

Sculpting Skies: The Ever-Shifting Dreamscape of Turkish Air Travel

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The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered global air travel, reshaping passenger expectations and perceptions of service quality. This study examines changes in tourists' evaluations of Turkish-registered airlines based on 4,652 online reviews from five major carriers. Using Leximancer for semantic content analysis, the study identifies key thematic shifts before and after the pandemic. Results show a move from traditional service elements—like punctuality, catering, and staff behavior—to pandemic-related concerns such as hygiene, testing, and refund policies. The study also explores shifts in value-for-money perceptions, offering data-driven insights for airline managers in the post-pandemic travel environment.

Keywords: airline service quality, air transportation, post-pandemic tourism, aviation management

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry, once a bustling and vibrant tapestry of diverse cultures and destinations, has faced a profound and unprecedented transformation after the COVID-19 pandemic. The travel landscape, which was once defined by wanderlust and exploration, has been reshaped by a newfound emphasis on safety, hygiene, and adaptability. The Turkish airline sector is at the heart of this metamorphosis, a critical pillar of the country's tourism landscape. Turkish airlines, renowned for their warm hospitality and exceptional service quality, have historically played a pivotal role in attracting tourists to the enchanting Turkish zone (Dursun et al., 2014). However, the pandemic's disruptive impact on global travel patterns, coupled with the heightened concerns for safety and hygiene, has compelled airlines worldwide to reassess their operations, redefine their priorities, and reimagine the passenger experience (Arora et al., 2021). The result has been a fundamental shift in the way travelers perceive and evaluate the services provided by airlines, thus altering their expectations and preferences (Saydam et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the disaster of COVID-19 has significantly impacted travelers' behavior, especially owing to confinement-related difficulties (Jafari et al., 2020). COVID-19 grew to become the most hazardous virus in aviation history (Saydam et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2021), according to an IATA analysis, with its effects projected to last until at least 2024 (IATA, 2020). Gudmundsson et al. (2021) anticipated the same healing direction, with the best-case scenario occurring in mid-2022 and the worst-case situation occurring in 2026. The COVID-19 pandemic has not merely been a setback; it has ushered in an era of adaptability and innovation in the airline industry (Bharatish et al., 2023).

Airlines across the globe have been forced to adapt at an extraordinary pace, implementing rigorous safety measures, reconfiguring routes, and altering their service delivery to align with travelers' evolving needs and preferences (Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). This transformation is particularly pertinent in the Turkish zone, which is determined to regain its prominence as a preferred tourist destination post-COVID-19. The dream of travelers exploring Turkey's rich history, culture, and natural beauty now hinges on a delicate balance between adventure and safety. Hence, this article delves into the intricate interplay of factors affecting the quality perceptions of tourists utilizing Turkish airlines for transportation in the post-COVID era. It explores how the pandemic has sculpted tourists' expectations, preferences, and perceptions of service quality. By closely examining these shifts, this article aims to provide valuable insights into how Turkish airlines can adapt and enhance their offerings to meet the evolving demands of post-pandemic travelers.

The article focuses on the specific context of the Turkish airline sector, a region that has been underrepresented in post-pandemic travel research. While numerous studies have explored the impacts of COVID-19 on the aviation industry (Deveci et al., 2022; Tuncal et al., 2021), few have concentrated on how Turkish airlines, known for their unique blend of hospitality and service quality, have adapted to the changing dynamics. Furthermore, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by investigating how the pandemic has shaped travelers' expectations and perceptions of service quality in the post-COVID era. Understanding these shifts is essential for airlines and the broader tourism industry to tailor their services to the new demands of travelers. Also, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by investigating how the pandemic has shaped travelers' expectations and perceptions of service quality in the post-COVID era. Understanding these shifts is essential for airlines and the broader tourism industry to tailor their services to the new demands of travelers. Finally, the article bridges a gap in the literature by examining the intricate interplay between safety measures and the overall travel experience. While previous research has often treated these aspects separately, this article explores how airlines balance safety protocols with delivering an enjoyable and memorable travel experience.

Research Questions

R1: Before COVID-19, what are the key concepts that drive visitor perceptions of service quality?

R2: What are the primary concepts influencing tourists' perceptions of service quality following COVID-19?

