



# Intercultural Communication, the new customer service

*A study on the influences of customer service providers' intercultural communication competences within the airline industry*

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**Title of the thesis:**

Intercultural communication, the new customer service:

*“A study on the influences of customer service providers’ intercultural communication competences within the airline industry”*

**Research question:**

How do intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers, through customer service, influence customer satisfaction?

*“Cultural differences should not separate us from one another, but rather bring a collective strength that can benefit all of the humanity”*

- **R. Alan**

*“Strength lies in difference not in similarities”*

- **S. R. Covey**

*“The most important differences which distinguish human beings and societies are not biological. They are cultural”*

- **R. Benedict**

**Abstract**

In the airline industry, service providers must strive towards successful communication between them and their culturally diverse passengers in order to provide a good customer service (quality) and customer satisfaction. In fact, having the ability to offer high-quality customer service and positive service experiences will have a positive impact on increasing positive word-of-mouth, customer retention, customer loyalty, long-term business success, cost-effectiveness and sustainable competitiveness (Ihtiyar & Ahmad, 2015). As passengers become more diverse and global competition becomes more intense, it is necessary for organizations within the airline industry to establish intercultural relationships with their culturally diverse set of customers. In order to manage these relationships effectively, airline organizations within the airline industry need to understand and improve intercultural communications competences (Harvey & Griffith, 2002). This case study explains the complexity of intercultural service encounters, the role service providers and passengers take in these intercultural service encounters, the different approaches during such an encounter (competences) and the importance of customer satisfaction. Against this theoretical background, this case study explores different cultural related cases, different service approaches of service providers during these cultural related cases and the experiences of passengers during these cases. The research question: "How do the intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers, through customer service, influence customer satisfaction?" will determine whether intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers has impact on the customer satisfaction based on the customer service provided by these service providers.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Service Encounter, Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Competences, Customer Service, Customer Satisfaction, Airline Industry, Service Industry, Hospitality Industry

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## **Preface**

Tilburg University has been an interesting educative journey for me which was not without challenges. Starting a pre-master in International Management and realizing this was not the right fit for me has led me to the most interesting and educative studies I have ever experienced: Management of Cultural Diversity. I am very thankful for the opportunities this university has given me to learn and explore relevant topics in our societies. This thesis started in an unthinkable time, a pandemic. In December 2019, China reported the first cases of the COVID-19 (Corona) virus. Who would have thought that soon after the whole world would be captivated by this virus? In these uncertain times it was definitely a challenge to execute the research but with the grace of God, perseverance, motivation and one goal in mind (graduating) it all came to a positive end. I owe a special thanks to Prof. H.G. Siebers for his perseverance, guidance, knowledge, patience, constructive feedback and helpfulness throughout this process. Furthermore, I owe a special thanks to all who participated in this research and shared their experiences, thoughts and knowledge despite this uncertain time. Last, but not least, I want to thank my parents for their support. This would not be possible without their motivational words, their help, and overall support. I hope this research contributes to the improvement of intercultural service encounters, the understanding of culturally diverse customers and greater level of inclusiveness and customer experiences.

Chaglaia C.C. Delink

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past 25 years, the airline industry experienced rapid growth which stimulated developments in technology, world trade, international investments, and tourism activities. Because of these developments, the airline industry is often considered to be the center of globalization (Suhartanto & Noor, 2012). As the industry operates internationally, airline service providers and passengers are culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse (Harvey & Griffith, 2002). These service providers and passengers with different cultural backgrounds are connected through different means of communication (Behbahani, 2013). Moreover, as global competition intensifies, it becomes necessary for organizations within the airline industry to establish strong intercultural relationships with their culturally diverse service providers and passengers. To manage these relationships effectively, organizations within the airline industry need to understand and where needed work hard on their intercultural communication skills, performances and competences (Harvey & Griffith, 2002).

### 1.1. Problem field: intercultural communication competences and customer satisfaction

In such a diverse climate as the airline industry, intercultural communication competences take on a major role because these competences offer tools that help to negotiate about religious and ethnic differences and many other related issues (Martin & Nakayama, 2003). By disposing of intercultural communication competences, a communicator is able to self-reflect and gather information about one's own culture and culture of others, appreciate similarities and differences using cultural resources and acknowledge the quality and value of all cultures (Klein & Chen, 2001). This research will, therefore, explore whether intercultural communication competences of service providers, who are employed by airline organization KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, influence customer satisfaction through customer service.

KLM is a culturally diverse airline organization that operates flights from Amsterdam to 845 destinations, connecting people from Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and Australia (KLM, Destinations, 2019) and transports millions of passengers yearly (KLM, Nieuws, 2019). All passengers enter Amsterdam Airport Schiphol at least once during their journey with KLM. These passengers expect and are offered customer service while traveling, starting at the check-in to the arrival at their final destination.

It can be assumed that any organization which provides service, strives to offer excellent customer service to aim for a high level of customer satisfaction. As global

competition intensifies, one of the greatest assets for an airline organization, such as KLM, is a high level of satisfaction. The service experiences of passengers from the check-in to arrival at the final destination is important. In case of dissatisfaction with the service delivered by the airline organization, a passenger will reconsider purchasing tickets for future flights and the probability to switch to another airline will increase (Namukasa, 2013). Research shows that cultural orientation of service providers and their familiarity with different cultures have an impact on the perception and post-purchase evaluation of a customer and their successful and unsuccessful service encounters (Patterson & Mattila, 2008). Therefore, this research highlights intercultural communication competences, rather than communication competences, which a service provider has to dispose of in an intercultural work setting. Moreover, intercultural communication competences as well as customer service in connection to these competences is an underrepresented topic in current published researches and case studies.

## 1.2. Present-day study: research question and ambitions

This research problem aims to provide an answer to the main research question: ***“How do intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers, through customer service, influence customer satisfaction?”*** Providing an answer to this research question will help raise awareness, within the airline organization KLM, on the importance of intercultural communication competences of their service providers, the influence this may have on the customer satisfaction through the customer service they provide. The main research question will be answered by providing answers to the following sub-questions (Appendix 1 Sub-questions):

1. Which cases of cultural relevance do KLM service providers bring forward?
2. How do these culturally relevant cases relate to the cultural competences of KLM service providers?
3. To what extent are customers satisfied with the service delivered by KLM service providers in these culturally relevant cases?

The sub-questions address three important subjects within this study. The first sub-question will display work- and cultural related experiences of the service provider and occurrences during such encounters from the service providers' point of view. Using the data from the first sub-question, the second sub-question will highlight in what manner these service providers

handle the occurrences during such intercultural service encounters. This may bring forward specific intercultural communication competences that service providers express during these encounters and the approach they choose to take in order to resolve the occurrences during the encounter. Using the data collected from the second sub-question, the third sub-question will highlight data that will display whether the manner in which service providers tackle certain occurrences leads to customer satisfaction or customer dissatisfaction.

