Chapter-7

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an insight into the major findings of the research and the conclusions. The chapter starts with discussions on the findings of the research. Section 7.2.1 discusses the results of the hypotheses tested for the research frame I & II. The section 7.2.2 deals with the results of mediation test for research frame II. Section 7.3 gives conclusions on the basis of the tested hypothesis and section 7.4 summarises the chapter.

7.2 Discussion of findings

FLSE has moved into the centre stage of airlines in the recent years. Never before has their contribution to the success of airlines has been subjected to so much of debate and discussion. The situation has developed as a result of some fundamental change that has taken place, the most important of which is the pervasive and intensive competition that airlines are facing today. To sustain the competitive advantage airlines must have a commitment for improvement, innovation & change and the most important catalyst towards developing these qualities are its employees and their capabilities. It has become very important for the airlines to recruit, care, train them on the on-going basis to improve productivity, innovation and provide them conducive environment for personal growth. This makes the role of FLSE ever so important in ensuring the success of business. The objectives of this study were formulated keeping in mind the importance of the role played by FLSE. The primary aim of the study was to undertake research to find out the relationship between various antecedents and the consequences of FLSE commitment to service quality in airline industry of India. Another very important objective was to test whether job satisfaction mediates this relationship or not. A model on the basis of relevant review of literature was proposed and tested by using SPSS 19 and the Mediation test (proposed by Andrew F. Hayes) which gave the results for the different paths. The findings of this research are there by discussed first on the basis of individual hypothesis before giving a summary of the entire hypotheses tested.
7.2.1 Results of Hypotheses testing (Research frame I&II)

In accordance with the reviewed literature, hypotheses were developed. These hypotheses were tested using regression. Results showed that there was a negative relationship between organizational support and Job satisfaction. Indeed, the more organizational support the employees get, the less likely he/she was to get job satisfaction. The results are not consistent with the organizational support theory which states that in return for a high level of support, employees work harder to help their organization reach its goals (Aselage and Eisenberger, 2003) because organizational support has a significant effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002; Aube et al., 2007; Riggle et al., 2009). Thus the findings reject hypothesis 1a.

As expected the results showed a positive relationship between rewards and job satisfaction. That means job satisfaction depended upon the rewards, the more the rewards, the more satisfied the employees are with their job. So hypothesis 1b was accepted. The positive relationship has also been established by researchers like Bowen, Gilliland, & Folger, 1999; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). Heskett, Jones, Loveman, asser, and Schlesinger (1994). They found that the perception of appropriate levels of pay and other compensation have a significant impact on frontline employees’ job satisfaction and loyalty to their organization.

By empowering employees, management relinquish control over many aspects of the service delivery (Hartline and Ferrell, 1996) to frontline employees who, because of their boundary spanning roles, can provide quick and appropriate responses to dissatisfied customers (Boshoff and Allen, 2000). The study gave a very surprising results thereby showing a negative relationship between the employee empowerment and the job satisfaction. It proved that empowerment do not always affects the level of job satisfaction and so it did not support hypothesis 1c.

Training is considered to be a systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and expertise required by a person to effectively perform a given task or job. Poorly trained employees fail to provide a high level of service quality and deal poorly with customer complaints (Bettercourt and Gwinner, 1996; Yavas et al., 2003). Hypothesis 1d was accepted as there existed a positive relationship between the training and the job satisfaction.
satisfaction i.e. the more the training is given, the more satisfied the employees are with their jobs which could further results in their retention in a particular organisation.

A significant relationship was found in case of service technology and job satisfaction; supportive management and job satisfaction \( (r=0.666, p<0.05 \text{ and } r=0.652, p<0.05) \). It was found that the more the employees get management support and the latest technology for the service delivery, the more they get satisfied with their job. So it establishes a positive relationship between the two and hence hypothesis 1e and hypothesis 1f were accepted.