R3: What are the themes most linked with a higher and lower value for money?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality Perception in the Airline Industry

The airline industry, a dynamic and fiercely competitive sector within the global travel and tourism arena (Efthymiou and Christidis, 2023), constantly evolves to meet passengers' diverse needs and preferences. Service quality stands as the cornerstone of this evolution, holding the power to sway travelers' decisions, preferences, and ultimately, their loyalty (Thongkruer and Wanarat, 2021). In today's interconnected market, where the bar for service excellence is continually raised (Ghorabae et al., 2017), airlines recognize that elevating service quality isn't merely a strategy for gaining a competitive edge but a fundamental prerequisite for survival and growth (Park et al., 2004). The relentless pursuit of enhanced service quality underscores airlines' strategic imperative to understand and anticipate customer expectations (Hussain et al., 2015). By aligning their offerings with passenger needs, airlines distinguish themselves from competitors and cultivate enduring relationships that translate into repeat business and fortified market positions (Park et al., 2004). In essence, the commitment to superior service quality serves as a potent differentiator in an environment where every aspect of the passenger experience is scrutinized (Ghobadian et al., 1994).

In response to escalating competition, airlines must continually innovate and refine their service offerings (Pina et al., 2014). This drive for innovation manifests in various facets of the passenger journey, from booking and check-in procedures to in-flight amenities and post-flight services. Consequently, passengers benefit from various choices and experiences, each tailored to their evolving expectations and preferences (Pina et al., 2014). Moreover, as technological advancements revolutionize how airlines interact with passengers, the focus on service quality extends beyond traditional touchpoints to encompass digital channels and personalized interactions (Hussain et al., 2015). From AI-driven chatbots offering real-time assistance to data analytics enabling targeted marketing campaigns, airlines leverage technology to deliver seamless and intuitive experiences that resonate with modern travelers. Pursuing service excellence isn't merely a competitive strategy for airlines; it's an ongoing commitment to exceeding customer expectations and fostering lasting relationships in an ever-evolving industry landscape. As airlines navigate the complexities of the global market, those that prioritize service quality stand poised to thrive amidst competition, ensuring that every passenger journey is a testament to their unwavering dedication to excellence.

The imperatives of service quality in the airline industry have been further accentuated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, marking a pivotal shift in how airlines perceive and deliver on passenger expectations. Pre-pandemic, the focus on service excellence was paramount, with airlines striving to differentiate themselves through superior offerings and personalized experiences (Thongkruer and Wanarat, 2021). However, the global health crisis ushered in a new era, where health and safety concerns took center stage alongside traditional service metrics. During the height of the pandemic, airlines faced unprecedented challenges in maintaining service standards while ensuring the well-being of passengers and crew. Enhanced cleaning protocols, social distancing measures, and the adoption of contactless technologies became integral components of the passenger experience (Wan-Chik et al., 2022). Consequently, service quality took on a new dimension, encompassing the customary elements of comfort and convenience and a heightened emphasis on health and safety protocols (Narayan et al., 2009).

Moreover, the pandemic prompted airlines to reassess their approach to customer service in light of rapidly evolving travel restrictions and passenger expectations. Flexibility and empathy emerged as cornerstones of service excellence, with airlines implementing flexible booking policies and providing transparent communication to reassure travelers amidst uncertainty (Hall and Seyfi, 2020). In doing so, airlines endeavored to retain customer loyalty and cultivate trust and confidence in their ability to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. As the industry gradually recovers from the impact of COVID-19, the imperative of service quality remains as vital as ever, albeit with a renewed focus on resilience and adaptability. Post-pandemic, airlines continue to refine their service offerings, leveraging lessons learned during the crisis to innovate and reimagine the passenger experience. From the seamless integration of health and safety measures to the deployment of digital solutions for contactless travel, airlines are at the forefront of shaping a new era of travel characterized by heightened expectations for service excellence and a steadfast commitment to passenger well-being.

Furthermore, the pandemic has underscored the interconnectedness of service quality with broader industry dynamics, such as sustainability and environmental responsibility. As airlines strive to rebuild in a post-pandemic world, there is an increasing recognition of the need to integrate sustainability principles into service delivery, from reducing carbon emissions to promoting eco-friendly practices throughout the passenger journey (Aina et al., 2023). By aligning service quality with sustainable practices, airlines can not only meet the evolving expectations of passengers but also contribute to the industry's long-term viability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a catalyst for redefining service quality in the airline industry, emphasizing the importance of agility, resilience, and responsiveness to evolving passenger needs. As airlines navigate the complexities of a post-pandemic landscape, the pursuit of service excellence remains central to their strategic vision, ensuring that every aspect of the passenger experience reflects a commitment to safety, comfort, and unwavering dedication to customer satisfaction.