Despite the large role cultural differences have in the airline industry, this topic has been largely neglected in academic research. The majority of current research primarily focuses on the perspective of the customer (Wang & Mattila, 2010). However, interest in studies related to the topics of customer service, service quality and customer satisfaction within the airline industry is increasing because the importance of delivery of high service quality is becoming more evident for organizations within the airline industry in order to survive and be competitive. Present-day research is focused on the impact of the quality of the service on passenger satisfaction and has been carried out in numerous regions. Research has shown that the quality of services provided before, during and after flights has had a significant effect on passengers' satisfaction (Namukasa, 2013). Further, positively experienced customer service is important because having the ability to offer customer service of high-quality with positive service experiences positively impacts long-term business success, customer retention, positive word-of-mouth, cost-effectiveness, customer loyalty, and sustainable competitiveness (Ihtiyar & Ahmad, 2015). An organization that employs service providers who dispose of intercultural communication competences can be effective. Findings from an exploratory qualitative research have shown that intercultural communication competences have influence on adequate and perceived service levels and satisfaction (Sharma, Tam, & Kim, 2009).

Customer service experience within the airline industry is another topic that has been extensively researched. These studies were focused on customer service experiences on online platforms using Twitter as the unit of analysis (Misopoulos, Mitic, Kapoulas, & Karapiperis, 2014). The relationship between service quality and customer loyalty has been widely researched in the commercial airline industry where data was collected from two different air carriers (Ostrowski, O'Brien, & Gordon, 1993), also the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the airline industry has been widely researched where a comparison was made between legacy airlines and low-cost airlines (Baker, 2013).

Further, a remarkable study has been carried out into the emotional labor of working in the hospitality industry, focusing on the airline industry. This research displayed the impact of passengers becoming more demanding and the gendered consequences of providing “quality” service becoming more challenging. This often requires a high emotional investment especially for women as they are often positioned as front-line service providers (Tyler & Taylor, 2001). This overview of relevant literature found often, if not always, misses the cultural aspect of passengers and service providers. The focus of these researches do not involve KLM Royal Dutch Airlines in particular nor the impact of culture, cultural aspects or intercultural communication competences and the influence on customer satisfaction through customer service. This case study will, therefore, be a new study to add to a great list of academic research in the airline industry.

### 1.3. Overview

The introductory chapter gives an introduction to the research topic. The second chapter discusses the theoretical framework. In the third chapter, the methodology used for this research is explained. In chapter four findings of the executed research and in chapter five the results of this research are discussed, connected and compared to theories presented in the second chapter. Finally, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in chapter six.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The airline organizations play an important role in the movement of people and products domestically and internationally. The industry is highly competitive and therefore having the ability to provide high-quality services to passengers is the core competitive advantage for the profitability and growth of organizations in the airline industry. For this reason, airline organizations have switched their focus to service quality in order to increase customer satisfaction. The level of service quality has an impact on an organization’s ability to retain customers, which in turn is a competitive advantage. This competitive advantage leads to an increase in market share and therefore, the ability to deliver high-quality services to passengers is of importance for the survival of an airline organization (Namukasa, 2013). The rapid growth of the airline industry creates opportunities as well as challenges to organizations within this industry. Opportunities are created due to the increasing demand for airline services. And the challenges are created by the high level of competition within this

industry and due to the increase of customer demands for better customer service (Suhartanto & Noor, 2012).

### 2.1. Intercultural service encounters

The current global marketplace, which includes customers from a variety of cultural backgrounds, has caused cultural competences to become a key competitive capability in the airline industry (Patterson & Mattila, 2008). Because the airline industry is considered as the center of globalization, academics and practitioners have a valid reason to consider intercultural service encounters. Intercultural service encounters, in the airline industry, are encounters between service providers and the passengers who do not share the same cultural background (Wang & Mattila, 2010). As the airline industry provides service as its main selling point, service encounters occur constantly during the traveling process. Service encounters are social exchanges, where the interaction between the service provider and the passenger is an important element that determines whether satisfaction or dissatisfaction occurs as a result of the service provided by the service provider during such an encounter. In turn, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the passenger provides a motive to continue the relationship or not. Cross-cultural studies, which focus on marketing, suggest when shaping people's attitude, values and preferences it are cultural norms and values that have a significant influence on evaluations of service encounters during intercultural service encounters which require a medium to high degree of customer contact (Patterson & Mattila, 2008).

The cultural differences between the service provider and the passenger make the service encounter more complex. This complexity stems from the fact that intercultural service encounters have to deal with intergroup and interpersonal elements. Solomon et al. (1985) presented the role theory which explains that in the memory of service providers and passengers, who stem from different cultural backgrounds, have different service scripts and role expectations stored in their minds. These differences easily create misunderstandings which can result in dissatisfied passengers, unhappy service providers and eventually results in the loss of a customer (Wang & Mattila, 2010). People with different cultural backgrounds differ in norms, values, relationships and communication styles. Studies in the social sciences have demonstrated that miscommunication often arise from intercultural service encounters (Wang & Mattila, 2010). In intercultural service encounters, difficulties in face-to-face

communication can lead to misunderstandings because of cultural differences although the service provider and the customer may speak the same language (Kasang, 2001).

Remarkably, existing research in the hospitality industry display customers having mixed feelings about intercultural service encounters. On the one hand, customers negatively experience intercultural service encounters which can be explained through the social identity theory and the similarity-attraction theory. The social identity theory focuses on the understanding of intergroup discrimination. This theory explains that members of one group favor the ingroup which they belong to, called ingroup favoritism, and these members discriminate against the outgroup, which is called outgroup hostility. The categorization of ingroup-outgroup can be applied when people become aware of cultural differences during an encounter. When placing the ingroup-outgroup categorization in the context of intercultural service encounters between service providers and passengers at the airport, service providers and passengers can use identity information, such as an accent, to determine whether the counterparty stems from the same cultural group or not (Brickson, 2000). The similarity-attraction theory explains that individuals are more likely to be attracted to people who are similar to themselves. Interactions within marriage or friendships are considered to be easier for communicators who are similar to each other when it comes to their demographics, attitudes, or experiences (Sharma, Tam, & Kim, 2009). For this reason, both of the theories suggest that there is an increased possibility that passengers will be dissatisfied with the service provided when the service provider and the passenger have different cultural backgrounds. Several studies have shown that customers have negative service experiences in intercultural service encounters, especially when customers are considered to be part of a minority group in a society. On the other hand, not all intercultural service encounters are perceived negatively. Studies have shown that customers are likely to adjust their standards on service in order to be more understanding of intercultural service encounters. Stauss and Mang (1999) have shown that there are customers that do not find intercultural service encounters to be more problematic in comparison to intra-cultural service encounters. A more recent study by Warden et al. (2003) suggests that customers that take part in intercultural service encounters tend to be more forgiving when service failures occur and service recovery is offered. The reason for customers to be forgiving appears to be that service recovery efforts remind customers of the existence of their own cultural scripts and those of the service providers. As a result, customers are more likely to accept efforts of

service recovery which will lead to the customer holding the service provider less responsible for the failure which initially occurred (Warden, Liu, Huang, & Lee, 2003)

