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# Fare Types and Their Effects on Aircraft Ground Handling

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2017 Kerava

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## Fare Types and Their Effects on Aircraft Ground Handling

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Degree Programme in Tourism  
Bachelor's Thesis  
June, 2017

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**Abstract**

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**Fare Types and Their Effects on Aircraft Ground Handling**

Year	2017	Pages	27
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This Bachelor's thesis discusses different fare types in aviation and how they affect aircraft ground handling and the work in practice. The aim was to provide information about fare types and to recognize the problems the fare types have on ground handling. There was no earlier research conducted on this subject in Theseus database.

The thesis includes a theoretical section that describes the different fare types and the customer service closely related to this topic is also given consideration to in the theoretical section. The theoretical section also discusses the basics of aircraft ground handling.

The study was based on quantitative methods. A questionnaire was given to the employees of Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd to address the problems and to gain information from the people who confront these issues on a daily basis. In total 41 responses were received on paper. Due to the low number of responses, the thesis has qualitative research features.

The results were analyzed and themed. The results indicate that the respondents noticed communication and the amount of hand luggage to be the main issues. However, there was also some duality in the responses and a part of the respondents saw that there were no problems at the departure gate due to difference in fare types and a significant part who thought it caused problems considerably. This thesis could help airlines and related companies and stakeholders to foresee the problems and create new innovations to ease the issue.

Keywords, aircraft ground handling, aviation services, customer service, fare types

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## 1 Introduction

The aim of this Bachelor's thesis is to research how different fare types affect ground handling. The writers used a quantitative research method and conducted a questionnaire for the staff of Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd at Helsinki-Vantaa airport using a Likert scale. The questionnaire has eight questions which of three have follow-up questions. The questions are conducted in such a way that the respondent can express their personal opinions regarding the subjects.

Ground handling work is also introduced, focusing on check-in and gate functions since they are the departments that are mostly included in the research. The theories include explaining the types of fares and how they construct. The theories of airline customer service, customer satisfaction and quality of services are also included in the topics of this thesis as they go hand in hand with aircraft ground handling work. After all, customer satisfaction is the purpose of fluent and effective processes keeping in mind the safety aspects of aviation.

Both writers have professional work experience in working with aviation and customer service in different companies. Therefore the research has a strong pragmatic approach to it, as the writers share their expertise in the thesis planning and conduction. One of the writers works as a passenger service agent for an aircraft ground handling company and provides services for several airlines. The theories of this thesis are handled in every day work and the writer has four years experience from the different aspects of aviation and especially the work that is done when the aircrafts are on the ground.

The other writer has been, for the past two years, actively working as a customer service agent for three of the world's largest airlines in the department that handles claims related to the passengers' experience during the flight. A role of vast importance as it is notable for being responsible for creating the passenger's last impression towards the brand and quality of the airline whereas a passenger service agent on the ground creates the first impression of the airline. Taking the given facts into account, this thesis work features along with the researched data the perspectives of two professionals who perform at two segments of airline customer service where the theories of customer service and providing quality services are implemented into practice.

The results and data in this thesis provide information about aviation and its services and the results could benefit in inventing new innovations in fare types, ground handling and customer satisfaction when it comes to air travel.

## 2 Ticket Fares

Airline ticket fare, also known as airfare is the price to be paid by a passenger in order to fly a specific journey using the service of an airline. The fares can be determined by a selection of factors such as date of purchase of the ticket, booking class or additional services, for instance, baggage or meals throughout the flight experience which are offered by a given airline. (Schlick, C. 2013. How Do Airlines Set Prices & Flightfox 2013.)

The fare's prices as a general rule among the majority of the airlines include three basic elements which are subject to charge: base fare, fuel surcharge and taxes and airport fees. There are other facultative charges which are paid on the top of the base fare such as seat selection, meal onboard and checked-in baggage, this type of surcharge is normally offered by low-cost airlines, while the more traditional companies often make such services available to the passengers without any extra costs, particularly on long-haul flights. A notable amount of traditional airlines have given up complimentary meal service on board entirely, especially on short-haul flights, and serve purchasable drinks, meals or snacks. (Schlick, C. 2013. How Do Airlines Set Prices & Flightfox 2013.)

Travel class and booking fare should not be confused as the first refers to the quality of service the passenger will be experiencing during the flight and the latter strictly means the type of flight ticket which the airline customer purchased. (Schlick, C. 2013. How Do Airlines Set Prices & Flightfox 2013.)

Airlines manage their ticket fares taking two main coefficients into consideration: the passenger's willingness to pay a certain price for a ticket and also the occupancy ratio. Oppositely to the general idea that a certain product is meant to be sold to different customers at the same price, that rule does not necessarily apply when purchasing an airline ticket, different groups of passengers have specific demands when it comes to flying, therefore, willing to pay a larger or lower than average price to be transported to a certain location. A clear example can be explained with the difference between business and leisure passengers. While a business person normally runs on a more inflexible schedule, that same person will be willing to spend a larger amount of money when buying a flight ticket. On the opposite side, leisure passengers typically acquire their tickets well in advance as their trips are set to happen with greater anticipation. (Lee, S. 2012. Understanding Airline Fare Types & Host Agency Reviews 2016.)

The occupancy rates trends are closely watched by the airlines as to how to fill up the highest number of available seats on a flight as possible. An empty seat means financial loss; therefore, the airlines are constantly adjusting its ticket fare rates according to these forecasts in

order to maximize revenue. (Lee, S. 2012. Understanding Airline Fare Types & Host Agency Reviews 2016.)

### 2.1 Published Fare

Published fare is the fare which is publicly advertised, for instance in an airline's website. It is applied to both domestic and international routes; this means these fares are always going to be the same, regardless if the passenger acquires the ticket directly from the airline's website or a travel agent. Since these fares are presented with a higher value of purchase, passengers may be entitled to issue a ticket without a specific date, free of extra charge stopovers or even an exemption of fee for reissue of ticket. (Fleming, A. 2017. Published Versus Unpublished Fares & TripSavvy 2017.)

