A Study on the Image of Male Flight Attendant on Customer Satisfaction*

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Abstract

Purpose - Many studies have shown the effects of the external images of female flight attendants on the customers' satisfaction. Recently, the perception of male flight attendants has become more important and positive, and airlines are hiring a significant number of male flight attendants every year. Due to the lack of research on the male flight attendant, however, the images of male flight attendants were investigated for this study.
Research, design, data and methodology - Using survey techniques with 204 respondents, this study used analytical data based their resulting analysis.
Results - The study examined whether the image of the male flight attendant affects the cognitive and emotional perceptions of customers. The focus of the present study is the external image of the male flight attendant, and the following image-component divisions were formed: hairstyle, body type, uniform, speech, and facial expression.
Conclusions - The study purpose sought to determine whether the image of the male flight attendant exert effects on the emotional and cognitive images of airlines, and if these images have a positive effect on the customers' satisfaction and loyalty for an airline, so that airlines can use the external image of the male flight attendant to help with its own image reinforcement.

Keywords: Male Flight Attendant, Image, Satisfaction.

JEL Classifications: L83, M30, M31.

1. Introduction

As the competitiveness of the aviation market has become more fierce in modern society, the customer service of the aircrew has served as a major factor to differentiate the customer-service experiences of passengers directly from the marketplace. The airline choice of a customer is often based on the image of the airline that serves as a crucial factor (Lee, 2009). Since there are numerous aspects of service satisfaction that customers evaluate, the impact of the external image of flight attendants is considered as significant, and therefore, each airline employs strict standards when recruiting cabin-crew members, who undertake demanding and difficult courses on high-quality human service skills

(Shin & Kim, 2011). As one of the factors that constitutes the image of an airline, the cabin crew can positively influence an airline's image; that is, the cabin-crew image is a major factor in the determination of the image of an airline (Kim, 2002).

Since violent acts and disturbances in the aircraft are frequently reported as a serious threat to the airline and other passengers, the aviation industry is planning to increase its employment levels and strengthen its security and training programs. As the social status of male flight attendants has positively changed, an increasing number of male flight attendants are being employed every year by domestic airlines. The percentage of Korean Air male flight attendants is 10 percent, and the airline has actually increased the proportion of male flight attendants so that one male flight attendant can be assigned to each flight. Based on their total flight-attendant number, Asiana Airlines maintains their ratio of male flight attendants at approximately five percent. Asiana Airlines offers male flight attendants not only for safety and security, but also for special-movement procedures for the customers for which offering various specialized services are offered by a team

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comprising female and male flight attendants. One in every four crew members of the Jeju Air cabin crew serves is a male flight attendant, and a variety of events including in-house model teams and costume services are offered to the customers. Jin Air maintains their ratio of male flight attendants at 20 percent, which is the highest rate among the domestic airlines, and it has expanded its routes to the Americas and introduced new models. In addition, Air Busan, Eastar Jet, and T-way Air continuously hire male flight attendants, whereby they are required to fulfill a combined role regarding the safety of the aircraft and the refreshment of customer services. So far, numerous studies on the image of female flight attendants have been conducted, but the research on the image of male flight attendants is nonexistent.

At the present time, when the importance and the hiring of male flight attendants are increasing, the purpose of this study is for the improvement of the competitiveness of airlines, and the enhancement of the need to improve the image of male flight attendants through the adoption of hairstyles, uniforms, shapes, tones, and facial expressions as independence variables, whereby the impact on the perceived and emotional images of the customers and the way that male flight attendants affect the customer satisfaction of an airline are identified. Also, the present study provides the implications regarding the management of human resources by checking the importance of the external images of male flight attendants and providing a practical alternative to improve the service quality.