2.1.1. The challenges of service providers and customers in intercultural service encounters

International passengers may cause service providers stress but also feelings of uncertainty, nervousness, intimidation or even frustration, while other service providers remain calm during an encounter with these passengers. Some service providers are aware of the need to remain calm and function properly during an intercultural service encounter in order to provide the level of service required and expected. Service providers initially feel nervous when having to deal with international passengers however, these feelings disappear when they have increased job-experience. The different reactions towards international passengers can be influenced by three moderators which are service situations such as busy days, customer characteristics and the characteristics of the service provider. In case the service providers are occupied, the passenger's behavior can cause more stress because service providers have limited time and energy to cope with conflict. Findings of the research which focused on service providers' emotion, stress, and coping during intercultural service encounters show that service providers find intercultural service encounters challenging because passengers from different cultural backgrounds might have different preferences and expectations of service styles during an intercultural encounter. According to this research, the perceived challenges associated with intercultural encounters stem from language barriers between service providers and international passengers. Furthermore, special requests are considered to be challenging as well. These special requests from international passengers are hard to deal with especially when passengers have failed to adapt to the local environment and act as if they are in their home environment (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

Participants of this study presented recommendations that positively contributed to their ability to interact with international passengers. The participants suggest patiently trying to understand the passenger's requests or questions by paying attention to body language, use visual aids such as pictures or translations from colleagues who speak the customer's language or translation programs such as Google Translate. Moreover, participants of the study emphasize the importance of their professional attitude towards the service delivery. Service providers strongly believe in the importance of meeting the needs of the customers and achieving high levels of customer satisfaction. However, one must be aware that not every

service provider has the ability to participate in intercultural service encounters properly. For example, several service providers might ignore international passengers and therefore cause frustration with the passenger. Moreover, these service providers might ask their colleagues to assist the passenger or even blame their colleagues when a service failure has occurred in an intercultural service encounter. An aspect that can provide an explanation of the level of performance of a service provider in intercultural service encounters is their personal characteristics and experiences. When it comes to service providers working in the airline industry, they find enjoyment in working with people and learning about different cultures. Furthermore, service providers seem to share several personal traits such as being patient and having the ability to adapt to different situations. Previous experiences and training of service providers are also reflected in their work ethic and customer-orientation (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

To sum up, examples of possible employee-related stressors are language differences, culturally diverse customers and service preferences. These possible stressors may result in actual feelings of stress for a service provider if these stressors lead to an *intercultural customer performance gap*. This gap explains that foreign customers might fail to perform their role which is expected by the service provider. An intercultural customer performance gap can be caused by communication difficulties, unusual requests or preferences for service interaction. The type of service might moderate the link between the stressor and stress. In context of self-service, such as the electronic self-service check-in desks, the likelihood of stress is smaller as passengers perform a large portion of the service themselves. A second potential moderator are customer characteristics which includes group size and customer attitude. When passengers are in a group, service providers feel more stressed and intimidated since the communication barrier is multiplied. Customer attitudes are moderators as well because in situations where passengers are rude or mean, service providers might experience feelings of frustration. Inversely, in case passengers are polite, service providers genuinely make efforts in order to solve the customer's problem. The third moderator involves service provider characteristics, such as personal thoughts on service and their personal acceptance of other cultures. In case the service provider strongly believes in satisfying passengers, they will not be annoyed by passengers displaying unusual behavior. Instead the service provider tries their best to understand what these passengers really want (Wang & Mattila, 2010). Service providers who are not properly trained and have little to no



ability solve the problems a passenger might have may lead to the dissatisfaction of the passenger. Consequently, service providers feel frustrated while doing their jobs which and company costs increase. On the other hand, service providers who are satisfied tend to be more productive and deliver better quality service which positively effects customer satisfaction and the profitability of the organization (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004).

When it comes to the customers taking part in intercultural service encounters, they experience challenges which are similar to the challenges experienced by the service provider. The passenger who travels overseas is often in a stressful situation due to many differences they experience between their own country and the country they arrive in. Oberg (1960) explained this experience as a "culture shock" which means the passenger lacks familiar cues, such as behavior, in the new culture. Simple and automated behavior that was once reflexive now is in need of effort and thought in the new culture. Passengers may display this "culture shock" in terms of feelings of confusion about role expectations, surprise and general anxiety and uncertainty of not being in control of their lives and actions (Sparks, 1992).

#### 2.1.2. Issues within intercultural service encounters

As studies of Wang & Mattila (2010) in social sciences have demonstrated the possibilities for miscommunication, misunderstandings often arises from intercultural service encounters due to differences in norms, values, relationships and communication styles. The work of John Gumperz is a prime example of this occurrence. Based on the work of Gumperz in *Crosstalk*, where miscommunication is displayed between people who have different cultural backgrounds, it is clear that cultural differences can cause issues within a dialogue. In this study, several issues came forward such as the manner in which individuals try to get their point across in their non-native language and the manner in which this is understood or received by the counterparty. This issue refers to conversational inferencing which refers to the effortless sensemaking that takes place when people work out the significance of an utterance, a word, an action or an object. They do so by matching it against their past experiences (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972). This incident was also highlighted in the research into the emotions service providers experience during an intercultural service encounter where previous work experiences and training was reflected in their work ethic and customer-orientation (Wang & Mattila, 2010). A second issue which was brought forward was the one of assumptions. Are there assumptions being made of either parties within the intercultural interaction? And are the parties aware of these assumptions? Furthermore, another issue that

arose was the one of knowledge which refers to the question: *“do service providers have extensive knowledge on other cultures and are service providers able to contextualize this knowledge?”* Will a service provider understand the meaning when a passenger produces vocal signs that enable a certain level of formality for example, shifting to a more prestigious accent, using the word ‘request’ instead of the word ‘ask’? (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972).

Besides assumptions, knowledge and communication being an issue, another major issue is the service itself. Services are intangible, there is no tangible product that can be picked up and examined. Production and consumption occur simultaneously when the service is delivered therefore, assessing the quality of it can be difficult. As a consequence, the organizations within the hospitality industry have to depend on effective training of frontline service providers. The hospitality industry depends heavily on the service provider’s people skills because of the intangibility of the service product. Bitner (1990) suggests that the marketing mix should be extended beyond the traditional elements which are product, place, price and promotion. Moreover, Bitner (1990) suggests the marketing mix to include people, the physical environment and processes such as company policies. However, it is difficult to add people to the marketing mix because of the human behavior. Human behavior varies constantly, is unpredictable and often too difficult to explain which also makes quality control difficult. These varied human elements produce variation amongst service providers’ their attitude, interpersonal skills, commitment towards the organization and the levels of training. Specifically, the variation in levels of communication skills is of major concern because effective communication is essential to meet the needs of a customer in the hospitality industry (Sparks, 1992).