### 2.2 Advance Purchase Excursion Fare

Advance Purchase Excursion, also known as APEX, is a type of fare that postulates antecedence of purchase of four, seven, 14, 21 or 30 days prior to the date of the journey. Several of these fares do not allow the passenger the option of cancellation of the ticket or when it allows, an extra charge will be required in order to permit the passenger this assortment. Some of these fares demand that the passenger issues a return ticket, others offer the buyer lower prices in case of a one-way journey. Stopovers might be permitted in some of the cases with the charge of additional taxes. APEX are fares that are not always periodic, meaning that they are not always enforced for intermediary points, therefore, a flight from location X to Z connecting in Y can be cheaper than a direct flight from X to Z. (Bastidores do Turismo 2013 & Wires, D. 2012. Tipos de Tarifas Aéreas.)

### 2.3 Bulk Fare

Bulk fare is also known as consolidated fare; this type of fare has a larger discount when compared to the published fares. While in the published fares children pay as much as 75% of the original fare and babies 10%, bulk fares do not work in the same fashion, in certain cases not even children are entitled to the aforementioned discount. (Kelly, D. 2015. What Are APEX fares & TripSavvy 2015.)

Normally in the bulk fares, travel agency's service fees are included in the price, very often are not refundable and do not credit miles into the passenger's frequent flyer account, or in some cases only half of the mileage. Additionally, there is a deadline for the ticket to be reissued, this deadline is based on the date of departure of a given flight, meaning that the pas-

senger may lose its ticket if it is not used or reissued. (Kelly, D. 2015. What Are APEX Fares & TripSavvy 2015.)

#### 2.4 Group Fare

This type of fare is applied to groups of nine or more passengers. Group fares will not be cheaper than the bulk fares, only more affordable than the bulk fares. This type of fare is not usually recommended for passengers who are not certain if they will be actually traveling or not since in the majority of cases these tickets will not be reissued or reimbursed. Group fares offer the possibility to reserve a seat number on a flight without actually providing the names and information of passengers at the moment of reservation of tickets, the seats will be reserved and the data of the passengers can be updated in a later opportunity. (Bastidores do Turismo 2013 & Wires, D. 2012. Tipos de Tarifas Aéreas)

#### 2.5 Normal Fare

Normal fare can be categorized as a module of APEX fare, they are both promotional fares which are made available by the airlines. Depending on the airline, these fares can be called instant purchase or specials, in many cases these fares can be found on travel fare aggregator websites. Antecedence is a must when purchasing this type of ticket due to its lower price. (Bastidores do Turismo 2013 & Wires, D. 2012. Tipos de Tarifas Aéreas)

### 3 Airline Customer Service

Airlines have several responsibilities towards their passengers; these responsibilities extend beyond the act of reliably transporting passengers from place to place. The whole process implicates also in how the entire experience is handled and affects the journey of the passengers, the level of service onboard, quality of food and beverages as well as the physical condition and functionalities of the aircraft are some of the features which determine the passenger's satisfaction. The service offered before and after the flight also has a major importance, from the moment the passengers purchases the flight ticket, extending to the service after the journey in case the customer faced any issues or incidents during the flight experience. (Lieberman, M. 2016. World's Best Airlines for Customer Service & Travel+Leisure 2016.)

#### 3.1 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction relies upon how an airline trains its employees aiming to meet the passengers' needs and expectations. A customer or a passenger service agent must meet certain



requirements in order to perform successfully in this type of role, among these characteristics are worth mentioning: strong communication skills, promptitude to deal with upset passengers and professional and well-mannered approach. (Airline Customer Service Agent 2016 & National Careers Service 2016.)

### 3.2 Quality

Although airlines provide to their customers differentiated standards and variety of customer service channels and quality, there are normatives that must be adopted by the majority of commercial air companies. International Air Transport Association, also known as IATA, which is the trading association that comprises the absolute plurality of the world's airlines, supplies the airlines with trainings and courses focused on customer service for leadership management. These courses aim to secure that the airlines service agents will be prepared to deliver high standard service focused in key aspects such as effective communication between the parties, multicultural perception, up to date service trends and, most importantly, guarantee that the passengers are regarded according to international laws and regulation that protect their legal rights as air passengers. (Airline Customer Service for the Leadership and Management Training Program 2017.)

One of the writers works for a company that provides customer support for a group of leading airlines in the European aviation market. Being a part of the Customer Relationship Advisory department he deals daily with claims sent by passengers who have had any sort of incident of inconvenience before, during or right after the flight. The writer himself is instructed by the company about the priorities on the treatment of these claims according to the tier of ticket the passenger purchased from the airline, this means, passengers who invested in buying a more expensive type of fare, therefore flying on a higher class, will have the advantage of a faster customer support even after their flight. By experience, the writer has noted that most of these claims are in relation to delayed flights, lost, delayed and damaged baggage. The required quality of the customer service and customer satisfaction is always kept in mind when handling the claims.

### 3.3 The Montreal Convention

A multilateral treaty among the majority of airlines named The Montreal Convention was established in 1999. This treaty was created for the purpose of stipulating the liability of airlines in the event of any flight incident affect the passengers. In addition to settling the company's responsibility in the event of any physical detriment or harm, for instance, death, injury or delays, the convention also encompasses the airlines' liability in the occurrence of damaged, delayed or lost baggage. The establishment of the convention was of great importance

as it universalized the norms, bringing a clear conception of airline liability and passenger right, ensuring legal protection of all the parties involved. (The Montreal Convention 2017.)

#### 4 Aircraft Ground Handling

Aircraft ground handling means the servicing of an aircraft while it is on the ground. This consists of several different services. The most important factor in ground handling is safety; both in flight and on ground. Also providing quality services in the minimum turnaround time as well as accuracy, operational efficiency, sustainability and an open, effective market are the keys to good ground handling. (Gomez, D. 2009, 1 & IATA Ground Handlers 2017.)

Often ground handling is outsourced from airlines to handling companies. At Helsinki-Vantaa international airport there are three different ground handling companies, Airpro Ltd, Swissport Finland Ltd and Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd. There are also two cargo handling companies, three fuel suppliers and two catering suppliers in addition to other services provided on the ground. (IATA Ground Handling 2017 & Finavia Ground Handling 2017.)