Measuring and Managing Service Quality

Reliable and valid service quality measurement is crucial for effective quality management (Asubonteng et al., 1996). It involves understanding the multifaceted nature of quality, ensuring that frontline staff directly interact with customers, align their perception of quality with the organization's requirements, and strive for service excellence. Clear definition and communication of service quality standards are essential to enhance customer perceptions and satisfaction (Prayag, 2007).

Early studies in the airline industry have identified service quality attributes differently, reflecting varying perspectives among researchers. For instance, Gourdin (1988) highlighted three key quality attributes: airfare, safety, and on-time performance. In contrast, Elliott and Roach (1993) proposed a more comprehensive framework, outlining six criteria for evaluating airline service quality, including food and beverage quality, timeliness, baggage handling, seat comfort, airline check-in, and in-flight service. Subsequent literature categorized airline service quality into five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Tsaur et al., (2002) refined this framework using fuzzy set theory, categorizing attributes into five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Alotaibi (2015) built upon this by refining the AIRQUAL scale, aligning it with the SERVQUAL dimensions to positively impact customer satisfaction and loyalty. Gilbert and Wong (2003) expanded upon these dimensions, dividing tangibility into three sub-dimensions: facilities, employees, and flight pattern, while replacing empathy with customization. This adjustment aimed to better reflect tangible aspects of service, such as facility quality, employee demeanor, and flight scheduling, while highlighting the importance of assurance, particularly safety and professionalism.

Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, service quality attributes in the airline industry were essential for passenger satisfaction and loyalty. Pre-pandemic attributes like airfare, safety, on-time performance, and in-flight amenities were traditionally emphasized (Kim et al., 2024). These attributes formed the basis of assessing service quality and shaping passengers' perceptions and decisions. However, the pandemic introduced a new dimension to service quality, with health and safety becoming paramount concerns for passengers (Pereira et al., 2023). Airlines had to adapt rapidly, implementing stringent cleaning protocols, social distancing measures, and flexible booking policies to ensure passenger well-being while maintaining service standards (Pereira et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered traveler behavior and preferences, with a newfound emphasis on safety, hygiene, and adaptability. However, there is limited research on how these shifts have influenced travelers' perceptions of service quality, particularly in the context of airline travel. This study addresses this gap by investigating how the pandemic has shaped travelers' expectations and preferences regarding service quality, specifically when utilizing Turkish airlines. As the tourism industry strives to recover from the impacts of COVID-19, airlines need to tailor their services to meet the evolving demands of travelers. However, there is a gap in understanding how airlines, including Turkish carriers, can adapt their offerings to align with post-pandemic traveler preferences. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the specific factors that influence travelers' perceptions of service quality in the post-COVID era, enabling Turkish airlines to enhance their offerings accordingly.

METHOD

Sampling Method

The study employed a probability sampling method approach. As a systematic sampling, systematic data gathering approach, systematic sampling is a basic procedure that is accomplished by selecting each *n*th individual from the intended population. Following this, a random selection of the major subject and a selection of each *n*th example is made. The inspection component is specified as the number *n*, which is calculated by dividing the target population size by the sample size required. Actual visitor contacts with an airline with a base in Turkey before and after Covid 19 were sampled for this study, this thesis adopted a qualitative content analysis methodology. Samples were collected from Turkish Airline, Pegasus Airline,

Anadolu jet, Corendon Airlines and SunExpress Airlines on TripAdvisor based on the popularity index. Leximancer 5 was used for the study due to its ability to explore and forecast (Olorunsola et al., 2022).

This study gathered a sample from 5 airlines, with n=10. The overall sample size was 4652, corresponding to previous research such as Brochado et al., (2019), which examined 1,200 online reviews to examine passengers' service quality judgments regarding airlines. Another looked explored visitors' service perceptions of World Heritage sites (226 people) (Stoleriu et al., 2019). According to the methodologies utilized by previous experts, only English assessments were included in the current analysis. Online visitor reviews were acquired from booking.com and copied to an Excel sheet (csv. Comma Delimited) folder.

Data Treatment

Another method that is often employed in data analysis is content analysis. It is a method for discovering enormous amounts of word-based data that uses hierarchical coding and grouping. It describes the sentence patterns, frequency, linkages, and connection structures. This Leximancer-based content analysis translates word-based data from popular languages into semantic representations. The current study used four stages to create a virtual map (Olorunsola et al., 2023).