#### 2.1.3. Intercultural service encounters and coping strategies

Service providers sometimes have to deal with international passenger’s unusual and unpleasant behavior. There are two types of coping strategies that can be used in situations where the passenger displays behavior which is perceived as negative: problem-based coping and avoidance coping. Problem-based coping is trying to satisfy customers by solving their problems. In this case, service providers may use additional intercultural communication competences in order to improve the service encounter. In case of avoidance coping, the service provider wants to “escape” the service encounter without making any personal effort or considering the customer’s rights. For example, the service provider might ignore the passenger or shift the responsibility to a colleague (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

Emotions might be connected to the type of coping strategy chosen. For example, negative emotions towards the service provider might lead to the service provider choosing the avoidance coping strategy and neutral emotions might lead to the service provider choosing the problem-based coping strategy. However, no causal links can be established in this exploratory study. Nevertheless, in this exploratory study it is proposed that previous experiences of service providers in service encounters influence them to either provide help or escape the situation. Having previous experience in this line of work is important because results from conducted interviews indicate that service providers did not have any formal training when it comes to proper handling conflict during intercultural service encounters. In fact, the lessons these providers have learned during their previous encounters have turned into a service script for these encounters. These lessons may also increase the provider's intercultural sensitivity which is the enhancement of performance in communicating with international customers (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

From the discussion displayed above it is suggested that intercultural service encounters may be considered to be complex and there are many different factors impacting the manner in which customers perceive the intercultural interaction. For this reason, Sharma et al. (2009) emphasizes the importance of intercultural communication competence (ICC), which is the ability to interact effectively with individuals with different cultural backgrounds. This ability can determine whether customers are able to adjust their expectations in intercultural service encounters. Or, it may be the service providers' own perceptions of intercultural service encounters that has impact on their service performance and consequent hence the customer satisfaction (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

## 2.2. Intercultural communication competences

Wang & Mattila (2010) claim intercultural service encounters to be complex. And in order to cope with the complexity of these encounters, service providers may use intercultural communication competences in order to improve these service encounters. Furthermore, there are factors which influence the manner in which customers perceive these encounters. Sharma et al. (2009) suggests that intercultural communication competences (ICC), which is defined as the ability to interact effectively with people who have a different cultural background, determines whether customers are able to adjust their expectations and evaluations in intercultural service encounters. "Cultural" may refer to a person's values and

beliefs or a person's national, regional and local customs (INCA, 2004). Another suggestion, made by Wang & Mattila (2010), explains that it may be the service provider's own perception of intercultural service encounters that influence their service performance and therefore the level of satisfaction of the customer (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

Intercultural communication competences develops self-reflection, gathering information about one's own and the other's cultures, appreciating similarities and differences using cultural resources and acknowledging the quality and value of all cultures (Klein & Chen, 2001). It deals with having the right mind-set, skills, and sensitivity when taking part in cross-cultural interactions (Ahmad & Ihtiyar, 2015). Intercultural communication competences can be used to negotiate cultural meanings and to execute appropriate and effective communication that recognizes the multiple identities of the participants in the intercultural service encounter. When a service provider disposes of intercultural communication competences, he or she dispose of knowledge to interact with people in an effective manner with self-concept, open-mindedness, a non-judgmental attitude, and social relaxation. Furthermore, a service provider is also able to recognize contexts of situations as each situation is different and people's reaction may be influenced by culture or emotions (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

A service provider might be competent in one, if not all, of the following six competences: *fundamental competence* entails the general ability to effectively adapt to a new and unknown environment to achieve specific goals. In context of an intercultural service encounter between a service provider and a passenger, the goal could be selling an upgrade to a passenger while this satisfies the need for a seat change because the passenger is not able to sit to next a woman because of religious reasons. Fundamental competence consists of cognitive capabilities that a service provider must contain in order to be effective in any situation that may occur. *Social competence* involves specific abilities instead of general abilities such as in fundamental competence. When one is social competent one has the ability to express empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity (how people perceive and analyze things such as events, structures, or experiences) and interaction management (how do people handle conflict). *Interpersonal competence* is having the ability to accomplish tasks and achieve goals through successful communication. In context of an intercultural service encounter, the service provider would be able to provide information even when the passenger does not speak English as their native language. Although, to dispose of

interpersonal competence one must dispose of the fundamental and social competence. The interpersonal competence distinguishes itself from these two competences because one must be able to execute certain skills in a particular manner in order to control the environment in which the encounter takes place in order to achieve goals. *Linguistic competence* is the ability to use language properly. *Communicative competence* is the knowledge of how to use language properly, but it also entails the knowledge on how to execute this knowledge of language properly. One is communicative competent when one is able to appropriately get messages across in a particular context of interaction. This would mean that one is linguistically able to adapt in an intercultural service encounter where the passenger may speak the same language as the service provider however, the level of fluency may differ. *Relational competence* consists of many of the previous mentioned competences however, to be relational competent one must be able to establish certain degrees of relationships with others before he or she can interact effectively with them (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

When a service provider disposes of these competences, he or she is able to act appropriately in a way to make one understand and be able to build relationships in situations where cultural differences are present (Behbahani, 2013). In an attempt to better understand the challenges of intercultural communication relating to the development of customer relationships, it is important to draft the complete potential field of partners. The potential scope of global relationships can be referred to as the global relationship domain. In this domain the identification of the communication linkages are important which are: 1. Intra-organizational relationships 2. Interorganizational relationships and 3. Organizational-to-customer relationships. However, what is also important is the realization of the implications for overall intercultural relationship network development. This research will focus on organizational-to-customer relationship which is frequently tied to customer service providers. The interaction between the service provider and customer is seldomly coordinated that can cause confusion, conflict and miscommunication. National culture is a major obstacle between the service provider and the customer. This cultural distance, where the norms and values of two societies differ, can cause complexity and decrease the ability to interculturally communicate (Harvey & Griffith, 2002).

#### 2.2.1. Competence and performance

An aspect that can provide an explanation of the level of performance of a service provider in intercultural service encounters are their personal characteristics and experiences.

Characteristics and experiences are internal factors that play an important role in being able and willing to perform (Wang & Mattila, 2010). These two aspects play a vital role in the outcome of the service encounter. For example, one might be competent to show empathy however their personal characteristic is not to show empathy at all. According to Wang & Mattila (2010), proper training (which is an external factor) also reflects in the work of a service provider. And one can assume that where personal characteristics and past experiences fall short, proper training can fill in. However, a service provider may be trained to deal with angry passengers but has never experienced this in reality. When, for example, a service encounter gets out of hand to the level where the passenger gets physical with a service provider there is an increased chance that the service provider is not able to handle the situation correctly. The question may be asked whether training is the ultimate solution for the service provider being willing and able to perform. However, according to Wang & Mattila (2010), *intercultural customer performance gap*, which is another external factor, might make the intercultural service encounter more challenging. The intercultural customer performance gap arises when foreign customers fail to perform their role which is expected by the service provider. The service provider might be properly trained however, when the customer does not react in a manner which is expected by the service provider the intercultural service encounter will fail (Wang & Mattila, 2010). This example displays, yet again, the importance of personal characteristics and past experiences. Therefore, one must be aware that being competent does not directly mean that one is able or willing to perform. There is a difference between what a person is able or willing to do in controlled situations and what a person does in actual practice (Rethans, et al., 2002). Being able or willing to perform in actual practice may depend on external factors. A person may be competent to engage in certain situations however may not be willing to engage because of the context of the situation. For example, a man is not willing to speak to a woman because of his religious background but is indeed able to speak to a woman (Nakane, 2007). Therefore, not only competence but also performance impacts the quality of the service provided.

