations, causal attributions and repurchase intentions following a service failure may differ.

As expected, passengers were found to hold higher expectations for flagship airlines than for LCCs. When the difference in marketing strategies, brand promises and ticket fares are considered, the difference in expectations from LCCs and flagship airlines is coherent. Higher ticket fares, brand extensions, and differentiation strategy of flagship airlines may be the facts behind higher expectations. In a similar vein, paying lower ticket fares for LCCs may result in lower expectation levels.

Findings also indicate that when compared with flagship airlines, passengers tend to attribute failure to more stable causes for LCC service failures. Passengers may have higher level of trust to flagship airlines due to their membership to alliances and/or promise of premium service experience. Moreover, flagship airlines' membership to alliances, which requires a certain level of service quality, may result in a stable high-quality service expectation, and thus, passengers may be perceiving the cause of a flagship service failure to be less stable.

Moreover, findings indicate that following an airlines service failure, passengers have higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines than for LCCs. The basis of higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines may be the flight destination options, and more frequent flights offered by flagship airlines, when compared with LCCs. Additionally, for domestic flights, there exists no rival airlines for flagship airlines, whereas numerous LCCs offer domestic flight options. Therefore, passengers who prefer flying with flagship airlines may keep patronizing the same airlines, and passengers who prefer more economic flights may switch to another LCC.

On the other hand, contrary to expectations, hypotheses stating that passengers tend to perceive causes of LCC failures to be more controllable than flagship airlines service failures, and flagship airlines service failures to be generalizable than causes of LCC service failures, were not supported.

6.3. Managerial Implications

According to Folkes and Kostos (1986), there exists an incongruity between attribution of consumers and suppliers. Therefore, understanding passengers' attributions following a failure may be beneficial for management of airlines in terms of detecting antecedents of failure attributions and customers' perceptions regarding cause of service failures which are inevitable in service encounter, and their role on repurchase intentions. Additionally, this research considers difference of attributions and reactions of passengers for two distinct passenger airlines business models and provides managerial implications separately for LCCs and flagship carriers.

Extrovert passengers were found to attribute flagship airlines service failures to uncontrollable causes. Thus, it can be stated that following a service failure, positive affectivity and optimism of passengers result in more favorable evaluations for flagship airlines. Extrovert passengers who experience a failure with flagship airlines, perceive service failure to be under volitional control of airlines, and do not blame airlines in this respect.

After experiencing a service failure, loyal passengers of flagship airlines are found to attribute negative event to uncontrollable and unstable causes. In other words, it is found that loyal passengers of flagship airlines tend to perceive failures as temporary and uncontrollable which could have not been prevented by airlines, and do not blame airlines service provider. Supported negative influence of loyalty on flagship controllability and stability attributions points out the importance and advantage of loyal customers, who also constitute the most profitable customer type for enterprises. Since failures are impossible to be eliminated completely (Vázquez-Casielles et al., 2007), within this context, loyal passengers are the most insightful customers of flagship airlines. Similarly, loyal passengers of LCCs are found to attribute failures to generalizable causes which are not person- or airlines-specific. Accordingly, not solely for flagship airlines but also for LCCs obtaining loyal passengers plays a vital role.

Passengers who prefer a certain LCC out of habit are found to attribute service failures to uncontrollable and generalizable causes. It may be stated that habituality results in tendency of not blaming LCCs for a negative event in terms of controllability and generalizability attributions. In a similar vein with loyalty, in this manner, passengers who patronize certain airlines out of habit holds importance for LCCs. Therefore, sticking in minds of customer and becoming the first and automatic choice of airlines may make LCCs gain a competitive edge in the industry, especially when the fact of high competitiveness among LCCs is considered.

Switcher passengers who experience a service failure with flagship airlines were found to attribute failure to stable causes. Since switchers are categorized under non-loyal and low-profit customer group, their failure attribution holds less importance for airlines service providers. Additionally, switchers are known as the customers who seek discounts (Knox, 1998), and thus even if they were found to be not blaming flagship airlines after experiencing a failure, they would most likely have been patronizing another airlines which offers discounts for the next travel (Moisescu, 2006). In addition, passengers who score high in switching behavior attribute flagship airlines service failure to controllable causes. This finding indicates that, even passengers who have no commitment to the service provider and

seek for discounts expect flagship airlines to control and prevent any possible failures due to its business model and premium pricing strategy.