The correlations among the job satisfaction and the servant leadership was found to be quite high \( (r=0.814, p<0.05) \). The regression results also showed a positive and significant relationship between them. Laub (1999) had predicted that a servant-led organization would have higher job satisfaction. The analysis showed that as the servant leadership increases, the employees' job satisfaction also increases, which establishes a positive relationship that supported hypothesis 1g. This finding also validated the work of Girard (2000) and Thompson (2003) who found a positive correlation between servant leadership and job satisfaction among the leaders and salaried levels in their respective organizational samplings. It is expected that servant leadership may impact on frontline employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment because of its role in creating an environment conducive to delivering high quality service and handling customer complaints effectively.

The analysis also stated a positive relationship between job satisfaction and FLSE commitment to firm. That means that more the employees get satisfied with their job, the more they get committed towards their organization. Thus it supports Hypothesis 1h. Many researchers agree that frontline employees who are satisfied with and committed to their jobs, share the firm's customer-oriented values, exhibit low levels of role stress, and deliver the highest level of service quality (Hartline, Maxham, and McKee 2000; Singh 2000).

There is also evidence suggesting that being effective in performing a job is positively related to job satisfaction (Rust et al., 1996). The results were in the accordance to the evidences given by these researchers. The relationship between job satisfaction and FLSE commitment towards service quality was also found to be significant which supported Hypothesis 1i. Frontline employees that have higher levels of job satisfaction
are more likely to be in a positive mood and behave sensitively and considerately towards others. The results of the analysis showed a significant relationship between Job satisfaction and FLSE service recovery performance which proved the hypothesis 1j to be true.

Fitzgerald (1972) stated that employee job satisfaction relates to job performance. Satisfied employees perform better than dissatisfy employees (Boshoff & Allen, 2000). In the study also it was analysed that there exist a significant relationship between Job satisfaction and FLSE job performance, which supported hypothesis 1k. It was also found that the employees who were more satisfied by their job were more ready to help others which supported hypothesis 1l. Even researchers like Berkowitz (1972) have explained this relationship by suggesting that people who were in a good mood are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour. It was also found that the employees who were satisfied with their jobs were ready to serve customers that were in addition to their official role requirements which satisfies hypothesis 1m. Even the recent service literature emphasizes the importance of extra-role service behaviours during service encounters (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997; Kelly & Hoffman, 1997).

This research also aims to institute an understanding of the mediating effect of job satisfaction. The mediating relationship was introduced in the model where job satisfaction was introduced as a mediator for antecedents and consequences of FLSE commitment towards service delivery. In order to test the degree to which job satisfaction acts as a mediator of the relationship between all possible antecedent consequences relationships, the direct and the indirect effect were analysed.

7.2.2 Results of mediating effect of Job Satisfaction (Research frame III)

Job satisfaction was tested as a mediator between the seven antecedents and six consequences. Mediation test as outlined by Hayes (2009) was conducted for all the direct, indirect and the total effects/paths. The results of the mediated approach are as follows-

Organisational support

No direct effect between organisational support and fl_cf, fl_sq, fl_jp, fl_sp, co_p, er_sb is found. The bootstrapped CI for ab includes zero that means that the indirect
effect is also not significant in all the cases or we can conclude that no mediation exists between organisational support and \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \). That indicates that the job satisfaction do not mediate the relationship between organisational support and the consequences. So Hypotheses - H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, H2e and H2f were not supported.

**Rewards**

No direct effect exists between reward and the consequences i.e. \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \). the bootstrapped CI for \( ab \) does not include zero that means that only the indirect effect is significant in all the cases. It is concluded that partial mediation exists between organisational support and \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \) as the total effect in all the variables (consequences) is not significant. So H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d, H3e and H3f are partially supported.

**Empowerment**

No direct effect exists between empowerment and the consequences i.e. \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \). The bootstrapped CI for \( ab \) included zero that means that the indirect effect is insignificant. As there is no direct and indirect effect, it is concluded that no mediation exists between them. That also implies that job satisfaction do not mediates the relationship between empowerment and the consequences. So the hypothesis-H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d, H4e and H4f are not supported.

**Training**

Inspite of the fact that no direct effect exists between training and \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \), even then the indirect effect is significant in all the cases. the bootstrapped CI for \( ab \) does not include zero. It is concluded that job satisfaction partially mediates training and \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{jp}, fl_{sp}, co_{p}, er_{sb} \). H5a, H5b, H5c, H5d, H5e and H5f are partially supported.