### 2.2.2. Intercultural communication competence and service quality

Passengers of airline organizations experience many different service encounters with front-line service providers and flight attendants. These experiences are defined as “moments of truth” which indicates that customers judge or evaluate the airline’s service quality by comparing their experiences and expectations with a number of quality attributes. This

comparison is executed when there is a need to research the impact of airline service quality on customer satisfaction because customer satisfaction holds a significant importance in airline industry (Namukasa, 2013). As service quality influences the customer satisfaction, the level of service quality is of the essence. In order to positively increase the customer service quality, intercultural communication competences may be used (Wageheim & Reurink, 1991).

Customer service is a strategy that focuses on meeting and satisfying customer expectations through identifying, understanding and focusing on customer needs (Wageheim & Reurink, 1991). Hereby, the quality of the service delivered is important because it influences a customers' satisfaction (Namukasa, 2013). The quality of customer service can be measured by the overall impression of the efficiency of the organization and its services. Zethaml et al. (1990) provided a definition of service quality and explained it to be a process which is based on expectations and perceptions of the customer who receives the service. The service quality can be measured by customers judging the level of responsiveness, which refers to the willingness to help the customer. Furthermore, the level of assurance can be judged by the customer, which refers to the knowledge and ability of service providers to create sense of trust and confidence between themselves and the customer. Finally, the customer can judge the level of effort to achieve empathy, this entails service providers are caring and provide individual attention to the customer. When customers measure the quality of service, they can determine whether or not there is equity in the relationship between them and the service provider (Sparks, 1992).

The majority of definitions of service quality focuses on the customer's needs and requirements of the service and how well the delivered service match the customers' expectations of the service. Customers base their judgement of customer service and its quality on personal experiences during the service encounter (Namukasa, 2013). This service encounter differs because every service provider may have different service styles. These service styles are a reflection of a combination of *courteous* (phatic speech, nonverbal and verbal immediacy), *personalized* (demonstrating a customer orientation, interaction involvement, information sharing and social support) and *manipulative* (bureaucratization, interaction control, compliance gaining and emotion management) *communication behaviors*. The exact communication behavior which is demonstrated by the service provider is influenced by the provider's status (position within the organizations' hierarchy), customer's status (may be the prime minister), and time pressure. At the same time these three

communication behaviors can be influenced by culture (Zabava Ford, 1999). The difference in service styles also explains the suggestion made by Wang & Mattila (2010) which indicates that it may be the service providers' perceptions of the intercultural service encounter that may impact their service performance (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

#### 2.2.3. Intercultural communication competence and service failures

The goal of the service provider is aiming towards providing the maximum level of service quality meaning satisfying and retaining customers even in case of service failure (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004). A service failure occurs when the service quality of the service provided does not match the customers' expectation which results in a dissatisfied customer. A service failure that can easily be fixed, such as a seating issue, often results in a single complaint. However, receiving more than one complaint about one particular issue might indicate a systematic problem. When customers file a complaint, the attribution theory can be applied. This theory suggests that the customer will have an increased negative reaction if the cause of the complaint is perceived to be permanent rather than temporary (Knox & Van Oest, 2014). Solving a service failure, also known as a service recovery, can be defined as trying to solve those elements of the service that have failed. The goal of applying service recovery is to restore the customer's satisfaction which disappeared during the service failure. The importance of applying service recovery is that customers may rate the performance of the service provider much higher if he or she is able to recover the problem after the service failure has occurred rather than when the failure did not occur in the first place. Research has indicated that addressing and solving a customer's complaint leads to higher customer loyalty in comparison to a customer that has been instantly satisfied during the initial service encounter. However, a dissatisfied customer can form a threat to the organization when the issue is not resolved. This can cause for the dissatisfied customer to switch to the competitor or spread negative word-of-mouth (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004). In the airline industry, where competition is intense, negative publicity or customers taking their business to the competitor can greatly harm an organization in the airline industry.

In order for a service provider to restore a service failure, there are three perspectives that need to be taken into account. An organization has specific service recovery routines, service providers have a certain degree of empowerment and the customer may have a certain expectation of the manner in which the issue needs to be resolved. It is assumed that culture has an effect on these different perspectives for example, an organization within the



same industry might have different service recovery routines in place because of the geographical position or a foreign customer might have different expectations of service recovery than a customer with a Dutch cultural background. Therefore, service providers and customers express their underlying cultural values and assumptions during this interaction (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004).

Providing high-quality service in the airline industry is considered to be an important strategy for success in today's competitive environment. In order to measure the service quality, Gronroos (1984) proposed the Nordic school of thought which is based on two constructs. The first construct is the technical quality which refers to the performance of the service provider and the outcome of this displayed performance. The second construct is the functional quality which refers to the subjective perception of how service is delivered and includes the perception of the customer during service encounter. Rust and Oliver (1994) added service environment as a third construct. The implication of this three-part model is that it emphasizes the significance of understanding that the measurement of service quality is based on the performance, expectations and perceptions of the customer and the environment in which the service is provided (Ahmad & Ihtiyar, 2015).

### 2.3. Customer satisfaction

The previous discussion suggests by providing service quality through customer service and service recovery, an organization can influence customer satisfaction. One should understand that an organization cannot achieve a hundred percent customer satisfaction and there will always be some customers left dissatisfied. In marketing, customer satisfaction is one of the important elements which links the process of purchasing and consumption with post purchase evaluations. Customer satisfaction also has impact on future purchase behavior of customers and the profitability of an organization (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Several definitions are provided for 'customer satisfaction'. Oliver (1981) defined customer satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment which results from the comparison between a product's perceived performance (or outcome) and to customer's expectations. For this research the following definition by Hansemark and Albinson (2004) is used. They defined customer satisfaction as the overall attitude of the customer towards a service provider and the emotional reaction to the difference between the customer's expectations and what they actually received regarding the fulfilment of their needs, goals or

desires (Namukasa, 2013). In context of the airline industry, research has shown that the quality of pre-flight, in-flight and post-flight services has a statistically significant impact on the satisfaction of passengers. In addition, the satisfaction of passengers as a mediating variable also had a significant impact on the loyalty of passengers towards the airline organization. It was noted that the satisfaction of passengers differed from person to person for the reason that passengers are interested in different things. Some passengers were more interested in off board facilities such as airline lounge access and other passengers were interested in onboard facilities such as meal and beverages offered during the flight (Namukasa, 2013).

#### 2.3.1. Measuring customer satisfaction

The manner in which service is provided, through different service styles, has influence on whether a customer is satisfied or unsatisfied with the service. In order to measure whether the customer is satisfied or dissatisfied, Oliver (1981) introduced the expectancy-disconfirmation model. This model explains that customers will base their satisfaction or dissatisfaction of a product or service by the comparisons they make between their expectations and perceptions (Oh, 1999). Furthermore, the theory researches the formation of expectations and the disconfirmation of those expectations through the comparison of performance. Expectations can be defined as the perception of pre-consumption associated with goods and services, where performance is the basis of the customer's perception of the provided goods and services. Dissatisfaction arise when prior expectations and the actual performance by the service provider do not match. If an airline customer perceives the quality of service that he or she receives exceeds their needs, wants, and expectations, their satisfaction towards the organization will be high (positive disconfirmation). On the other hand, if the customer's perception of the service quality does not meet their needs, wants, and expectations, then, the customer's satisfaction towards the organization will be low (negative disconfirmation) (Suhartanto & Noor, 2012). Research shows that intercultural communication competences directly affects customer service quality and customer service. Customer satisfaction reduces the costs that arises through the attraction of new customers and prevents customer complaints. Taking these benefits into consideration, customer satisfaction positively impacts customer loyalty that can predict future purchase intention and is it influenced by cultural diversifications (Ahmad & Ihtiyar, 2015).