Expectations were found to have positive influence on controllability attributions following a service failures experienced with a LCC. Falling short of higher expectations result in higher level of anger, and thus attribution of failure to controllable causes. As a result of anger, passengers may perceive failure as to be preventable by the LCC. For passengers who experience a service failure with flagship airlines, expectations were found to have negative influence on stability attributions. In this respect, it may be stated that, flagship airlines take advantage of higher expectations resulting from premium pricing strategy (Bhadra, 2009; Wittman, 2014), due to negative influence of expectations on stability attributions following flagship airlines service failure. As is seen from findings, expectations play a vital role for both LCCs and flagship airlines. Therefore, whereas it is possible for flagship airlines to take advantage of higher expectations of passengers, LCCs should perform in accordance with expectations of passengers. Additionally, brand image created by the airlines, which also shapes expectations, should be consistent with the capability of airlines.

Passengers were found to hold higher expectations for flagship airlines than for LCCs. As indicated previously, there is a positive relationship between ticket fares and expectations (Bhadra, 2009; Wittman, 2014). Thus, it can be stated that higher ticket fares are the basis of higher expectations for flagship airlines, whereas lower ticket fares result in lower expectations for LCCs. Additionally, preferential rights granted to flagship airlines by the government may result in higher expectations for flagship carriers. High expectations may be opposed to flagship airlines favor in cases of service failures. High expectation which cannot be met by flagship airlines may result in higher anger, and thus, unfavorable actions taken by passengers such as negative WOM. Therefore, flagship airlines should be more careful regarding satisfaction of passengers' expectations.

When compared with flagship airlines service failures, passengers found to attribute failure to more stable causes for LCC service failures. The reason behind this finding may be the perception of alliance membership and privileges granted to flagship airlines by the government as a result of a quality service. Therefore

passengers may consider flagship airlines service failures to be related with unstable and temporary causes, and believe that obtaining privileges and prestigious membership would not be possible otherwise. On the other hand, cost leadership strategy of LCCs may be evaluated as a decision taken by the management in order to compensate customer loss, which is a result of stable service failures. Passengers may perceive LCCs to be striving for attracting new customers with low fares after losing existing customers due to stable service failures.

Singh (1988) stated that decrease in repurchase intentions is a form of customer responses to service failures. This study revealed that, change in passengers' repurchase intentions following a service failure differs in accordance with airlines' business model. Following an airlines service failure, passengers hold higher repurchase intentions for flagship airlines than for LCCs. The reason can be the operational and strategic differences between LCCs and flagship airlines. Membership to strategic alliances, wide flight destination options, more frequent flights, in-flight entertainment systems, and complimentary food and drink service offered by flagship airlines may be more favorable for passengers. In addition, as stated previously, passengers are found to attribute service failure to more stable causes for LCC service failures than for airlines service failure. Perception of an unstable service failure may increase repurchase probability for flagship airlines, and on the contrary, perception of a more stable service failure causes a reduction in repurchase intention for LCCs.

6.4. Limitations and Recommendation for Further Research

First, the effect of severity of the failure has not been investigated in this study. However, sequent negative events following an airline service failure may influence the perception of failure causality and behavioral intentions. For instance, for a passenger going to an important business meeting, the effect of a 30-minutes-delay may conclude in different attributional responses. Missing an important business meeting, and losing a key customer may cause different reactions. Thus, failure severity in airlines context is worthy for further investigation.

Secondly, the construct loyalty typologies of habituality, switching, and loyalty have been measured via previously validated and used measurement scales for different settings. However, for airlines service encounter, due to the nature of the industry (flight availability, the importance of ticket fares, and flight times), loyalty typologies may have more flexible borders. For instance, loyal passenger of a an airlines may patronize another airlines due to convenience of flight times, or a switcher seeking for discounts may patronize an airlines with high ticket fares due to convenience of flight destination. Therefore, future research should develop loyalty typologies measurement scales in accordance with the nature of the airlines service encounter in order to verify the results.