Aviator Airport Alliance AB for example provides a wide range of ground handling services which are ramp services, passenger services, load control, flight operations and crew administration, representation, administration and supervision, crew transportation, ticketing and lounge services. Other commercial services are cargo handling and de-icing. (Aviator Services 2013.)

##### 4.1 Check-In Procedures

Checking in is a person announcing their arrival for example to a hotel, event, cruise or in this case, airport and aircraft. When doing a traditional check-in for a flight, a boarding pass is received from an agent at a check-in desk and a possible luggage is weighed, tagged and checked in. The check-in agent represents the airline but can be working for a ground handling company. (Airport Jobs 2012. Finavia Check-In 2017.)

Nowadays there are multiple ways to check-in depending on the airline. Several airlines provide or require a passenger to check-in online, via mobile, tablet, sms, smart phone app or self-service kiosk. Multiple airlines at Helsinki-Vantaa airport are using the self-service kiosk where check-in can be done and for some airlines, a baggage tag can be printed. There are also three airlines using a self-service baggage drop desk, where the passenger can drop off their own luggage. (Finavia Check-In 2017.)

There is more to checking in than just receiving a boarding pass or checking in a luggage. Airlines provide different services depending on the customs of the airline. The passenger can for example ask for a specific seating arrangement, pay for extra services, upgrade, making changes to their reservation or arranging their special service or assistance. The primary duty of a check-in agent is to check for passengers' valid travel documents such as passports and visas. This also depends on the airline and of the destination. The check-in agent also needs to be aware of dangerous goods and limitations, security issues and evacuation procedures and dealing with stressful or difficult situations. Normally check-in agents work also at the gate and may have other duties in passenger service, depending on the airline. (Airport Jobs 2012.)

#### 4.2 Departure Gate

Gate at the airport is the waiting area before boarding an aircraft. It is also a work place for the gate agents. Gate agents have a variety of tasks in between the arrival of the aircraft and the departure of the aircraft, where there often is a short turnaround time. Their main job is to oversee an on-time, safe departure and arrival of the flights they are handling. (Qubein, R. 2017.)

Another main job for a gate agent is to get the passengers to board the aircraft once they have arrived at the gate. In between there is a variety of paperwork, computer work and communicating with other departments such as check-in agents, baggage agents, operations and also with the captain and crew of the aircraft. Gate agents also operate the jet bridge at the gate, if there is one. Normally gate agents work also at the check-in and may have other duties in passenger service, again, depending on the airline and airport. (Gate Agent 2017. Freudenrich C. & Harris W. 2001, 6.)

#### 4.3 Aviator Airport Alliance AB

Aviator was founded in 2010 and it has been expanding ever since. Aviator has taken over some of the other ground handling companies at European airports. Aviator is owned by the investment fund named Accent Equity 2008 as the majority shareholder. The turnover of Aviator in all its stations was approximately 212 million euros in 2015 and employs over 2400 people. Aviator provides aviation services at 17 airports. (Aviator Corporate 2013.)

Aviator guarantees stable and high quality service and provides passenger and baggage handling as well as de-icing, cargo and full freight handling and station services such as airport security. Aviator's vision is to be the global leader in aviation services and is committed to delivering high quality service on time and is dedicated to efficiency, safety and innovation.

Aviator's employees are also focusing on excellence for the benefit of customers, shareholder and employees alike. (Aviator Corporate 2013 & Aviator Services 2013.)

Aviator has five values; Respect, flexibility, passion, customer focus and responsibility. One another's individuality is respected and success is recognized and rewarded. Aviator employees are open-minded and willing to change in order to improve. Enthusiasm and joy in serving customers is what Aviator takes pride of. Meeting customer needs are ensured and commitment to acting professionally is carried out. Supportive work environment and providing constructive feedback when needed is also included in the responsibility factors of Aviator. (Aviator Corporate 2013.)

#### 4.4 Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd

Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd is an aircraft ground handling company which provides ground handling services for different airlines at Helsinki-Vantaa airport. Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd started their ground handling operation at Helsinki-Vantaa airport in 2014 when Aviator Alliance acquired the former Servisair Finland Ltd operations. (Aviator Corporate 2013.)

Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd was founded in 1967 and back then it went by the name John Nurminen Ltd. After that they have been through several corporate acquisitions and name changes. Aviator Finland handles on average 12 500 flights per year at Helsinki-Vantaa airport and has revenue of 17 million euros. There are approximately 280 staff members working for Aviator Finland. The chief executive officer is Veijo Karosvuo. (Rytsy, A. 2015.)

According to the writer's experience at work, the values of Aviator; respect, flexibility, passion, customer focus and responsibility, actually are present in every day work. Colleagues are highly respected as well the customer's needs and safety aspects. Respect is in order also when working with heavy machinery. Flexibility and passion for aviation are seen among the staff vividly as well as customer focus. Even when the work is fast-paced and sometimes stressful, customer's are never left unnoticed or without information and they are given quality service in every situation. Working in aircraft ground handling is also a responsible job and safety is always the number one priority.

## 5 Research Methods and Conduction

Data can be analyzed with a quantitative research method or a qualitative research method or a mixture of both of these methods. (Given, L. 2008, 21). In this data analysis the writer is

using a mixture of both, more leaning towards quantitative research method and classification.

### 5.1 Qualitative Approach

This type of research method places focus on the experience or opinion of an individual or a group of individuals rather than statistical numbers, for instance used in quantitative researches. Characteristically, qualitative research is employed for the purpose of reaching opinions, motives and reasons in order to trends and insights, resulting in a deeper exploration and comprehension of a certain subject of research. Noticeably being an exploratory method, qualitative research approaches seek to deliver insight of how individuals or groups of individuals perceive the aspects of their environments. (Qualitative Research Approach 2017 & Statistics Solutions 2017.)

Numerous ways of collecting data can be applied when conducting qualitative research, most notably can be cited the field research, which presents the idea of the researcher observing the studied subject on site, the data collected is subsequently processed and analyzed in various ways. Remarkably in the making of this study the in-depth interview method was utilized, where the individuals of the subjected group were given the opportunities to not only participate in the means of numeral data, but also to contribute with their personal insights in a variety of perspectives concerning the studied phenomenon. (Trochim, W. 2006. Qualitative Approaches & Research Methods Knowledge Base 2006.)