The first step is to submit the csv file with the collected data. As a result, notion seeds are created. Thesaurus is then produced from the notion. Each seed was associated with the phrase thesaurus, and a map was generated by mixing words that were potential keywords for different concepts. As previously stated, ideas are collections of linked terms encompassing a topic. When these word descriptions for each idea have been specified, a concept map will be constructed to show the link between the concepts in the text. The thesaurus displays a list of ideas, the number of variations performed by the thesaurus's learning mechanism, thereby generalizing the concepts from the seed terms and providing a graded list of thesaurus's words that identifies and describes each concept. The weightings associated with each suggestive word are likewise included in the thesaurus list (Dambo et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

Leximancer is a tool that analyses document types and explains details extracted from created documents. At that point, Leximancer uses a quantitative technique to graphically characterize the major concepts contained in the text and outlines how the ideas are connected based on the Bayesian premise of employing computations as well as nonlinear components. Researchers examine three major functional units, terminology, ideas, and themes.

This program employs a two-organized analytical strategy for extricating co-event data to perform theoretical and sociological research. As a result, Leximancer determines the similarity of reformulated ideas and forms where these ideas are linguistically interconnected to create a graphic representation of the results/ Because Leximancer conducts similar social and rational studies, it quantifies not only the proximity of distinct ideas but also the manner in which morals to which ideals are related. When analysing data, the first step is to programmatically define the phrases that occur in the findings.

These notions are decided by the repetition of phrases that incorporate the contradictory principle and the repetition of the contrary principle in another sentence. That is how ideas are generated (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). The application also interprets concepts by grouping them into groups and then into larger groupings designated as themes that display as colourful circles on the map. The outcomes of the most recent review reviews frequently emphasize which papers involve significant subjects.

RESULTS

This study inspects 4,652 online user-generated content from Turkish Airline, Pegasus Airline, Anadolu jet, Corendon Airlines and SunExpress Airline. This study aims to assess the level of change in the perception of airline service quality by tourists bound for Turkish based airline in the post covid-19 era. This study aims to give scholarly insight into the framework of change in the perception of airline service quality by analyzing user experience through online evaluations generated by users and also generating a

Posts reflecting this theme include the following;

“The plane they choose was taken off from Bangkok and was scheduled at 4.40 am to IST and it arrived on time, so they already knew they messed up 280 people’s first day of holiday. Best part: No apology has been made, not a single sorry for the delay, the pilot announcement never mentioned that this flight has a delay....”

“I booked my ticket MONTHS in advance, 2 flights going and 2 flights coming home. Exactly 2 weeks before my flight, I received a text from TURKISH AIRLINES that my return flight (3rd flight) was cancelled.”

“We arrived home three days after we were supposed to. We missed work and college.”

“Had fantastic return flights from Gatwick to Dalaman. The cabin crew were attentive and kind both ways. The food was really nice and the whole experience was much more pleasant than being treated like cattle with the dreadful UK budget airlines- all of which I won’t be flying with again.”

Service Theme

Airline (Word count = 2512; word relevance percentage = 98 percent), service (Word count = 2458; word relevance percentage = 95 percent), customer (Word count = 1170; word relevance percentage = 54 percent), travel (Word count = 432; word relevance percentage = 33 percent), trip (Word count = 418; word relevance percentage = 31 percent), company (Word count = 403; word relevance percentage = 30 percent), pay (Word count = 217; word relevance percentage = 20 percent), luggage (Word count = 173; word relevance percentage = 18 percent), recommend (Word count = 163; word relevance percentage = 16 percent), free (Word count = 34; word relevance percentage = 8 percent), system (Word count = 23; word relevance percentage = 5 percent), and charge (Word count = 18; word relevance percentage = 2 percent).

The following posts are related to this theme:

“I am now still wrangling with them as I disputed this charge with my credit card company. If you dislike rude and unhelpful customer service avoid this airline like the plague”

“Dinner was also included free of charge.”

“Would highly recommend this company and will definitely travel again with them.”

“I will never travel with this low-class airline again and do not recommend it.”