Another limitation is that, respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire by assuming the existence of an airline service failure. In the present case, participants may have been recalled the last failure they experienced during a flight, or may have been recalled the most frequently heard airlines service failure from their friends and family. Moreover, it is likely that respondents gave less intense emotional responses than they would have been asked to fill the survey after they experience a failure.

Additionally, service failures may occur at different levels; at employee level or at organizational level. For different cases involving different level of service failures, repurchase intentions following a service failure may vary. For example, a passenger may be more propitious in terms of repurchase intentions in case of having a negative experience with an impolite stewardess, when compared with the case of cancellation of a flight without giving a notice. In accordance, failures may be categorized as employee-level and organization-level for further investigation of the model.

Furthermore, this study examines the data obtained solely from Turkish passengers. The study may be broadened by obtaining data from international passengers from different cultures. Consumers from different cultures are found to have dissimilar levels of service expectations and tendency to show different relational behaviors (Patterson and Smith, 2001; Mattila and Paterson, 2004). According to Carpetener (2000), failure attributions differ in accordance with cultural tightness. Accordingly, in further researches another set of data may be

obtained from citizens of a western country and a comparison may be made between individuals belonging to eastern and western culture. The comparison may supply significant managerial implications in terms of behavioral and attributional patterns of customers.



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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma havayolu firmaları aracılığıyla gerçekleşen seyahatler hakkında yürütülen akademik bir çalışmadır. Bu testin sonuçları bir yüksek lisans tez çalışmasında kullanılacaktır. Kişisel cevaplar değil örneklemden alınan kümülatif cevaplar önem taşımaktadır. Bu nedenle kimlik bilgilerinizi yazmanıza gerek yoktur. Bu araştırmaya katılmanız sizin için herhangi bir risk taşımamakta olup, cevaplarınızın tümü gizli tutulacaktır. Bu testi tamamlamak ortalama olarak 5 dakikanızı almaktadır ve katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Saygılarımla,

Birce Dobrucalı

İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi

BÖLÜM 1: *Demografik Bilgiler*

1. Cinsiyetiniz nedir?

Erkek Kadın

2. Kaç yaşındasınız?

18-24 25-31 32-38 39-45 46-52 53 ve üstü

3. Bitirdiğiniz son okul aşağıdakilerden hangisidir? Eğer halen devam etmekte iseniz, lütfen son bitirdiğiniz okulu işaretleyiniz.

İlkokul Ortaokul Lise Önlisans Lisans Yüksek lisans Doktora

4. Aylık gelir seviyeniz nedir?

0-1000 1001-2000 2001-3000 3001-5000 5001- 7500 7501+

BÖLÜM 2: Lütfen aşağıda sunulan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum</i> | <i>Katılmıyorum</i> | <i>Kararsızım</i> | <i>Katılıyorum</i> | <i>Kesinlikle Katılıyorum</i> |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dikkatleri üzerime çekmekten hoşlanmam. | | | | | |
| Konuşacak çok az şeyim vardır. | | | | | |
| İnsanlar arasında kendimi rahat hissederim. | | | | | |
| Çok fazla konuşmam. | | | | | |
| Eğlencelerde çok sayıda farklı insanla sohbet ederim. | | | | | |
| Çevremde yabancılar varken sessiz kalırım. | | | | | |
| Eğlencelerin aranan ismiyim. | | | | | |
| Kendimi geri planda tutarım. | | | | | |
| Konuşmaları ben başlatırım. | | | | | |
| İlgi odağı olmak hoşuma gider. | | | | | |
| İnsanlarla ilgilenirim. | | | | | |
| İnsanları aşağılarım. | | | | | |
| Duygusal biriyim. | | | | | |
| Genellikle diğer insanlarla ilgili değilimdir. | | | | | |
| İnsanların ne hissettikleriyle ilgilenirim. | | | | | |
| İnsanlara vakit ayırırım. | | | | | |
| İnsanların sorunlarıyla ilgilenmem. | | | | | |
| İnsanları rahatlatırım. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanlarla çok az ilgilenirim. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanlarla empati kurarım. | | | | | |