As a research method, the qualitative approach presents its advantages and drawbacks. The most observed advantages are , for instance, the studied subject can be assessed in details, the data collected can be tenable as it relies on human experience, complexity which is normally left aside in quantitative methodologies are more easily understood while conducting a qualitative research. (Research Methods Knowledge Base 2006.)

On the disadvantageous side it is important to mention that the amount of data acquired can make the processing, analysis and interpretation of data a complex task also the type of data collected may be toilsome to present visually. (Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research 2014.)

### 5.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research method is based on observing and investigating observable phenomena using empirical investigation. Quantitative information is processed as statistical, mathematical or computational units and the data is always in a numerical form. The aim is to under-

stand or predict behavior or events by using these units and to get results that can be generalized. These findings can be generalized using statistics. (Given, L. 2008, 52, Koppa 2017 & McWhinney, J. 2016.)

An example of statistical research is using arithmetic means which eliminates singular anomalies. Arithmetic means implements the averages of the researched material and generalizing the result. On one hand, using arithmetic means show how a singular opinion can be looked at in comparison to the entire material. On the other hand, this rules out singular opinions entirely. (Given, L. 2008, 55 & Virtuaali 2017.)

Using a quantitative method produces an accurate conclusion in comparison to qualitative research methods in which the conclusions are only hypothetical. There are also risks when it comes to using a quantitative method to analyze data. Analyzing involves having to read through vast amounts of data and validating the patterns can be a challenge. A quantitative method and especially conducting a questionnaire may cause difficulty controlling the situation so there is a higher risk for variables. The issue of ethical consent, privacy invasion or deception may also lie in quantitative analysis and especially questionnaires. (Virtuaali 2017, Libweb 2017. & McWhinney, J. 2016.)

## 6 Results

The questionnaire form was conducted in A4 sized blank paper, where the questions were printed on, and where the answers are to be written to. On the questionnaire form there were eight questions and three follow up questions. At the end there was a comment section, where the respondent could write freely.

Likert scale was used as a questionnaire answer method. There were four different answer possibilities numbered from 1 to 4. Number 1 standing up for “not at all” number 2 for “slightly” number 3 for “moderately” and number 4 for “considerably”. One of the questions had three answer possibilities lettered a to c. A standing up for “increased”, b “decreased” and c “no change”. The questionnaire was conducted in Finnish since the respondents were all Finnish speakers. Altogether 41 responses were received.

The questionnaire was targeted to the staff of a ground handling company named Aviator Airport Services Finland Ltd. The respondents were agents who work at the check-in and gate for different airlines. The questionnaire was tested on a supervisor who filled the paper out before handing the questionnaire out for all the staff.

### 6.1 Queuing Times to Check-In Counters

13 of the respondents answered that the queuing times to the check in counters have not at all shortened due to different fare types. 12 of the respondents answered “slightly”. 11 of the respondents thought the queuing times have moderately shortened and five of the respondents have noticed the times to be considerably shorter. (Figure 1.)

In addition, there were two comments written on the right side of the question about a service called “direct to gate”, which means independently checking in online, via mobile or via airport’s self service kiosks and going directly to the gate with their carry-on, instead of interacting with an agent or dropping off any luggage. One comment was made about checking in online, which is also linked to the “direct to gate” - service. These participants considered this service being the reason why queues at the check-in counters have shortened instead of different fare types.

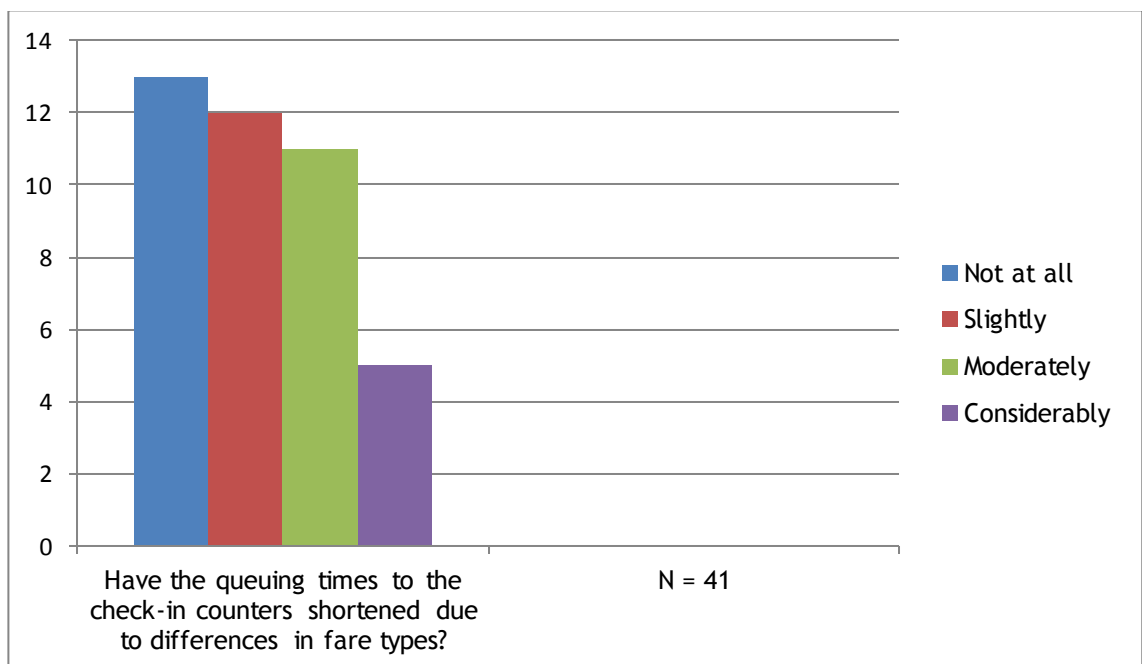


Figure 1. Queuing Times to Check-in Counters.

### 6.2 Differences in Fare Types at the Check-In

Two of the respondents answered that the differences in fare types gave not caused any problems at the check-in. Nine of the respondents thought that they have cause problems slightly, 21 of the respondents have noticed moderate problems and eight thought there are a considerable amount of problems. There was also one respondent who did not answer the question.