Food Theme

Food (Word count = 1534; word relevance percentage = 56 percent), staff (Word count = 1458; word relevance percentage = 55 percent), seats (Word count = 1170; word relevance percentage = 54 percent), boarding, (Word count = 1001; word relevance percentage = 48 percent), entertainment (Word count = 432; word relevance percentage = 33 percent), crew (Word count = 418; word relevance percentage = 31 percent), friendly (Word count = 415; word relevance percentage = 30 percent), nice (Word count = 217; word relevance percentage = 20 percent), attentive (Word count = 189; word relevance percentage = 18 percent), in-flight (Word count = 188; word relevance percentage = 18 percent), and brand (Word count = 13; word relevance percentage = 1 percent).

The following posts are related to this theme:

“The queue, although long went down fairly quickly and the check in process was smooth, as was boarding. The aircraft, a brand new A321 -NEO was comfortable, cabin was clean and well-presented and crew were friendly - if a little distant.”

“The airplane was super clean so many safety measures being applied, and the cabin crew was very friendly and professional. The boarding and check-in process was very organized.”

“Great service, from de leg room to the food and general attention to the passenger certainly, will try to use next time. It was unknown decided to take a chance for fly duration and price. I wasn't disappointed at all”

Fly Theme

Fly (Word count = 641; word relevance percentage = 43 percent), experience (Word count = 593; word relevance percentage = 40 percent), class (Word count = 570; word relevance percentage = 39 percent), comfortable (Word count = 483; word relevance percentage = 37 percent), excellent (Word count = 402; word relevance percentage = 31 percent), economy (Word count = 328; word relevance percentage = 27 percent and route (Word count = 37; word relevance percentage = 8 percent).

Posts reflecting this theme include the following;

“Hot food is served and most of the time, the food served were delicious. I flew YUL-IST in economy and IST-KUL in business and I have had a very satisfying flight. While in Business, Cabin crews were attentive and helpful. Business Class with TK is highly recommended.

It was great brilliant service; economy class was good as business class I was surprised to see latest films in economy seats”

“Two recent flights between Dublin and Istanbul on Turkish Airlines were a dream. This airline offers comforts not easily found on planes since the industry stripped back to a more affordable basis. You can chose your seat with extra cost, bring 8kg on board and another 23kg in the hold - and I flew Economy. Travel-friendly luxuries did not stop there. Plan your meal options in advance or settle for one of three main courses on board within the context of a tasty three-course meal. Your drink of choice is included; they will bring you tea and coffee as needed. Choose your movie from various genres, including new releases or game, or follow the flight path. Seats recline, the plane is immaculate, staff are kind and a sterile pack of masks, wipes and sanitiser is offered to every person while boarding. Terrific class.”

Change Theme

Change (Word count = 2610; word relevance percentage = 100 percent), money (Word count = 1713; word relevance percentage = 70 percent), agent (Word count = 1670; word relevance percentage = 69 percent), reservation (Word count = 1083; word relevance percentage = 50 percent) and compensation (Word count = 632; word relevance percentage = 43 percent).

The following posts are related to this theme:

“I had planned 13 days Turkey tour about 4 months back. paid 2600Euro in advance for full trip less air tickets both ways from my country. I joined one international group of Turkish airlines. Istanbul is most common lay over airport. May be many people got their part of full flights cancelled due to Ukrainian war or covid-19. Refunds not given.”

R2: What are the primary concepts influencing tourists' perceptions of service quality following?

Pay Theme

Pay (Word count = 717; word relevance percentage = 45 percent), booked (Word count = 713; word relevance percentage = 45 percent), money (Word count = 678; word relevance percentage = 39 percent), agent (Word count = 273; word relevance percentage = 50 percent), reservation (Word count = 184; word relevance percentage = 23 percent), charge (Word count = 87; word relevance percentage = 5 percent) and compensation (Word count = 32; word relevance percentage = 3 percent).

“They cancelled my flights last year took ages to get credit voucher go use on new flight. This year more cancellations 4 weeks before travelling. After 5 sets of feedback later, I spent an hour on the phone yesterday and because this is my 2nd year of cancellation for the same outbound flight, my Card details aren’t on file; no more customer service team can’t refund over the phone!”

Airline Theme

Airplane (Word count = 731; word relevance percentage = 45 percent) and Clean (Word count = 622; word relevance percentage = 40 percent).

“The flight leaving Dubai was delayed because they said they had to clean the plane so boarding was 1 hour late. This meant that we missed our connecting flight anyway. Then at the transit desk in Turkey they could not give me an extra leg room seat or alternative because they were taken. They passed the buck again and told me to email Pegasus for refund.”