### 3. Methodology

In the following chapter the methodological design is explained. This chapter will outline the field of study, research design, data collection, sampling strategy, data analysis and the internal and external validity.

#### 3.1. Field of study

This research focuses on the airline industry. This field of study was chosen for several reasons. First, the airline industry was chosen because it operates within the hospitality industry fulfilling the main criteria of heterogeneity, and intangibility. This means that the airline industry offers one type of service and this service is not a tangible product that can be picked up, examined and assessed. Furthermore, within the airline industry the “product” which is offered is the complete travel experience from booking a flight to the arrival at the final destination. Second, there is a high degree of interaction between the service provider and the customer, which allows for a high number of critical incidents to occur. The moments of interaction with the airline’s customers with the service providers for example, at the check-in desk or in the airplane when meals are served can increase the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the customers’ service experiences. Third, the airline industry operates beyond national boundaries. Therefore, there is a need to cater to passengers from all over the world which has led to all major airlines having to set up operations at their most important hubs and recruit local service providers. The latter makes for an ideal variability when selecting samples of service providers with different cultural backgrounds who belong to the same organization. Fourth, the airline industry is very competitive where service is one of the most competitive elements within the industry and service quality is at the forefront of many marketing plans of large airline organizations (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004).

#### 3.2. Research design and data collection

This thesis is a deductive and inductive research into the intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers and the possible impact these competences may have on the customer satisfaction through customer service. This research is inductive because of the cases that are put forward which are collected from data offered by respondents of interviews and focus groups. This research is deductive as theories based on the literature found will be used in order to analyze the data that will be collected during focus groups and individual interviews. This research will solely focus on verbal face-to-face communication

during an intercultural service encounter between the service provider and passengers of KLM. Because this thesis will investigate a not thoroughly studied problem, in order to gain more insight and familiarity it will be an exploratory research (Singh, 2007). A qualitative and quantitative research method will be applied where data will be collected directly from the subjects under investigation which are airline service providers employed by KLM and passengers using the services offered by this airline organization. The use of a mixed method approach has different advantages such as, providing stronger evidence for a conclusion and compensating for the weaknesses and limitations of each method individually.

In order to research whether intercultural communication competences impacts customer satisfaction through customer service, a “three-steps data collection” will be applied. The choice of a three-steps data collection approach is based on the data that needs to be collected in order to execute this research. There are three elements that are important to this research: cases of intercultural service encounters, insights on intercultural communication competences in relation to these cases (how are these cases handled by service providers employed by KLM), and KLM passengers’ evaluation of the service provided (are passengers satisfied or dissatisfied with the offered service). These elements can only be brought forward with the use of a three-step data collection method. Originally this three-steps data collection method was designed as follows: the first step would be conducting interviews with two focus groups face-to-face. The second step of data collection would entail twenty-four individual face-to-face interviews with KLM service providers. The third step in the data collection process would be conducting a questionnaire amongst KLM passengers with a sample size of 600. Unfortunately, in March 2020 the virus COVID-19 rapidly spread in the Netherlands which caused for the entire country going into an “intelligent lockdown” which was enforced by the Dutch government. Due to this “intelligent lockdown” it was not possible to execute the original research design as social distancing was the norm and therefore, face-to-face contact was not allowed. The COVID-19 pandemic forced for the research design to be redesigned to fit the current crisis.

The revised data collection process continued to consist of a three-steps data collection method. The first step of data collection entailed face to face interviews with two focus groups. The two focus groups consisted of four and five service providers. Moreover, in order to collect additional relevant data, it was of importance to have a sample of respondents employed in different departments of the airline organization. Therefore, five cabin crew

members were interviewed through online communication channels such as Skype. The focus groups and online interviews were organized to give insight into work experiences of these service providers where cultural differences have played a significant role. The following question is formulated in order to collect this information: *“Could you give an example of a customer being dissatisfied with the service provided possibly due to a cultural mismatch?”* The answers to this question should give a clear view on which cases of cultural mismatches occur between a service provider and a passenger in an intercultural service encounter. This first step of data collection will also determine the frequency of occurrence of each case mentioned. The focus groups and interviews are finalized by selecting five cases mentioned during these interviews. The following sub-question will be answered (Appendix 1 Sub-questions): **Which cases of cultural relevance do KLM service providers bring forward?**

The second step of the data collection consists of online individual interviews with twenty-four service providers. These interviews were conducted through an online communication channel such as Skype and Facetime. During these interviews, the service providers were presented the five cases selected during the first step of the data collection. Second, the service providers were asked to give more insight on how they would react during the occurrence of each of the five cases. Furthermore, the service providers were asked which measures are taken when these particular cases occur. The answers to these questions will give an overview on which measures are taken during these five cases and the reason behind their choice (Appendix 4 Interview Script). Furthermore, follow-up questions will be asked. These follow-up questions are based on the initial answers of the service providers. The following sub-question will be answered (Appendix 1 Sub-questions): **How do these culturally relevant cases relate to the cultural competences of KLM service providers?**

The third step consists of questionnaires which were conducted amongst KLM passengers with a sample size of 176. These questionnaires were conducted at Schiphol Airport at different gates (Appendix 6 Questionnaire Script). Due to COVID-19, the questionnaires were held amongst a decreased amount of KLM passengers traveling via Schiphol Airport than initially was planned. In this questionnaire, the five cases will be presented in a broader perspective. The questions of the questionnaire were designed based on the data collected during the first and second step of the data collection method. First, control variables are used: age, gender, frequency of flying, birthplace of the parents and background. Second, passengers are asked whether they have experienced one of the five

cases which are presented in a broader perspective rather than specific. The reason for this is because passengers may not have experienced specific cases but have experienced similar cases. When a passenger indicates having experienced a situation which is similar to the case, the passenger will be asked how this situation was handled. The answer options are based on the data collected during the second step of data collection. The passengers can indicate what the reaction or measure was of the service provider when the case occurred. Passengers can indicate whether they were dissatisfied or satisfied with the manner in which the case was handled by the service provider. Furthermore, passengers are asked to indicate their satisfaction rate of the service provided overall. In order to determine the satisfaction-rate the expectancy-disconfirmation model introduced by Oliver (1981) will be used. This model ensures that customers will form their satisfaction of the service after it has been provided. Therefore, passengers were asked to provide their perceptions or evaluations using a “worse than/better than expected” scale (Oh, 1999). The following sub-question will be answered (Appendix 1 Sub-questions): **To what extent are customers satisfied with the service delivered by KLM service providers in these culturally relevant cases?**

#### 3.2.1. Sampling strategy

As previously mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused for the data collection method to be revised and the pandemic has also caused for sample sizes to be adjusted. In order to carry out this “three-steps data collection”, access to service providers and customers was needed. Initially, this access would have been granted by a manager of the department Passenger Services. This manager would need to grant access to service providers working on “Airside” as they interact with the passengers after the check-in process, before or during the boarding process and onboard. Furthermore, these service providers interact with the passengers in case of cancellation, delays and missed flights. However, because of the pandemic, two live focus groups could be organized with a small group of participants and the participants of the focus groups and interviews were approached through LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

The service providers who participated in the focus groups and the one-on-one Skype interviews were randomly selected. The sample construction for the individual interviews consisted of Ticketing Agents, Gate Agents, Service Agents and Cabin Crew members. Both male and female employees were selected, where a distinction was made between service providers with a migration background, either western or non-western, and non-migrants.