The majority considered the fare types to cause problems moderately at the check-in. (Figure 2.)

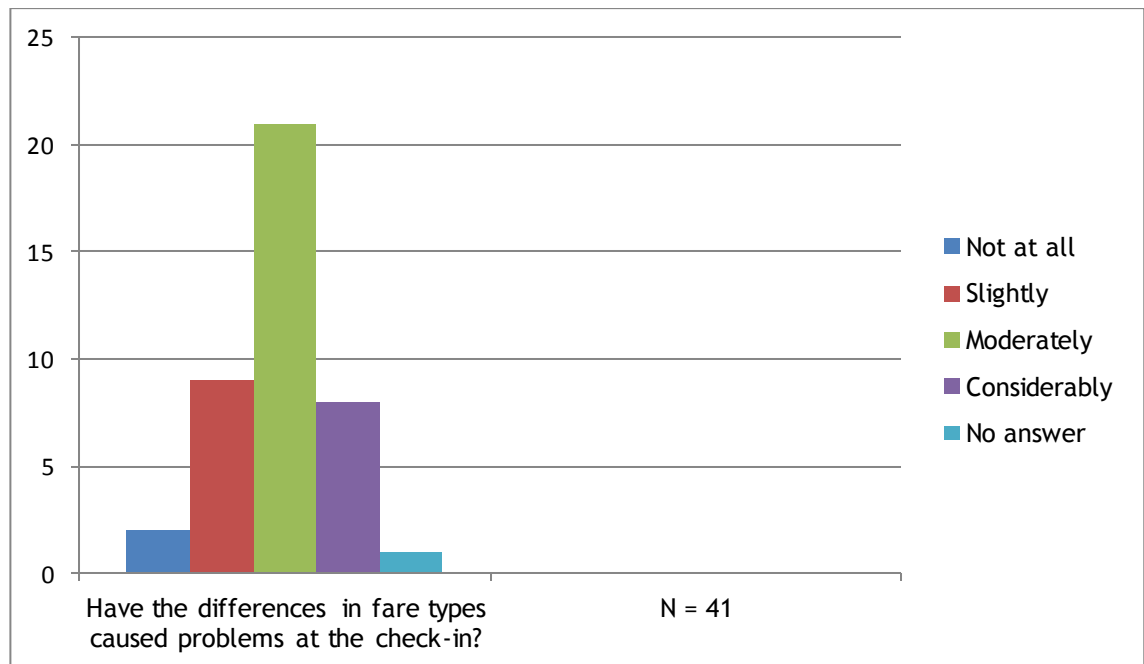


Figure 2. Problems at the Check-in.

#### Follow up: Problems at the Check-In

This question also had a follow up question asking the respondent describe what type of problems the differences in fare types have caused, if they thought it does. There were 26 different respondents who thought passengers at the check-in are unaware if their ticket includes any check-in luggage or not. There were seven mentions about charging for check-in luggage. Six mentioned that passengers get upset because they need to pay for their luggage. There were also six different mentions of passengers being confused. Four of the respondents described the passengers being angry because of the payment and one respondent said how the charge is considered to be too expensive and how passengers do not understand why they need to pay for their check-in luggage. There was also a mention that the charge comes as a surprise to some of the passengers, especially if someone else booked their ticket for them. This respondent mentioned that sometimes a company, a secretary or a friend books a flight instead of the passengers themselves.

Three mentioned that passengers who have booked their flights from travel agencies are unaware of their ticket fare because of the travel agency's unclear information or that the amount of check-in luggage is not clearly mentioned in the reservation the passenger receives. There were also three mentions about passengers having too much hand luggage. Two



answers said how passengers are unaware of the fare type rules, one respondent mentioned ticket flexibility as an example, meaning how the ticket can be changed or altered. Two respondents also mentioned that a problem is how they need to explain fare types to passengers.

### 6.3 Problems at the Departure Gate

12 of the respondents thought the difference in fare types do not cause any problems at the departure gate. Ten answered that they have caused problems slightly, four of the respondents answered “moderately” and 14 thought the amount of problems at the gate is considerable. There was one respondent who did not leave an answer. (Figure 3.)

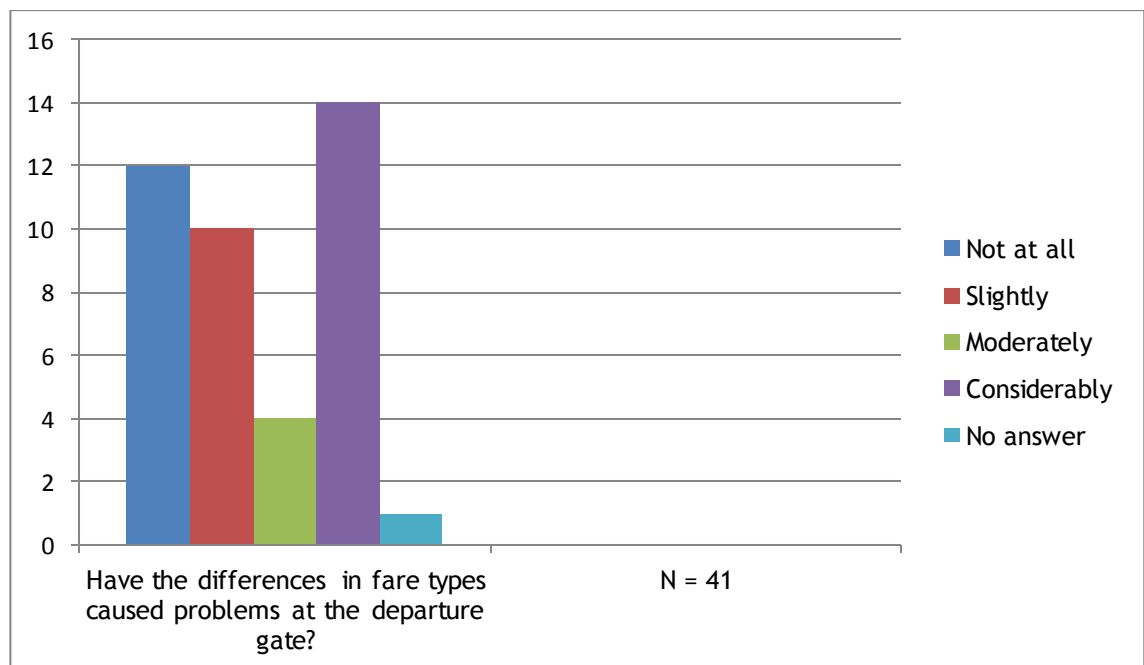


Figure 3. Problems at the Departure Gate.