“I was apprehensive about flying with Pegasus after reading some of the reviews here, but can only say that if you prepare properly, this is a perfectly good flight experience. Both my flights on this journey were on time. Clean, new planes, friendly staff both on the ground and in the air. Yes, this is a low cost airline and as such you pay for a bottle of water, or a snack on the plane, or you take it with you. If you can’t handle that, then that is not the airline’s fault. Yes you pay for bags, so what?”

R3: What are the themes most linked with higher and lower value for money?

Value for Money Before Covid-19

The study also objectively examines the interpretation of higher and lower value-for-money scores before COVID-19. According to the survey, customers who rated airline closely associate their pleasant experience to concepts such as flight (92%), service (82%), comfortable (78%), food (71%), entertainment (63%), staff (51%), and seat (31%).

Example of higher value for money:

“My family and I had the pleasure of flying with TA for 3 flights during our holiday to Turkey. The first flight was from CDG to IST. That was the first time we flew with them, and we were impressed. They put every American based airline to shame from their in-flight entertainment to dining. The meals provided were tasty and delicious. The options for dinner were a pesto ravioli or chicken with roasted veggies and mashed potatoes. They included side salads and pudding (banana and chocolate for most flights) Both entrees were tasty and hot. I fell in love with the mini scented hand wipes they provided and wish I could’ve stashed a few. The attendants were pleasant and the airplane was clean and comfortable. We had leg space and enough room to move the headrest to be comfortable. Our two other flights (AYT to IST and IST to ORD) were just as great. The food, staff, plane and cleanliness is what really sets them apart despite the 30-45min delays, which

isn't that bad considering the travel climate worldwide right now. I'm so glad I didn't pay attention to all of the negative reviews as I was totally impressed."

The following concepts have a high likelihood of co-occurrence with a low monetary value: agent (63%), departure (46%), luggage (39%), seat (31%), compensation (22%), boarding (20%), hours (18%), and reservation (12%). Example:

"After a flight cancellation my layover changed from 2 to 9 hours and I was not offered compensation or complimentary anything. Could not cancel my flight as other tickets got more expensive in the months between the flight acquisition and flight change"

Value for Money After Covid-19

The study also objectively examines the interpretation of higher and lower value for money scores after the COVID-19. The study reveals that guests who rated airline closely link their positive experience to the notion of the concept such as flight (72%), service (61%), seat (60%), Helpful (55%), Friendly (51%), staff (43%), and Hygiene (34%).

"Turkish Airlines was outstanding! I was a bit nervous about international air travel since COVID but the airline did an amazing job. The service at check in was great. Staff member, Irena, assisted us with checking in and printing out our boarding passes. She went above and beyond to make sure we were pleased! Turkish Airlines also offers travellers FREE tours if you have a connecting international flight in Istanbul and have a layover between 6 and 24 hours. You must sign up for a tour at the Hotel Desk in the International Arrivals Terminal of Istanbul airport. We could see several mosques, the Grand Bazaar and several other sites. Dinner was also included free of charge."

Concepts regarding the probability of co-occurrence with low money value are: COVID-19 (65%), restriction (43%), test (42%), refund (61%), boarding (39%), ticket (61%), charge (28%), and change (16%).

"I was asked for a Rapid Covid-19 test on my last flight with Turkish Airlines. However, it was not actually required for my trip, so I had to pay 40 EUR at the airport to get a test. Later on, I realized it was their mistake, and there was no need for any test result, but the Airline took no responsibility and told me the information I was given was correct! It was a mess. I am not going to fly with this Airline ever again."

CONCLUSION

Discussion

The study's goal is to ascertain how the covid-19 outbreak has affected people's perceptions of the quality of travel and airline services to the via Turkish zone. This study inspects 4,652 online user-generated content from Turkish Airline, Pegasus Airline, Anadolu jet, Corendon Airlines and SunExpress Airline. Global travel and tourism sector were drastically altered by the COVID-19 epidemic, especially once safety-related limitations were put in place. As previously stated, certain literatures referenced consumer feedback from online surveys showing a decrease in the usage of airline and tourism services due to perceived health hazards. This has been seen as indicating a decline in trust, thus it is crucial to look into these claims further. This includes determining how much tourists and air passengers' perceptions of Turkish based airline have changed after COVID-19. Figure 4.1 depicts the results of the study sans COVID-19-related concerns, which indicated five themes: "flight", "service", "food", "fly", and "change". Figure 4.2 depicts the results of the study with COVID-19-related difficulties, with seven themes: "flight", "service", "food", "fly", "pay", "COVID-19" and "airplane".