One service provider per sample requirement was interviewed, totaling the sample size to 24 service providers. The sample construction for the questionnaires was as follows: male and female passengers above the age of eighteen. A minimum age limit is set based on the fact that minors are in need of their parent's consent and therefore, in this case age is a conditional factor. Initially for the questionnaire, respondents would be selected on one intercontinental flight and on two European flights totaling the original sample size to 600. However, due to COVID-19, 90% of the fleet of KLM remained non-operative and the remaining 10% of the fleet was only 40% occupied. Therefore, the sample size for the questionnaire was forced to be adjusted to a hundred respondents in total. It was expected that passengers would vary in background: non-western, migrants, western (non-Dutch) and therefore, background is a control variable.

Due to COVID-19, participants were approached via online platforms to ask for their participation in this research. The sample size of participants was as follows: in the first step of the data collection process the first focus group consisted of four service providers which was one Gate Agent and three Service Agents. GA1, SA1 and SA2 are all employed at airside (gate) and SA3 is employed at landside (check-in desk) (appendix 3). The participants of this focus group were all women and their age ranging from 24 to 55 years. The participants have different cultural backgrounds being Polish, Dutch, Ghanaian, Surinamese. The participants' timeframes of employment at this particular organization range from 3 to 21 years. The second focus group consisted of five service providers: two Gate Agents, two Service Agents and a Ticket Agent. All five service providers are employed at airside (gate or ticket desk) (appendix 3). The participants of this focus group consisted of two males and four females age ranging from 46 to 62 years old. The participants vary in cultural background which are Surinamese, Dutch, Indian and Italian. The participants' timeframe of employment at this particular organization range from 1 to 29 years. As Cabin Crew agents failed to be included during the focus groups, they were included and interviewed after the focus groups. Five Cabin Crew members were individually interviewed on Skype: four Cabin Crew agents and one Purser. The participants of these one-on-one Skype interviews were all women age ranging from 27 to 65 years. The participants have different cultural backgrounds being Chinese, Dutch and Surinamese. The participants' timeframe of employment at this particular organization ranges from 7 to 41 years. The second step in the data collection process was conducting individual interviews. In total, 24 service providers were interviewed. An interview script was

designed beforehand (appendix 4) based on the five cases which were selected from the data collected from the organized focus groups and the one-on-one Skype interviews (appendix 3). The 24 participants consisted of male and female service providers. Their age ranging from 21 to 61 years. The participants have different cultural backgrounds being Dutch, Ghanaian, Polish, Surinamese, Antillean, French, Cape Verdean, Portuguese, Spanish, Moroccan and Turkish. The participants' timeframe of employment with this particular organization ranges from 3 to 39 years. The third and final step in the data collection process was conducting questionnaires. In total, 176 passengers of KLM participated in this questionnaire. A questionnaire script was designed beforehand (appendix 6). The questions in the questionnaire were designed based on the data collected in step two of the data collection process. Participants of this questionnaire are between the age of 19 and 77. In total, 86 men and 90 women participated in this questionnaire with a culturally diverse background such as South America, Central America, North America, European, Asia and Africa. In total, 8 out of the 176 respondents flew with KLM for the first time, 69 respondents flew with KLM between two to ten times, 45 respondents flew between 11 to 20 times, 34 respondents flew between 21 to 30 times, 7 respondents flew between 31 to 40 times, 2 respondents flew between 41 to 50 times, 11 respondents flew more than 50 times with the airline organization.

### 3.3. Data analysis

In order to analyze the qualitative data, first the interviews of the focus group will be recorded and transcribed by applying open coding. The choice to use open coding is based on the fact that by using this method concepts can be developed, defined and labeled into categories which are based on their properties and dimensions, in search of those five cases of cultural mismatches. Each case found will be categorized into relevant categories such as religion or language barriers. One case from each category will be selected based on the frequency in which it has been mentioned by the participants. Second, after selecting those five leading cases, individual interviews will be held and recorded. The recordings of these individual interviews, with KLM service providers, will be transcribed and selective coding will be applied as they are based on the literature found on intercultural communication competences by Chen & Starosta, 1996. This second step in the data analysis process will bring forward the manner in which these service providers provide service during the five particular cases of cultural mismatch which is presented to them. This data will give clarity on the different views,



opinions and knowledge of cultural diversity of these participants. Furthermore, it will become clear as to what measures are taken in certain situations and why these particular measures are taken. This information will be leading in the questionnaires. Finally, questionnaires will be conducted amongst passengers of KLM and the results of these questionnaires will be analyzed using SPSS. The analysis will determine whether passengers have experienced (similar) cases which were selected in the first step of the data collection. By conducting the questionnaire, it will also be determined in what manner service was provided during each these cases which were experienced by the passengers. Therefore, data collected in the second step of the data collection process will be included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, data will be collected on the passenger's experience of the overall service provided. The data collected through the questionnaires will be analyzed in SPSS and the significance will be determined of each individual case by using a linear regression analysis. By applying this analysis it can be determined whether the manner in which service was provided during a particular case has influence on the satisfaction of the passenger. The collected data will be discussed and conclusions will be drawn in order to provide an answer to the main research question.

#### 3.4. Internal validity and external validity

In order to reassure the internal validity, there will be no reports to management. Moreover, internal validity is reassured by using different methods in order to collect data: focus groups, assessments, (pilot) interviews and questionnaires. The external validity can be reassured as the results of this research may be applicable for other airline organizations. Furthermore, in order to reassure the reliability of this research bias has to be minimized. Bias will be minimized by selecting service providers as respondents who do not have a personal relationship with the researcher. Moreover, to ensure the reliability of this research, pilot interviews will be conducted prior to the interviews. The researcher will be truthful by telling the respondents that she is an employee at the airline organization however, respondents may treat the researcher as someone who has no knowledge of the subject. When conducting the questionnaires, the respondents will receive the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire while the researcher is at distance. This is how the researcher ensures to write an honest report on the findings of this research although the researcher is employed by the organization.

#### 3.4.1. Reliability

To ensure reliability, the manner in which I represented myself towards the respondents was of importance. An explanation was given to the respondents beforehand, which stated that I am conducting this research on behalf of Tilburg University and the research and its findings will be analyzed and presented in this thesis. Second, it was of importance to speak honestly about my employment at KLM and to ensure clarity that my employment at this airline organization will not influence my research. Furthermore, I have discussed my employment with all the respondents and ensured them their anonymity. Moreover, I gave them my word not to express any judgement concerning their opinions, views on cultural differences or work style.

### 4. Findings

In this chapter the findings from the three-step data collection will be discussed. The service providers differed in function, age, cultural background, years employed by the airline organization and work experience. First, the findings of the focus groups will be discussed. Second, the findings of the interviews will be presented. Finally, the findings of the questionnaires will be presented.