**Service technology**

Direct effect exists in case of all the consequences except for \( fl_{jp} \) and \( er_{sb} \). Indirect effect is significant in case of all variables i.e. \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{sr}, fl_{jp}, co_{p} \). it can be concluded that a complete mediation exists between service tech and \( fl_{cf}, fl_{sq}, fl_{sr}, \) and \( co_{p} \). As job satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between service technology
and and fl_c3, fl_sq, fl_sr, and co_p, hypothesis-H6a, H6b, H6c, and H6e are supported. H6d and H6f are partially supported.

Supportive management

No direct effect exists between sm and the consequences i.e. fl_c3, fl_sq, fl_jp, fl_sp, co_p, er_sb. As the bootstrapped CI for ab does not include zero, the indirect effect is significant in all the cases and we can conclude that partial mediation exists between sm and fl_c3, fl_sq, fl_jp, fl_sp, co_p, er_sb. So H7a, H7b, H7c, H7d, H7e and H7f are partially supported.

Servant leadership

Direct effect is not significant in the relationship between sl and fl_c3, fl_sq, fl_jp, fl_sp, er_sb. The bootstrapped CI for ab does not include zero in case of all the consequences which means that the indirect effect is significant in all the cases. Because of this it is concluded that a partial mediation exists between sl and the consequences as only indirect effect exists between sl and fl_c3, fl_sq, fl_jp, fl_sp, er_sb. So H8a, H8b, H8c, H8d, H8e and H8f are partially supported.

7.3 Review of the results

The results of the regression analysis revealed that the organisational support and the job satisfaction are insignificantly related. In this study, organizational support focuses on help offered to frontline workers when necessary, appropriate job design, and support for frontline employees’ goals and values. The discovery that employee empowerment has a significant negative influence on FLSE CSQ was not expected, as it diverges from the tenets of HRD theory, which holds that employee empowerment generates job satisfaction. The FLSE cannot handle the passenger problems by themselves as they need to get managements approval before handling passenger’s problems.

However, the results are consistent with earlier studies that found rewarding an employee was a stronger predictor of employee job satisfaction (Ellinger and Keller 2003; Hannah 2004). In general, two kinds of rewards are available: financial and nonfinancial rewards. Rewards also range from a simple thank-you note for an exceptional service to a large reward such as wage increase and promotion. Rewards
given to employees, regardless of the type, must be meaningful to the employees and the organization.

The study also showed a significant relationship between training and job satisfaction which means that the more the training an employee’s receives, the more satisfied they get. Through training, FLSE of the different airlines master the basic skills necessary to perform the daily duties of the position and develop job competence. In addition to the basic skills, more airlines are offering training such as receiving training continuously to provide good service. The training program broadens frontline employees’ responsibilities and teaches proper techniques to resolve conflicts and deal with problems immediately.

Most of the FLSE feels that they have the ‘state of the art’ technology to enhance service quality which has resulted in a significant relationship between Service technology and job satisfaction. They feel that sufficient money is allocated for technology to support their efforts to deliver better service. The regression results are also significant for supportive management, servant leadership and the job satisfaction. They are of the view that their bosses provide them with sufficient flexibility about how they accomplish their objectives. Management also regularly spends time ‘on the floor’ with them and the passengers to constantly measure service quality.

As FLSE feels their future to be closely linked to that of the company, they are more committed to their company. They also feel proud to tell others about their being a part of the company and cares about the fate of their company. That is why a significant relationship between job satisfaction and FLSE Commitment to firm was found.

FLSE felt strongly about improving the service their company provides to its customers. They gained a sense of personal accomplishment in providing quality services to customers. They were willing to put in a great deal of effort to help their company deliver high-quality service to the customers. All this led to the significant relationship between job satisfaction and their commitment to service quality. FLSE handled dissatisfied passengers quite well and did not mind dealing with the complaining passengers. Satisfying complaining passengers was a great thrill to them. They also satisfied their customers’ service expectations and managed their works time effectively. They are knowledgeable about their company’s services and expectation of the
passengers which led to the significant relationship between job satisfaction and FLSE job performance.