2. Review of previous studies

2.1. External image of the airline crew

Since image is used as a tool when customers choose a particular target, it is recognized as a very important element in marketing areas where the customers' purchasing intent is of interest (Lee, 2009). The image created by the cabin crew is considered as the most important measure from among the image properties that customers choose from (Kim, 2003). As the image of the cabin crew plays a major role in the determination of the quality of an airline, it is a crucial business element (Choi, 2010).

In this study, the image of the male flight attendant was considered as the corporate image of the airline, and it was defined as the overall impression that is influenced by the individual taste, idea, and background of any person, object, or company. To evaluate the external image of male flight attendants, the questionnaire items were reconstructed according to hairstyle, uniform, body shape, tone, and expression using the previous research information.

2.1.1. Hair image

According to the Asiana Airlines image-making regulations,

regarding their male flight attendants, the flight attendants must use hair-care products that keep their hair fixed for a long time, because the crew must maintain a tidy hair style over a prolonged time frame. Therefore, dyeing needs to be done with natural hair colors such as a black or dark-brown color, and over-wave or fashion styles are not recommended.

<Table 1> Summarizes the recommended hair styles of the airline flight attendant

Division	Rule	Remarks
Forehead hair	Groomed to reveal more than 2/3 of forehead	Excessive wave or forehead-covering length is not recommended
Side hair	Without covering ears, short whiskers	
Color	Hair color, black or dark-brown series	
Cut	Short-haired, should not reach the collar	Fashionable styles and short sports hair are not recommended
Hair product	Less-polished products and spray	

This study uses hair style, visual image, harmony with the uniform, cleanliness, and color as the measurement factors.

2.1.2. Uniform Image

Uniforms began with the desire of organizations or groups to distinguish themselves as their own identity, and they also convey a collective image. Uniforms not only confer a sense of belonging to the wearer, but they also lead to the expectation of certain behaviors that matching the uniforms (Lim, 2005). The uniform shows the originality of an organization's ideas. In the Republic of Korea(ROK), society has stabilized since the 1960s, and with the development of the economy, many companies have adopted uniforms that are functional, convenient, and represent unity. In the 1980s, as corporate competition and the promotions for the attracting of customers became more intense, the C.I.P (Corporate Identity Program) was introduced to establish images and show the role of a uniform. Uniforms represent the form of a corporation, whereby an iconic image allows for the creation of a company image. However, a uniform represents the wearer's profession, but conversely, it also suppresses the unique characteristics of the wearer (Jeong, 2001). O'Neal and Lapitsky(1991) said uniforms affect the efficiency, management, and performance of the tasks of the wearer. In this study, uniforms will be analyzed with respect to luxuriousness, attractiveness, color, form, and cleanliness.

2.1.3. Body image

Body image is constantly changing due to biological growth, the external environment, aging, and the emotions of joy and pain, and it can be constantly changed due to

societal changes. The characteristics of the body shape are affected socially, while the mental state of the individual can be changed through its role as a variable, and it can also be changed according to uniforms and accessories (Cash, 1990). According to Pedersen and Markee (1994), the factors affecting the physical attractiveness of men are sequentially body shape, eyes, face, height, and hair, and for women, body shape, hair, face, legs, and height, in that order. Likewise, the body image plays an important part in the process of perception, and this presents that it plays an important role in image formation.

People typically feel more attracted and more sociable toward a normal body shape compared with an obese body shape. The body shape is an important factor in the determination of the attractiveness of a person (Lee & Kim, 1995). According to Kim (2003), customers' expectations for the external appearance of cabin crews are high, and they are most satisfied with slim, young, and dignified flight attendants. In this study, it means that the influence of the external appearance of an airline's male flight attendants, as well as the female flight attendants, exerted an effect on the provision of customer satisfaction. This study analyzes the body figure in terms of the following factors: visual, posture, uniform, harmony, reliability, and trustworthiness.