BÖLÜM 3: Lütfen aşağıda sunulan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Düşük maliyetli havayolları ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde;

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasının her anlamda mükemmel hizmet sunmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasının hatasız ve güvenilebilir hizmet sunmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Düşük maliyetli havayolu firması çalışanlarının daima nazik davranmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Düşük maliyetli havayolu firması çalışanlarının check-in esnasında hızlı hizmet vermesini beklerim. | | | | | |
| Düşük maliyetli havayolu firması çalışanlarından özelleştirilmiş, bireysel ilgi beklerim. | | | | | |

Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolları* ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde;

***Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu:** Her ülkenin, kuyruğunda kendi burağını taşıyan ve ülke lehine uçuş müsadese ve frekans hakkı alınan havayolu firması (Örn: Fransa-Air France, Almanya-Lufthansa, Azerbaycan-Azerbaijan Airlines, Türkiye-THY v.b.)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasının her anlamda mükemmel hizmet sunmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasının hatasız ve güvenilebilir hizmet sunmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firması çalışanlarının daima nazik davranmasını beklerim. | | | | | |
| Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firması çalışanlarının check-in esnasında hızlı hizmet vermesini beklerim. | | | | | |
| Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firması çalışanlarından özelleştirilmiş, bireysel ilgi beklerim. | | | | | |

BÖLÜM 4: Lütfen aşağıda sunulan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Havayoluyla seyahat edeceğim zaman sadece belirli bir havayolu firmasını tercih ederim. | | | | | |
| Alışkanlık olarak seyahat etmeyi tercih ettiğim bir havayolu firması vardır. | | | | | |
| Havayolu ile seyahat edeceğim zaman otomatik olarak belirli bir firmaya yönelirim. | | | | | |
| Havayoluyla seyahat edeceğim zaman hep aynı havayolu firmasını tercih ederim. | | | | | |
| Havayoluyla seyahat edeceğim zaman, her zaman tercih ettiğim havayolu firması dışında alternatif firma aramam. | | | | | |
| Her zaman tercih ettiğim havayolu firması fiyatlarını arttırsa bile onunla seyahat etmeye devam ederim. | | | | | |
| Herhangi bir havayolu firmasının sadık müşterisi değilim. | | | | | |
| Yakın gelecekte her zaman tercih ettiğim havayolu firmasını değiştirme ihtimalim yok. | | | | | |
| Fiyat, her zaman tercih ettiğim havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmeye devam etmemde önemli bir unsur değildir. | | | | | |
| Her zaman seyahat ettiğim havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmek için daha fazla parayı gözden çıkarabilirim. | | | | | |
| Daha önce denemediğim bir havayoluyla seyahat etmektense her zaman seyahat ettiğim havayolunu tercih ederim. | | | | | |
| Farklı havayolu firmalarıyla seyahat etmeyi denemekten çekinmem. | | | | | |
| Sadece değişiklik olsun diye çeşitli havayolu firmalarıyla uçmaktan keyif alırım. | | | | | |

BÖLÜM 5: *Lütfen havayolu seyahatlerinizde en sık karşılaştığınız sorun türünü, yalnız bir tanesini seçecek şekilde belirtiniz.*

- Uçuş öncesinde yaşanan sorunlar (yer personelinin tutumu, rötar, check-in, boarding, rezervasyon v.b.)
- Uçuş esnasında yaşanan sorunlar (kalitesiz ikram, konforsuz koltuk, kabin memurlarının tutumu v.b.)
- Uçuş sonrasında yaşanan sorunlar (kayıp/hasarlı bagaj, uzun bagaj bekleme süresi v.b.)