FLSE helped other employees who had excessive workloads and were always ready to lend a helping hand to co-workers around them. They voluntarily assisted customers even if it meant going beyond their job requirements which helped in establishing a positive relationship between Extra-role customer service behaviours, Cooperation and job satisfaction.

The conceptual model of the study places job satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between the seven antecedents and six consequences. In order to test the degree to which job satisfaction acts as a mediator of the relationship between all possible antecedent -consequences relationships, direct paths and indirect paths were added from each antecedent to each consequence.

No mediation was found in case of organisational support (antecedent) and the consequences of FLSE commitment to service quality. Same is the case with the employee empowerment and the consequences. In these cases neither direct nor indirect effects was significant. This kind of situation is also referred to suppression. As neither direct nor indirect effect was found to be significant, it is concluded that job satisfaction do not mediate these relationships and so no mediation existed between job satisfaction and the consequences(fl_cf, fl_sq, fl JP, fl_sp, co_p, er sb).

Job satisfaction mediated the relationship between rewards, training, service technology, supportive management and the consequences, but only partially as only indirect effect was found to be significant (bootstrapped CI for ab does not include zero). The direct effect and the total effect were found to be insignificant, and so it was concluded that job satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between these antecedents and the consequences. Being satisfied with the received rewards, training, service technology, supportive management, will significantly reduce employees’ intention to leave their employer.

Job satisfaction mediated in case of most of the antecedents (reward, training, Service technology, supportive management and servant leadership) and the consequences (fl cf, fl sq, fl jp, fl sp, co p, er sb). The direct and the indirect effect in case of st and sl was found to be highly significant. That is why a complementary mediation existed between these antecedents and all the consequences.
A complete mediation was found in case of st and fl.cf, st and fl_sq, st and fl_sr and st and co_p. That means job satisfaction completely mediates the relationships between service technology and fl.cf, fl_sq, fl_sr and co_p. In these cases both the direct and the indirect effects were found to be significant. However in case of service technology and fl.jp, er_sb, both direct and the total effects were found to be insignificant.

In case of re, trg and sm only indirect effect is significant as the bootstrapped CI for ab does not includes zero. As far as organisational support is concerned, neither direct nor indirect effect is significant. That indicates that job satisfaction do not mediates the relationship between os and the consequences. No direct effect exists between empowerment and the consequences. The indirect effect is significant only in the case of fl.jp and fl_sp as the bootstrapped CI for ab does not includes zero. So partial mediation exists only between empowerment and fl.jp and fl_sp.

Hence it can be concluded that whether it was a correlation, regression or a mediation analysis, service technology emerged as one of the most important variable. Job satisfaction fully mediated the relationship only between the service technology and the consequences.

Technology is being deployed to enhance the performance of the front line employee in interacting with the customer. In still other cases, technology is allowing introduction of entirely new service innovations. It is profoundly changing the nature of services and the ways in which firms interact with their customers. According to Bitner et al. (1990), the influence of technology on the ability of firms to effectively: (1) customize service offerings; (2) recover from service failure; and, (3) delight customers.

Service technology came out to be an important variable in improving the performance of FLSE. The employees of the airlines undertaken for the study are satisfied with the technology provided to them by the organisation. They are satisfied with the fact that they have ‘state of the art’ technology to enhance service quality. They also agree with the fact that sufficient money is allocated for technology to support their efforts to deliver better service. Not only this, the management also works hard to make the systems and processes more passengers friendly. The second most important variable of the study is servant leadership. Though job satisfaction partially mediated the
relationship between servant leadership and the consequences yet the correlation among the Job satisfaction and the servant leadership was found to be quite high (r=.814, p<.05). The regression results also showed a positive and significant relationship between sl and the consequences. The other variables i.e. re, trg, sm, fl_cf, fl_sq, fl jp, fl sp, co_p, er sb were also found to be important as they were also partially mediated by job satisfaction.

7.4 Summary

This chapter described the major findings of the research and the conclusion. It also explained the results of the hypotheses testing for the research frame I, II. The results of mediation test for research frame III were also discussed. Overall service technology came out to be the most important antecedent. The next Chapter 8 is the last chapter of this thesis which discusses the summary, interventions, limitations, recommendations and suggestions.