2.1.4. The tone and the expression image

Ruesch and Kees (1969) argued that non-verbal communication is more influential than verbal communication. Sundaram and Webster (2000) argued that tone, volume of voice, and fluency help to convey precise meanings and play an very important role in the decision of the sociality of the speaker, thereby resulting in a sense of reliability. Especially in the service industry, this is very important because it shows confidence while enhancing the reliability. In addition, facial expression plays a significantly important role in the expression of the psychological condition of the service provider, so that the customer can feel that the service is interested in him or her, or that he or she is provided with a thoughtful service. Service providers with effective facial expressions are attractive, comfortable, and warm, while service providers with poorly executed facial expressions convey a cold impression. This study measures the reliability, luxury, comfort, charm, and sophistication values that are realized through tone and expression.

2.2. Cognitive and emotional images

Cognitive image refers to an image that is perceived by a person as a perceptual evaluation, and emotional image refers to an emotion or feeling perceived by an individual through an experience (Richards & Wilson, 2004). An image of a cognitive dimension refers to an image that is created from the sight of an object, and the information about the object is recognized mentally. The cognitive knowledge of

what is known as a subject, or something that is formed by others, may have already been formed, and it may be knowledge that was previously known. That is, the cognitive images include the beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions of individuals, regardless of whether they were created from past experiences or not (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Also, the evaluation of a cognitive image is not merely a physical stimulus to observe by light, but it is actually a sensory experience that consists of emotion, background knowledge, and interpretation. Emotional images can be defined as a feeling, mood, or emotional reaction to the characteristics of a subject (Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Since an emotional evaluation refers to the emotional response of an individual to an object, an emotional image can be viewed as the feeling, feelings, or emotional response to an object (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Russell and Pratt (1980) argued that emotional images consist of the following eight variables: pleasant, unpleasant, irritating, funny, depressing, painful, loose, and sleepy. The airline image can be expressed as an increase of the resultant value of all of the variables in which the customer is subjectively recognized in the airline. Airline images can be stated as the result of a combination of all of the variables that the customer recognizes as a result of the flight. The airline image affects the factors that customers seek out when choosing an airline and the perceptions they convey to other people, and it is an important means by which airlines can grow (Lee, 2001). Customers choose airlines based on their own experiences and circumstance, and even if the same airline and service is being assessed, each customer receives a different response, and therefore customers form their own individual image of an airline. Park, Lee, and Park (2008) argued that a favorable image is becoming more important than the physical services when customers select airlines.

A cognitive image refers to an object, its shape, and the emotional image, which is created through the surrounding environment, concept, and information from others, which influences the purpose of the performed action, so the images of the emotional reactions such as trust, comfort, and luxury were measured for this study.

2.3. Airline satisfaction

Oliver and Linda (1981) defined customer satisfaction as a core concept of marketing activities and as the psychological state that the customer feels when their expectations are inconsistent with the customer's previous feelings about the consumption experience. Hellier et al. (2004) defined customer satisfaction as the overall enjoyment or satisfaction of the customer from the results regarding the ability of the service performance to meet the customer expectations and needs.
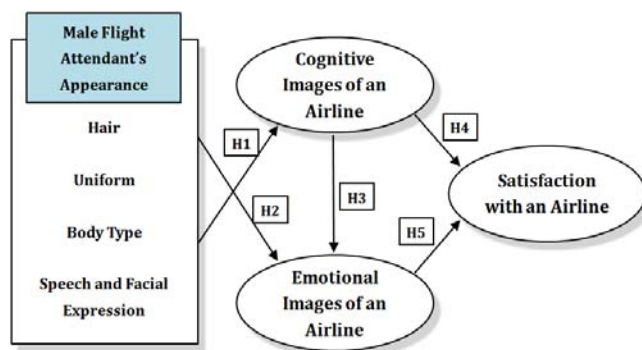
The results of this study are as follows: First, the customer satisfaction levels of the customer satisfaction were measured according to the total satisfaction and an

importance/performance analysis. If the satisfaction level is measured by the subdivided scale, however, the defining of the customer-passenger evaluation is determined after all of the intangible factors and human factors related to the airline are experienced, and the measured customer satisfaction is the perceived overall-service performance based on the previously mentioned expectation-inconsistency theory.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research model

The purpose of this study is a study of the effect on the external image of male flight attendants on the cognitive image and emotional image of an airline, and an analysis of their relationships with the customer satisfaction regarding an airline. The external-image factors of the airline crew consist of the following four factors of male flight attendants based on the previous studies: hairstyle, uniform, body shape, tone, and facial expression.