BÖLÜM 6: *Lütfen bir önceki bölümde belirttiğiniz sorun türünü göz önünde tutarak, aşağıda sunulan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz*

Düşük maliyetli havayolları ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde;

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bu sorunlara ilişkin sorumluluğun, o firmayla seyahat etmeyi tercih ettiğim için kendimde olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunlara ilişkin sorumluluğun havayolunda olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların devamlı (kalıcı) olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların çözülemez olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların yalnızca geçici olarak çözüm bulunabilecek sorunlar olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların sıklıkla meydana geldiğini düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların kasti sorunlar olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolu firması tarafından kontrol edilebilir olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolu firması tarafından öngörülebilir olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların muhattap olunan personelle alakalı olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolunun o havalimanında yürüttüğü operasyonlarına özgü olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolunun operasyonlarını yürüttüğü tüm havalimanlarında yaşandığını düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların o havayolu firmasına özgü olmadığını, her havayolu firmasında yaşandığını düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların yaşanan olağanüstü hal ya da dönemsel yoğunluğa özgü olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |

Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolları ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde;

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bu sorunlara ilişkin sorumluluğun, o firmayla seyahat etmeyi tercih ettiğim için kendimde olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunlara ilişkin sorumluluğun havayolunda olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların devamlı (kalıcı) olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların çözülemez olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların yalnızca geçici olarak çözüm bulunabilecek sorunlar olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların sıklıkla meydana geldiğini düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların kasti sorunlar olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolu firması tarafından kontrol edilebilir olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolu firması tarafından öngörülebilir olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların muhattap olunan personelle alakalı olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolunun o havalimanında yürüttüğü operasyonlarına özgü olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların havayolunun operasyonlarını yürüttüğü tüm havalimanlarında yaşandığını düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların o havayolu firmasına özgü olmadığını, her havayolu firmasında yaşandığını düşünürüm. | | | | | |
| Bu sorunların yaşanan olağanüstü hal ya da dönemsel yoğunluğa özgü olduğunu düşünürüm. | | | | | |

BÖLÜM 7: Lütfen aşağıda sunulan ifadelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Düşük maliyetli havayolları ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde bir sorunla karşılaşsam;

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aynı düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmeye devam ederim. | | | | | |
| Bir sonraki uçuşumu aynı düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasıyla gerçekleştirme eğiliminde olurum. | | | | | |
| Tekrar o düşük maliyetli havayoluyla uçuş yaparım. | | | | | |
| Bir sonraki uçuşumda, aynı düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasını kullanmam. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanları bu düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmemeleri konusunda uyarırım. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanları bu düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasıyla yaşadığım uçuş deneyimiyle ilgili olumsuz şeyler söylerim. | | | | | |
| Tavsiye isteyen biri olursa, yinede bu düşük maliyetli havayolu firmasını öneririm. | | | | | |

Bayrak taşıyıcı havayolları ile gerçekleştirilen seyahatlerde bir sorunla karşılaşırsam;

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aynı bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmeye devam ederim. | | | | | |
| Bir sonraki uçuşumu aynı bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasıyla gerçekleştirme eğiliminde olurum. | | | | | |
| Tekrar o bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasıyla uçuş yaparım. | | | | | |
| Bir sonraki uçuşumda, aynı bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasını kullanmam. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanları bu bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasıyla seyahat etmemeleri konusunda uyarırım. | | | | | |
| Diğer insanları bu bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasıyla yaşadığım uçuş deneyimiyle ilgili olumsuz şeyler söylerim. | | | | | |
| Tavsiye isteyen biri olursa, yinede bu bayrak taşıyıcı havayolu firmasını öneririm. | | | | | |

BÖLÜM 8: Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları okuyup, uygun cevapları işaretleyiniz.

1. Geçtiğimiz 1 yıl içerisinde kaç kez havayolu ile seyahat ettiniz?

1-3 4-6 7-10 11-15 15+

2. Lütfen havayolu ile gerçekleştirdiğiniz seyahatlerinizin amaçlarını sıklığına göre belirtiniz.

| | 1 Hemen Hemen Hiç | 2 Az | 3 Yarıya Yakın | 4 Çok | 5 Hemen Hemen Hepsi |
|--|-------------------------|---------|----------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| İş | | | | | |
| Etkinlik (konser, spor müsabakası v.b.) ve tatil | | | | | |
| Eğitim (Kurs, seminer v.b.) | | | | | |
| Aile ziyareti | | | | | |
| Dini Seyahat | | | | | |