As stated in the research by Brochado et al., (2019) and Saydam, et al., (2022), the topic of “flights” is a feature that is a critical service quality element of airlines’ core services. The words “flight,” “pay,” “baggage,” “pay at the airport,” “passengers,” and “take-off” are commonly used together. According to Rezaei et al. (2018), an efficient airport service is crucial for a pleasant flying experience and that the airline luggage handling system is one of the most significant factors for passengers. “Service” was a further recurrent theme in this research. The words “food” and “entertainment” are frequently used in conjunction with the idea of “service.” These results support the research by Noviantoro and Huang (2019) The mentioned writers also concluded that for today’s airline customers, in-flight entertainment is essential. Furthermore, Han et al study’s (2019), which made comparable discoveries to ours, consistently concluded that in-flight food and beverage quality greatly increases passengers’ happiness as well as their propensity to travel again.

The study’s outcome also reveal significant impact COVID-19 pandemic has on the perception of airline service among passengers. Many of the review reflect more concerns about the safety and cleanliness of flying, particularly in the wake of the spread of the virus on airplanes (For example: “Pegasus positions itself as a reliable cheap airline. During my flight in the middle of a second COVID 19 wave they chose filled the plane without any respect to social distance. No middle seats where leaved empty. If you want to fly safely and without worries, you must consider this. I experienced their pricing as manipulative and in some sense a “price trap”. If you book your ticket in advance at e.g., premium carrier you will pay the same as for Pegasus and get more value for money (more baggage allowance, inflight entertainment, meal, service-oriented crew). Conclusion money oriented instead of service oriented and little respect for safety concerning Covid-19.”).

In addition, implementing various social distancing measures and changes to in-flight services have altered the overall passenger experience (For example: “Flight check in was efficient and checked covid vaccine status and locator form for Turkey. Flight boarded on time out and return. Outbound wasnt full so we could spread out but inbound was fill and strangely the leg room felt more restricted. Take off was smooth as was touch down on both occasions. Staff ran refreshments smoothly Nothing to complain about would recommend.”).

According to a survey conducted by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in 2020, nearly 60% of respondents reported that they were either “very concerned” or “extremely concerned” about the potential risk of contracting COVID-19 while traveling by air (IATA, 2020). This suggests that the pandemic has caused a significant shift in the perception of airline safety among passengers. In addition, the changes to in-flight services and amenities due to the pandemic have also impacted the overall passenger experience. For example, many airlines have suspended or modified their food and beverage service, and some have even removed in-flight entertainment systems to reduce the potential for virus transmission (IATA, 2020). This phenomenon was also noted especially when comparing concept before and after COVID-19, for example: “Recently me and my family visited Istanbul Turkey. So, we took flight from Edinburgh to Istanbul with Turkish airline. The flight crews are not friendly and service are very bad. they’re looks like doing their jobs by force. And food was horrible. It’s not 1st time we flying with Turkish air but previous experiences are good. After covid situation they’re became worst airliner. Hopefully they’ll improve their services. Comment”

Overall, it seems likely that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the perception of airline service among passengers, with many passengers evaluating their service quality experience in concepts such as “Covid-19”, “Restriction”, “pay”, “fly” and so on. Other key indicators include safety and cleanliness and furthermore passengers also experienced changes to in-flight amenities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the airline industry. Some of the changes observed include: Reduction in demand: The pandemic has led to a significant reduction in the demand for air travel, as people have been advised to stay home and avoid non-essential travel. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of flights being operated and a significant reduction in passenger numbers. Changes to travel restrictions: Many countries have implemented travel restrictions and quarantine requirements for travelers from certain countries. These measures have also contributed to the reduction in demand for air travel. Increased focus on health and safety: Airlines have implemented a range of measures to ensure the health

and safety of passengers and staff, including using face masks and other personal protective equipment, enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures, and temperature checks. Financial challenges: The reduction in demand for air travel and the impact of travel restrictions have had a major financial impact on the airline industry, with many airlines experiencing significant losses and some going bankrupt.

Implication

There is a lacuna in the existing research about service perception in respect to post COVID-19 and pre-COVID-19 in the airline business. First and foremost, this study adds to the literature on the airline sector, in particular on service quality. This study also sheds light on the issue in a way that other academics may use to create service quality metrics from the viewpoint of passengers.