<Figure 1> Research model

3.2. Setting a hypothesis

The assumptions of this study were reviewed based on the image of the existing cabin crew and the previous studies regarding airline images and the causal relationship regarding the airline satisfaction of the customer.

3.2.1. Relationship between the external image and the cognitive/emotional image

Lee(2009) argued that if the external image of the crew is well formed, the halo effect is formed in other service abilities, thereby improving the customer satisfaction. According to the study of the customer perception of the airline uniform by Namgung and Lee (2016), the cognitive and emotional images, airline loyalty, conformity, and aesthetics of the crew uniform exert a positive effect on the

cognitive image.

A study on the influence of the external image of the flight attendant on customer loyalty by Kang, Jeon, and Park (2014) showed that the external image of the airline crew exerts a positive influence on the cognitive and emotional images. Based on the previous research data, the external image of the male flight attendant will positively affect both the cognitive image <H1>and the emotional image <H2> of the male flight attendant (+).

<H1> The external image of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the cognitive image.
   <H1-1> The external appearance of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the cognitive image.
   <H1-2> Uniform, the external image of the male flight attendant, will have a favorable effect on the cognitive image.
   <H1-3> The external shape of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the cognitive image.
   <H1-4> The external image of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the cognitive image.
<H2> The external image of the male flight attendant will have a favorable impact on the airline's emotional image.
   <H2-1> The external appearance of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the airline's emotional image.
   <H2-2> Uniforms, which are the external image of the male flight attendant, will have a favorable effect on the airline's emotional image.
   <H2-3> The body shape, which is the external image of the male flight attendant, will have a favorable effect on the emotional image of the airline.
   <H2-4> The outside images of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the airline's emotional image.

3.2.2. Relationship between the cognitive image and the emotional image

A study of Kim(2001) that is regarding the formation of tourist-destination images that centers on the cognitive and emotional images shows that human knowledge influences the cognitive images in the formation of the tourist-destination images and "experience" influences the emotional images. In addition, the cognitive images affect the emotional images, and the emotional images affect the overall image of a tourist destination.

Based on these previous studies, the cognitive and emotional images were measured as variables, and the relationship <H3> was set between the cognitive image of the airline driver and the airline's emotional image.

<H3> The cognitive image of the male flight attendant will have a favorable effect on the airline's emotional image.

3.2.3. Relationship between the cognitive and emotional images and the airline-consumer satisfaction

Hyun and Kim (2016) showed that cognitive and emotional images are important factors that affect the satisfaction of local festivals. A study on the cognitive and emotional images and the tourist satisfaction of the eco-tourism sites in Kyo(2010) revealed that the cognitive and emotional images of the tourist sites exert a significant effect on the customer satisfaction. The cognitive and emotional images exert a positive (+) effect on the customer satisfaction. Based on the previous studies, the male cognitive and emotional images exerted a significant positive effect on the customer airline satisfaction, and <H4> and <H5> were set.

<H4> The perceived image of the male flight attendant will exert a positive effect on the airline-customer satisfaction.

<H5> The emotional image of the airline will exert a positive effect on the airline-customer satisfaction.