#### Follow up: Problems at the Departure Gate

This question had a follow up question, asking the respondent to describe, if they thought the different fare types caused problems at the departure gate. There were multiple mentions considering the amount of hand luggage and how it causes problems.

19 respondents mentioned the increased amount of hand luggage which of three mention also how this problem leads to moving hand luggage to the cargo hold due to lack of space in the cabin, which often leads to delays. One mentioned how the increased amount of hand luggage leads to slow boarding process. Two respondents mentioned how the gate staff has extra work

because the carry-on items need to be checked. There were also two mentions saying that the hand luggage is too big in size.

There were two mentions how the different fare types lead to gate staff having to check passenger's travel documents at the gate, which also makes the boarding process slow and causes problems if the passenger does not have the required travel documents for their final destination. One respondent mentioned how economy class passengers use the priority lane while boarding, even though they are not entitled to do so. There was one mention also about passengers being unaware if the ticket fare is flexible or not and one respondent thought that there were no problems at the gate and how the problems are usually solved at the check-in.

#### 6.4 Problems at Other Departments

The fourth question was an open question asking if the respondents thought different fare types caused problems in any other departments. There were 30 respondents who did not answer this question.

Eight respondents mentioned the ramp staff and how it causes extra work for them when they need to collect checked in hand luggage from the gate and deliver them by hand to the cargo hold. One mention was made about this being a problem especially in short turnarounds, when the airplane has a short time between the arrival and the departure. One respondent said how it is unergonomic for the ramp staff to pick up the hand luggage from the gate and another mention was made about how they need to do so multiple times. One respondent compared how it is easier if the luggage is taken at the check-in in comparison to taking them at the gate.

One respondent mentioned that different fare types cause some problems at the arrival service and another respondent said the ticket office needs to check the fare types. One person thought the fare types and their features do not cause problems in other departments.

#### 6.5 Changes in Work Processes

The fifth question in the questionnaire form was if the respondents thought their processes related to their work have changed due to difference in fare types. 11 respondents answered "not at all", 14 answers said "slightly", nine respondents answered "moderately" and six respondents answered "considerably". There was one respondent who did not answer this question. (Figure 4.)

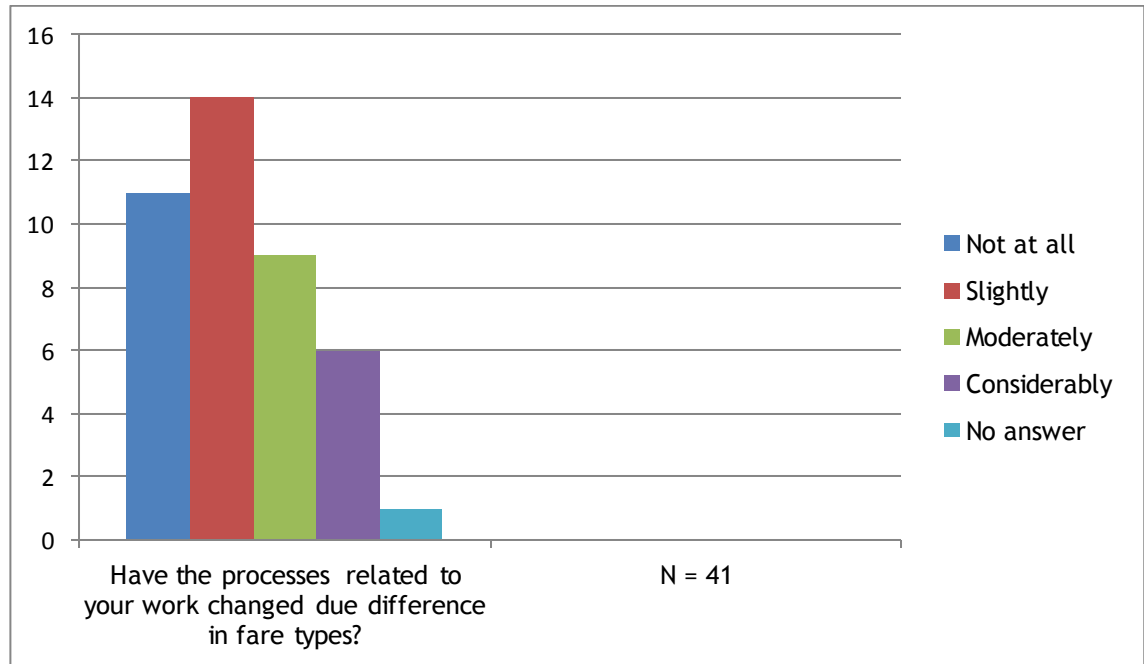


Figure 4. Changes in Work Processes.

#### Follow up: Changes in Work Processes

This question also had a follow up question asking respondents to describe the work processes if they considered them to have changed.

This question also had some similar answers to the problems the respondents thought occurred at the check-in or gate. Five respondents said they need to pay more attention to the amount of hand luggage at the check-in and gate, and three respondents mentioned having extra work at the gate with the hand luggage. One respondent said their personal opinion generally in fare type changes is the increased amount of hand luggage. One respondent mentioned how there are announcements made at the gate, regarding hand luggage and how they are checked in at the gates or how they are to be placed under the seat.

Seven respondents mentioned charging for extra services which was also mentioned by other respondents in question two. In this question there was a mention also regarding selling upgrades and comfort seats in addition to extra luggage. One mention was made how charging for them leads to slow check-in process and another mentioned how passengers try to pay for their luggage online when the online service has already closed.