Second, this study utilized a distinct methodological technique by analysing user-generated reviews using Leximancer because most research on post COVID-19 and/or pre-COVID-19 in the airline business has been conceptual. With the use of Leximancer's techniques, patterns might be investigated with little interference by academics in the inclusive interactions of the visitors. It has been demonstrated that this subject is more substantial than the others among them. The current study further contributes to the body of research by outlining the major narrative patterns connected to "greater" and "lower" assessments of the value for money of airline. Hence, this is aim to encourage airline managers to take additional measures to increase the quality perception of travellers amidst concerns on the safety of the flight. The research will also explore opportunities for direct feedback from customers to help inform up-to-date policies in the aviation and tourism sectors. The narratives of service encounter uploaded online by the two distinct satisfaction groups (satisfied-dissatisfied) contain opposing themes since content analysis clearly showed that satisfaction groups include various narratives and reviews regarding airline experiences. Since all the research was clear about the service elements that offered the most value for the money during the COVID-19 epidemic, this study's findings add to the knowledge by identifying those service features.

The results will go a long way contributing to target marketing strategies post the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to revamp the aviation and tourism economy. It will also contribute to the global body of knowledge for informing relevant policies and sound economic decisions by authorities throughout the world. Finally, from a societal perspective, our research offers interesting implications that can be used to strengthen advocacy for more connectivity worldwide as facilitated by a bigger and better global airline industry.

This study's findings give airline owners, directors, and decision-makers more understanding of how customers perceive facilities regarding consistency and experience. Understanding online reviews as a reflection of customer interactions can help airline owners pinpoint crucial elements for fostering good post-purchase trends and minimizing unfavorable behaviors. Consequently, customer reviews provide airlines a practical way to get feedback from passengers while also giving them a chance to learn how to make wise post-purchase decisions.

Managers should prioritize their employees' and customers' safety and health by implementing measures such as regular sanitation and providing personal protective equipment (PPE). COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption of digital services, and managers should continue to enhance their digital service offerings to provide more convenient and efficient services to customers. This can include offering online service portals, mobile applications, and other digital tools. The pandemic has highlighted the need for businesses to be flexible and adaptable in the face of changing circumstances. Managers can increase flexibility and adaptability by offering flexible work arrangements, adjusting service offerings to meet changing customer needs, and being open to new business models and revenue streams. In uncertain times, customers appreciate clear and transparent communication from businesses. Managers can improve communication and transparency by providing regular updates to customers about service changes and updates, and being honest and upfront about any challenges or limitations. Furthermore, employees are the frontline of service delivery, and investing in their training and development can improve service quality and customer satisfaction. Managers can provide ongoing training and development opportunities, such as customer service skills training, to ensure that employees have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver high-quality service. Overall, these service quality policies can help managers improve the quality of their services, increase customer satisfaction, and build trust and loyalty with their customers. This research

reveals that by prioritizing safety and health, enhancing digital service delivery, increasing flexibility and adaptability, improving communication and transparency, and investing in employee training and development, managers can position their businesses for success in the post-COVID-19 era.

Another stakeholder such as government also have a pivotal role to play in upholding the service quality post covid 19

In the post-COVID-19 era, safety and health concerns will remain a top priority for passenger. Governments can prioritize safety and health by implementing measures. Furthermore, governments should ensure that their services are accessible and inclusive for all citizens, including those with disabilities and language barriers. This can include offering translation services, providing accommodations for those with disabilities, and ensuring that digital services are accessible to all at airports. Governments can improve service responsiveness by ensuring that guest at airport can easily reach out to government representatives to seek information or assistance. This can include providing multiple channels for communication, such as phone, email, and social media, and ensuring timely and effective responses. Governments should continuously measure and improve service quality by gathering feedback from guest at the airport, analyzing service delivery data, and implementing improvements based on this feedback. This can help governments identify areas for improvement and enhance guest satisfaction with government policies.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There are several restrictions on the current study that must be taken into account. First, this study contained 4,652 reviews and five airlines. By contrasting various airlines in various regions and using larger samples, further research might contribute to a more thorough understanding of the key storylines in customers' online evaluations. Second, the focus of the current study was solely on one social media channel. Future studies should analyze the content of online reviews from various social media platforms (such as Facebook or Twitter) to assess how closely the findings from this study match up. Assessing if the primary themes of visitors' overall experiences vary according to visitors' demographic profiles is another issue that requires further study (e.g. sex, race or luxury vs family class). For post-pandemic strategy, this may help to better understand market segmentation in the airline business.

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