3.3. Measurement of the Variables

3.3.1. External images of the male flight attendant

In this study, the external images of the male flight attendants were measured according to hair style, uniform, body shape, voice and, facial expression, all of which served as sub-variables. Hair style shows a neat image, such as a clean look with a moderate hair color for the delivery of passenger services. The uniforms allow the passengers to create an image of the flight attendants according to the quality of their uniforms, and the passengers judge whether the uniform matches the flight attendant or not. Further, for the male flight attendant, the body shape indicates whether the attendant is reliable and trustworthy due to the body-image perception. The expression means that the passengers can feel comfortable and luxurious when they are receiving the service of the male flight attendant.

In this study, 20 items were measured by using a five-point Likert scale that is based on Shin (2008) and Kang (2014).

3.3.2. Cognitive image of airlines

This study defines the cognitive image of an airline as an image that is perceived by the individual. Based on the research of Park (2000) and Namgung (2012), the five items of the passenger's perception, professionalism, the response level, the problem-solving ability, and others were measured on a Likert scale.

3.3.3. Emotional image for airlines

This study defines the emotional image of an airline as images of trust, comfort, and luxury that are regarded by the passengers as the emotional part of the airline. To measure the emotional image, six items were measured on a Likert scale that is based on Kang (2014).

3.3.4. Airline-customer satisfaction

Airline-customer satisfaction is defined as the condition under which the passenger feels that his or her purchased airline product has been properly compensated. This study measured five items on a five-point scale by re-adjusting the items that were used in the Park (2009) study.

4. Results

4.1. Collection of data

For this study, the samples of 204 airplanes from Seoul Gimpo International Airport, Incheon International Airport, domestic airlines, and an international-route section for 204 passengers who had been cared for by one crew member for one year or more were used. The survey period of nearly two months lasted from January 1, 2016, to February 28, 2016.

For the study, self-answering questionnaires were used. First, the availability of the service was checked and then 204 questionnaires were distributed; of these, 201 were used for the analytical data. Three questionnaires were not used due to the high number of invalid responses.

4.2. Validity and Reliability of Variables

The result of reliability analysis on the external-image variables of the male crew was analyzed before the testing of the hypothesis of this study. The results are shown in <Table 2>.

<Table 2> Reliability analysis

Variable	Item	N	Cronbach's Alpha
Male Attendant's Appearance	Hair	5	909
	Uniform	5	.920
	Body type	5	.916
	Speech and facial expression	5	.932
Cognitive images of an airline		6	.906
Emotional images of an airline		6	.947
Satisfaction with an airline		5	.941

Reliability reflects a dispersion-homogeneity extent whereby the error in the measurement results is minimized as much as possible. Reliability is also a measure of the

consistency in the repeated measurements across the variables and to what extent the same results are achieved. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to show the reliability of each variable for an internal consistency based on the inter-item mean relation for the same measurement. In the social sciences, when the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is further than 0.6, an internal consistency, or reliability, is typically established.

The validation of the validity is the determination of the accuracy of the observation of each variable in the study; furthermore, this process also determines whether the actual measurement tool is correctly measuring the concept that is to be measured. The principal component analysis method was used for the factorial analysis of this study and a varimax rotation was performed to simplify the factorial loading.

The numbers of factors that were adopted in this study are based on the reliability analysis and the previous studies, and the factorial analysis was conducted to determine whether the variables were effectively loaded. As shown in <Table 3>, 19 items were classified into four factors, as expected, and the factorial result could be used for a future regression analysis.

<Table 3> Factorial analysis of the external image of the male flight attendant

Question	Factor loading			
Male Attendant's Appearance	Hair	Uniform	Body type	Speech and facial expression
Hair style is tidy	.753			
Hair style looks good	.757			
Hair style matches the uniform	.701			
Hair style is clean	.793			
Hair color is appropriate	.649			
Uniform is luxurious		.870		
Uniform is attractive		.847		
Uniform color looks good		.803		
Uniform shape matches the flight attendant		.679		
Body shape looks good			.673	
Correct posture			.610	
Body shape mathes the uniform			.787	
Body shape is reliable			.763	
Body shape is trustworthy			.700	
Tone and expression are reliable				.677
Tone and expression are luxurious				.716
Tone and expression are comfortable				.702
Tone and expression are attractive				.778
Stylish, expressive sophistication				.779
Eigen value	1.461	.850	1.144	11.334
The index of dispersion (%)	7.688	4.475	6.019	59.651

As shown in <Table 4>, the 10 items on the cognitive and emotional images are the same as those of other variables in the factorial analysis. As a result, the 11 items were divided into two factors, as expected, and the factorial result could be used for a future regression analysis.