There were four respondents who said there is more explaining to passengers regarding fare types and two mentions were made how the passengers are unaware of the conditions of their

fare type. One respondent mentioned how the check-in and gate agents provide different services for different passengers, for example by fare type or if they have a priority status.

There were two mentions of helping passengers at the self service kiosks. Three respondents said there is less contact with passengers and two thought this was because they use the self service kiosks and go directly to the gate without seeing an agent. Two different respondents mentioned having fewer agents at the desk and more staff on the floor, meaning how the check-in agents guide people and help them with the self service check-in or baggage drop off.

There were two respondents who compared check-in for charter flights being completely different to regular flights. Charter flight passengers usually check-in much more luggage and have significantly less hand luggage and they have their check-in luggage included in their ticket. One respondent mentioned how making reports of unruly passengers has increased.

#### 6.6 Difference in Amount of Hand Luggage

This question asked if the respondents have noticed a difference in the amount of hand luggage. There were already some mentions in earlier questions about hand luggage. There were no answers to “not at all”, three respondents answered “slightly”, eight respondents answered “moderately” and the majority of the respondents, altogether 28 answered “considerably”. Two of the respondents did not answer this question. (Figure 5.)

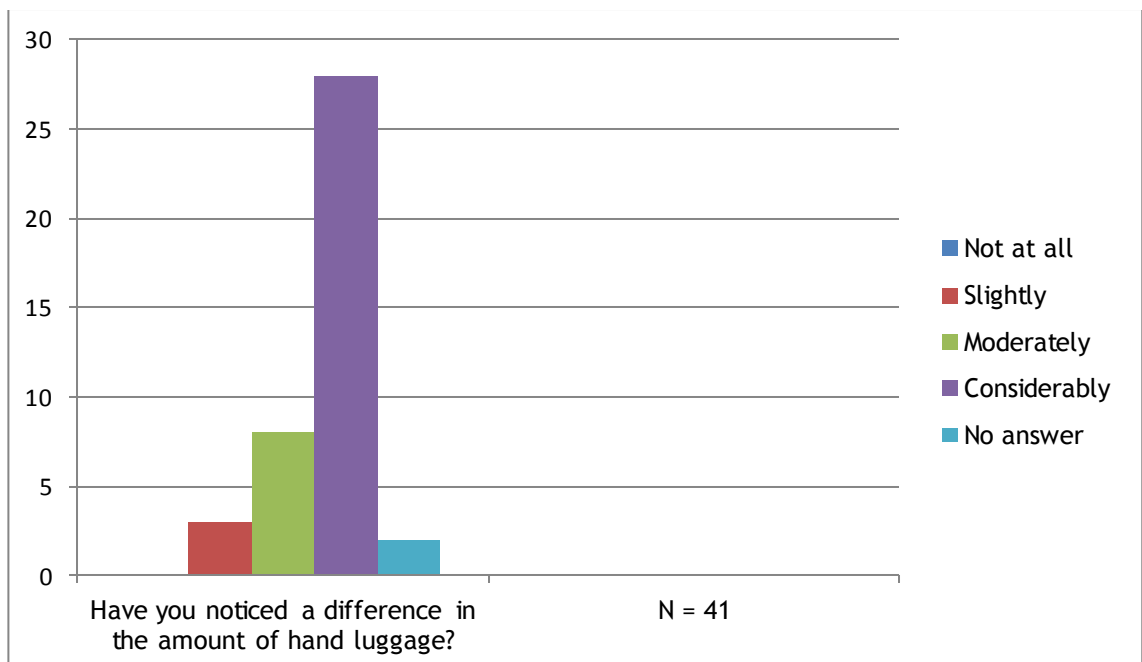


Figure 5. Difference in Amount of Hand Luggage.

### 6.7 The Noticeable Difference in Hand Luggage

This question had three options, the first one was “increased”, second was “decreased” and the third one was “no change”. These options were lettered from a to c. From 41 respondents one did not answer this question and the rest of them, altogether 40 respondents thought the amount of hand luggage is increased and none of the respondents thought the amount of hand luggage is either decreased or stayed the same.

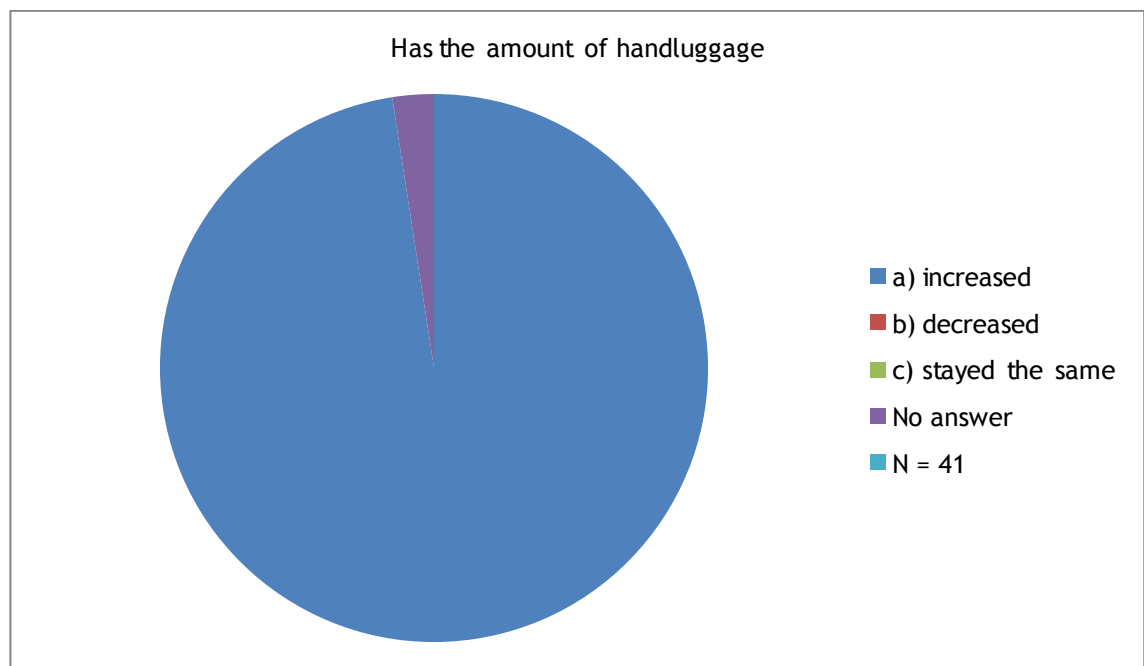


Figure 6. The Noticeable Difference in Hand Luggage.