<Table 4> Analysis of cognitive and emotional-image factors of the male flight attendant

Question	Cognitive image	Emotional image
Tidy appearance	.765	
Beneficial attitude	.832	
Professionalism	.759	
Sound problem solving	.793	
Sound reception level	.806	
Airline is reliable		.766
Airline is luxurious		.803
Airline is exciting		.832
Airline is comfortable		.839
Airline is attractive		.839
Airline is beneficial		.856
Eigen value	1.274	7.178
Index of dispersion (%)	11.578	65.258

<Table 5> Factorial analysis of the customer airline satisfaction

Question	Ingredient
Airline use is generally satisfactory	.848
Enjoyed using the airline	.911
The use of the airline was a favorable experience	.912
Favorable service from the airline	.915
Satisfied with the decisions made by the airline	.916
Eigen value	4.058
Index of Dispersion(%)	81.154

As shown in <Table 5>, when the factorial analysis was performed without a specification of the number of factors, only one factor that exceeds that of the eigen value of 1 was extracted. That is, it was confirmed that the five factors that are related to the satisfaction factor regarding the airline are bound to one factor. This makes it possible to use the factorial result for a future regression analysis.

4.4. Verification of the Hypothesis

As shown in <Table 6>, a multiple-regression analysis was performed using the factors that constitute the external image. Since each factor is not the average questionnaire value, but the post-factorial-analysis score, it is possible to prevent the occurrence of a multicollinearity problem in advance. As a result, external-image factors such as hair style, body shape, uniform, voice, and expression exerted positive effects on the cognitive image. The standardized-regression coefficients of each factor of the external image is based on the beta value, so it is possible to identify the factor that exerted a greater influence on the cognitive image.

<Table 6> Influence of the external image on the male flight attendant on the cognitive image of the male flight attendant

Model	Non-standardization Coefficient		Standardization Coefficient	t	Probability of significance	F	Significance of the model probability
	B	Standard error	beta				
(a constant)	.004	.043		.098	.913	88.375	.000***
Hairstyle	.316	.044	.310	7.250***	.000		
Uniform	.125	.043	.124	2.901***	.004		
Body shape	.449	.043	.450	10.538***	.000		
Tone and expressions	.575	.043	.574	13.424***	.000		
Dependent variable : Cognitive image, Modified R²: .638, ***p < .01							

<Table 7> Influence of external image of male flight attendant on airline emotional image

Model	Non-standardization Coefficient		Standardization Coefficient	t	Probability of significance	F	Significance of the model probability
	B	Standard error	beta				
(a constant)	-.004	.060		-.067	.946	20.114	.000***
Hairstyle	.245	.062	.240	3.984***	.000		
Uniform	.372	.061	.369	6.118***	.000		
Body shape	.096	.060	.097	1.601	.111		
Tone and expressions	.293	.060	.293	4.845***	.000		
Dependent variable : Emotional image, Modified R²: .279, ***p < .01							

<Table 8> Effect of the cognitive image on the emotional image

Model	Non-standardization Coefficient		Standardization Coefficient	t	Probability of significance	F	Significance of the model probability
	B	Standard error	beta				
(a constant)	-.004	.060		-.067	.946	45.954	.000***
Cognitive image	.783	.057	.697	13.652***	.000		
Dependent variable : Emotional image, Modified R²: .484, ***p < .01							

<Table 9> Effect of the cognitive image on the airline-customer satisfaction

Model	Non-standardization Coefficient		Standardization Coefficient	t	Probability of significance	F	Significance of the model probability
	B	Standard error	beta				
(a constant)	1.093	.289		3.778***	.000	38.527	.000***
Cognitive image	.715	.067	.606	10.686***	.000		
Dependent variable : Emotional image, Modified R²: .484, ***p < .01							

As a result, the factors that had the greatest influence on the cognitive image were expressed by speech and expression, followed by body shape, hair style, and uniform. For example, the beta value of the standardized-regression coefficient of 0.574 is approximately five times larger than the standardized-regression coefficient of 0.124 for the uniforms; this is because of the fact that in the external image of the male crew that affects the cognitive image, the influence is five times greater. In conclusion, the <H1> was adopted.

<Table 7> We examined the factors affecting emotional image by applying multiple regression analysis. As a result, the factors affecting the emotional image of an airline are the uniform, followed by speech, facial expression, and hair style. For example, the beta value of the standardized- regression coefficient of 0.369 for the uniform is approximately 1.5 times the beta value of 0, while the value of 240 for the hair style

standardized-regression coefficient is 1.5 times higher than the hair style coefficient value in the external image of the male crew that affects the emotional image. This indicates a major influence; however, since the difference between the standardized-regression coefficient and the beta value of the three variables is not large, the influence of each external-image element is similar. In the case of body type, however, an emotional-image effect cannot be established.

As shown in <Table 8>, the influence of the cognitive image on the emotional image is significant when the significance level is 0.01, based on the F-test result of 45.954 for the whole model; therefore, <H3> was adopted. The modified R² value of 0.484 means that the regression model accounts for 48.4% of the total data. In conclusion, the male coworker's cognitive image positively affects an airline's emotional image.

<Table 10> Influence of the emotional image on the customer airline satisfaction

Model	Non-standardization Coefficient		Standardization Coefficient	t	Probability of significance	F	Significance of the model probability
	B	Standard error	beta				
(a constant)	.381	.158		2.407***	.017	584.633	.000***
Emotional image	.909	.038	.865	24.179***	.000		
Dependent variable : Airline satisfaction, Modified R²: .748, **p < .05, ***p < .0							

<Table 9> shows the results of the <H4> analysis regarding whether the cognitive image of an airline will exert a positive effect on the airline-customer satisfaction. The F-test result for the whole model is 38.527, which proved to be significant when the significance level is 0.01; therefore, <H4> was adopted. The modified R² value of 0.364 indicates that the regression-analysis model accounts for approximately 36.4% of the total data.

<H5> is the hypothesis that the emotional image of airlines will exert a positive impact on the airline-customer satisfaction. For this purpose, a simple regression analysis was performed with independent factors and dependent variables. In this case, the hypothesis is adopted, even if the score after the factor analysis is used or the average value of the questionnaire items corresponding to each factor is used. <Table 10> shows the results from the use of the mean values of the questionnaire items corresponding to each factor. The F-test result for the whole model is 584.633, which is significant when the significance level is 0.01; therefore, <H5> was adopted. The modified R² value of 0.748 means that the regression-analysis model accounts for approximately 74.8% of the total data, and the explanatory power is very high. In conclusion, the emotional image of airlines has a positive effect on the airline-customer satisfaction.

5. Research-Results Discussion and Implications

5.1. Summary and Implications of Research Results

The purpose of this survey is the study of the influence of the external image of the airline personnel on an airline's cognitive and emotional images, and an analysis of the influence of the airline-customer satisfaction on the airline-image management. The implications and results of this study are as follows:

First, the external image of the male crew exerted a positive effect on the cognitive image of the male crew. Among the external-image factors, the factors that had the greatest influence on the cognitive image are the tone and the facial expressions. These results showed that the dynamic elements such as hair style, body, and uniform, which are the static elements of the external image, are the most important. As a result of their communications with the

passengers, the male flight attendants who serve customers at contact points can increase the positive image that is conveyed to the passengers; consequently, they can understand the importance of this communication and can try to communicate with each passenger individually to construct a more positive image.