### 6.8 Passengers' Awareness of Different Fare Types

Six respondents thought the passengers are not at all aware of different fare types. 24 respondents answered the passengers are slightly aware and ten said they are moderately aware. There were no answers stating the passengers would be considerably aware of different fare types. There was one respondent who did not answer this question.

Two of the respondents mentioned that they feel like it depends on the passenger. Business passengers are more aware what their fare includes, whereas leisure passengers do not. One respondent wrote that the passengers are aware of the fare types but they are not interested.

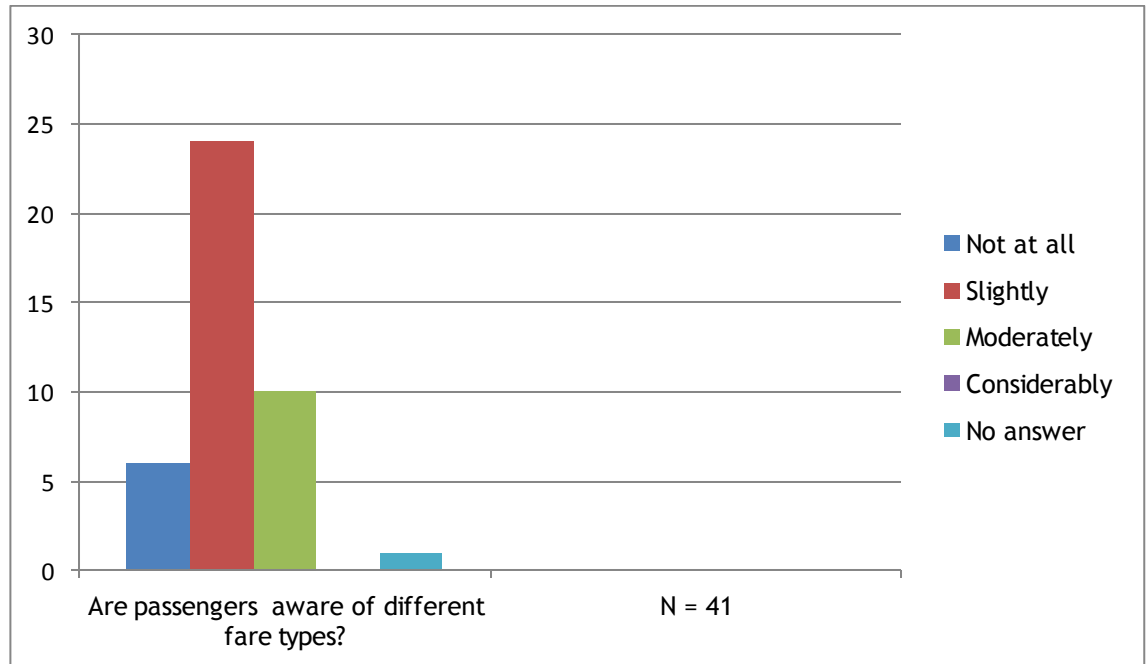


Figure 7. Passengers' Awareness of Fare Types.

#### 6.9 Comment Section: Open-Ended Questions

Two respondents wrote that the baggage allowance should be expressed more clearly, especially if the passenger purchases the ticket via travel agency. One respondent wrote that most of the passengers do know what the ticket includes if they have booked the tickets themselves.

One respondent wrote that the light fare is an excellent option for a passenger who has very little luggage with them. Most of these passengers bring a lot of luggage to the gate, where the problems pile up as the overhead lockers in the cabin fill up.

One respondent wrote that the passengers are poorly informed or that they have not found out what the fare type includes.

#### 7 Conclusion and Reflection

The division of work between the two writers was aimed to divide the work in half and to put the pieces together as a team. The theories were divided in a way that both of the writers could implement their expertise and knowledge of the subjects.

The writer noticed some excellent points from the respondents when conducting this research about how the fare types affect ground handling. The respondents pointed out also other

elements which make a difference to their work in addition to the differences in fare types. There was a surprising bipartition in question 3 where there were many respondents who thought the differences in fare types did not cause any problems at the departure gate but also a considerable amount who thought it caused a lot of problems.

The first thing the writer notices when conducting this research questionnaire is how much the amount of hand luggage is affected by the diversity in fare types. All of the respondents who did answer question number 7 thought the amount of hand luggage is increased, nobody thought it has decreased or stayed the same. (Figure 6.) This can be seen as one of the most important findings in this thesis and could be used to develop the fare types which do not include luggage, their services and how the passengers are informed. The writer has noticed when working as a passenger service agent that the amount of hand luggage is remarkably higher. It is also noticed among those who travel frequently.

In the follow up for question two there were over 60% of respondents who thought the passengers at the check-in are unaware if their ticket includes any check-in luggage or not. According to the writer's observation at work, these responses did not surprise. It can be challenging for passengers, especially leisure travelers who travel by air rarely. Business travelers seem to be more aware of the fare types.

Conducting the questionnaire was very useful and eye opening, analyzing the responses of different employees lead to comprehending how complexities are seen. The respondents are all professionals and did also provide relevant comments when it comes to the questions asked in the sheet. This definitely developed the writers professionally and also raises knowledge of the complexities among the readers of this thesis. Using a quantitative method and conducting a questionnaire was a natural choice for this topic. The writer also received positive feedback from the respondents.

In the view of the fortuity of which both writers are involved in the business segment presented in this study, such opportunity offers a substantial furtherance towards a broader understanding and comprehensive sight regarding on the ever growing in popularity choice of flying from place to place. Highly relevant aspects linked to what services and products one is actually buying when purchasing a flight ticket, what legal rights, what commitments the airlines have in regards to their passengers and how both of the parties acknowledge and handle such instances are analyzed through the content of this study.

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Figures

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Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7