Second, the external image of the male crew positively affected the emotional image of the airline. Among the external-image factors, the influences of uniform, speech, facial expression, and hairstyle are the most influential factors on the emotional image. However, in the case of body shape, the influence on the emotional image was not verified. Considering the demographic characteristics of men in their 30s who are employed in professional occupations, it may be less likely that the evaluations of male passengers are higher than those of the male flight attendants; this is also because it is a factor that reveals the unique personality and differentiation of the male flight attendant. Even though the airline cannot change the body shape of the flight attendant, it is possible to improve factors like the uniform, tone, facial expression, and hairstyle, among others. Among the sub-variables, the uniform exerts the greatest effect on the emotional image, and this is because the uniform of the airline crew represents the image of the airline to the passengers, so each airline uses its own characteristics and personality in its efforts to improve its uniforms.

Third, the cognitive image of the male crew exerted a positive effect on the emotional image of the airline. This means that if the flight-crew cognitive image such as the appearance, attitude, professionalism, level of response, and problem-solving ability improves, the emotional image of the airline's reliability, luxury, pleasure, and comfort will also be enhanced. These results suggest that the increasing of the cognitive image enhances an airline's emotional image because of the close causal relationship that exists between the two variables.

Fourth, the cognitive image of the male crew positively affected the airline-customer satisfaction. That is, the improvement of the cognitive image of the male flight attendants means that the airline-customer satisfaction is improved. This means that a positive image formation of the flight crew causes satisfaction and pleasure when a passenger uses the airline service. It also suggests that, as a service-quality assessment and feedback process for airlines, the image of the flight crew may be a factor that

can smoothly guide the communication processes with the customers. Therefore, that which the customer sees at the service point represents the image of the airline. In cases where the number of passengers is low compared with the flight-attendant quantity, the flight attendants can play an significantly important role in the increase of the image of an airline.

Fifth, the emotional image of airlines exerts a positive effect on the airline-customer satisfaction. That is, improving the emotional image of airlines means that the airline-customer satisfaction is improved. A close causal relationship is evident between the two variables; that is, if the overall emotional-image formation before the aviation service is favorable, the post-service satisfaction quality is likely to be the same. Since the airline-customer satisfaction is influenced by specific circumstances, airline companies should maintain a consistent emotional image to minimize the possibility of negative-direction customer-satisfaction fluctuations.

5.2. Limitations of the Present Research and the Future Directions

The study have three limitations as follows:

First, this study surveyed the images of domestic flight crews, but the chances of most of the passengers regarding an actual encounter with the flight crew was slight, so the image of the flight crew would have played a dominant role.

Therefore, if research on foreign national-airline passengers is carried out simultaneously, the results could be different, thereby making it difficult to form generalizations.

Second, in this study, the differences of the customer's perceptions according to demographic characteristics such as the airline, route, gender, and flight class (first class, business class, or economy class) could not be considered. In future studies, if these differences are analyzed, it will be possible to identify the important viewpoints for each passenger in each category.

Third, the uniform image among the external-image elements of the airline crew influenced the emotional image of the airline, but it was not possible to find the uniform factors that the passengers focused on. In a subsequent study, it would be helpful to improve the uniform of the airline flight crew if an analysis of the airline uniform of the male flight attendant is conducted.

This study is very meaningful because it is the first research to empirically measure the influence of the external image of the passenger on the airline-customer satisfaction, wherein the factors that can affect it have been considered. However, because of the lack of the existing research on this subject, some limitations need to be considered, and if additional studies are continued in the future, the researchers should be aware that the satisfaction of the airline passenger can be further enhanced by the external image of the flight crew.

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