#### 4.1. Focus groups and individual interviews

The first step in the data collection process was the creation of two focus groups and conducting individual interviews online. Each of the participants were asked the question: *“Could you give an example of a customer being dissatisfied possibly due to a cultural mismatch?”* The data collected provides an answer to the following sub-question: ***“Which cases of cultural relevance do KLM service providers bring forward?”*** The data collected from the focus groups and individual interviews brought forward different cases of cultural mismatches during intercultural service encounters. These cases can be grouped into five different categories: “race”, language, national culture, religion and special requests. These categories were chosen based on the main topic or main issue of the case.

Category “race”: in this category, cases are presented related to passengers who expect a preferential treatment because of their skin color, who expressed their feelings on feeling discriminated, or who rejected the service of a service provider because they differed in “race”. SA3 presented the first case in this category and mentioned that passengers of African descent often feel discriminated when they are asked to check in their oversized

hand luggage. These passengers often do not agree with this and express themselves by saying “you are doing this because I am black”. A similar case was presented by SA1 who provided a case where a passenger felt discriminated because he had to check-in his hand luggage. Remarkable in these cases is that passengers racially motivate the reason behind the service provider’s request. SA1 presented a similar case where passengers on flights to Accra often express their feelings of disagreement in the same manner. Moreover, GA presented another case which fits into this category: an African woman does not want to pay for her excess luggage and asks the service provider “are you going to treat a “sister” like this?” By referring to the service provider as a sister, the passenger expected a preferential treatment from the service provider because the similarity of their skin color. Furthermore, GA1 provided a case where passengers of Asian descent felt discriminated when asked the question “have you been to China in the past fourteen day?” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These passengers felt they were the only one being asked this particular question because of their Asian appearances. CC2 provided a case where a passenger felt discriminated by his fellow passengers during a flight as well as the cabin crew member. In this case, the fellow passengers expressed displeasure concerning this passenger because of his presented behavior. The cabin crew member addressed the passenger about the complaints of other passengers which made him feel discriminated. He asked the cabin crew member if he was addressed about this issue “because he was black”. CC5 provided similar cases pertaining to “race” which are often mentioned in the focus groups. Passengers of color expressing similarities between them and the service provider by addressing them with the term “sister” and afterwards feeling discriminated when their requests are not granted by the service provider. Thus far, participants of the focus groups and the one-on-one Skype interviews have shared cases where passengers felt discriminated by either fellow passengers or the service providers, P presented a different perspective of discrimination issues at the workplace. P presented cases where passengers expressed discriminatory behavior towards service providers. For example, a passenger refused a service provider to assist her with her bags because the passenger did not want a person of color to touch or hold her luggage. A more extreme case was presented by P, where passengers refused to travel the cockpit crew were persons of color.

Category language: in this category cases were presented where the cultural mismatch occurred because of a language barrier. SA2 presented a case where French speaking passengers are not satisfied with the service provider when the communication cannot take

place in French. SA2 adds that she is not always able to provide service to these passengers because of the language barrier. When the service provider is not able to speak French and the passenger does not or refuses to speak English, the passenger often ends up walking away from the intercultural service encounter with questions left unanswered and the service provider failing to deliver proper service. According to SA2, in these particular cases, it is often expected of the passenger to adapt to the international environment. According to SA1, in these cases the service provider tries to provide service with hand gestures however, this does not always provide a solution. Furthermore, TA brings forward a similar case where there is a cultural mismatch because of language barriers. In this case, conflicts arise because the service provider is not able to speak French with a French speaking passenger. These passengers demand for the service provider to be able to speak their native language. Moreover, CC5 shared a similar case within this category where a French speaking passenger expresses anger because the service provider was not able to speak their native language.

Category national culture: in this category one case was presented concerning a cultural mismatch occurring because of cultural differences. GA mentioned male passengers of Arabic descent often demand to speak to a male figure of authority instead of a female with authority. When these passengers are dissatisfied, they are not willing to express this dissatisfaction towards a female but instead demand a male supervisor to resolve their dissatisfaction. This case can be grouped in the national culture category because in particular national cultures they live by certain hierarchical rules. Different cases but also personal views and opinions were shared with regard to cultural differences. TA presented a case where conflict often arose due to passengers of French descent demanding a certain level of service which the service provider is not able to give in to. The passengers demand upgrades and access to the business class lounge. GA2 shares a personal opinion on this matter and believes that cultural differences is often the cause of conflict when service is provided. When conflict occurs in cases similar to that of the passengers of French descent, GA2 mentions not being willing to help these passengers as much as he would be willing to provide service to "other" passengers. The reason behind this choice stems from the opinion that a foreign passenger must adapt to the local culture instead of enforcing their foreign culture onto the local service providers. In another case presented by SA1 and SA2, passengers with an American background often feel offended because they think service providers do not believe them when document checks are carried out on flights to the USA because of COVID-19. GA2 also

shares a personal opinion on this case as he mentions that these passengers often negatively react towards extra security measures on flights to the USA although these security measures are enforced by the American authorities. Therefore, GA2 does not understand why these passengers express themselves negatively towards the local service providers concerning the rules enforced by their own government. Furthermore, CC3 provided three cases all of them occurring on different flights to India. According to the experiences of CC3, India is known for its men who treat females with little to no dignity as they express or expressed this freely. The first case presented by CC3, an Indian male passenger acted inappropriately by hitting on the buttocks of a female cabin crew member. In the second case, CC3 shared that Indian male passengers often snap their fingers towards female cabin crew members when they demand the attention. In the third case, CC3 provides an example where an Indian passenger left feces on the bathroom floor because the passenger had no knowledge on how to use toilet paper or was not aware of using toilet paper at all.

Besides the cases of cultural mismatch, there were two cases presented where conflict arose due to so called special requests. GA presented a case where a passenger requested a free upgrade because of the length of his legs and another passenger requesting free food vouchers because she disliked the meals served onboard. In both cases the passengers were dissatisfied with the service offered because their request was not granted which led to a conflict. These kind of conflicts cannot be tied to a particular cultural related behavior or cultural background however, one may assume that passengers with a certain cultural background may often have similar requests because it is common to do so within their culture.

Category religion: in this category CC2 brought forward two cases concerning Orthodox Jewish passengers. In the first case, an Orthodox Jewish passenger did not want to be seated next to a female during the flight because of his religious background and demanded to be reseated by the cabin crew member. In the second case, an Orthodox Jewish passenger refused to be served by a female cabin crew member because she is not considered to be "Kosher". Similar to the cases presented by CC2, P mentions that passengers often have special or odd requests because of their religious background. P presented a case where a Jewish family requested that the restroom would be cleaned after every visit. If not cleaned, the women of this Jewish family would not be able to go to the restroom during the flight. Another similar case is the case presented by P where a religious leader refused to be served

by a female cabin crew member. Furthermore, CC5 presented a similar case and expresses that Jewish passengers are considered to be more challenging to provide service to. CC5 often experienced reseating requests of Jewish passengers because they refuse to be seated next to a female because of their religious background.

#### 4.1.1. Leading cases

The first step of the data collection process has put forward a total of twenty-five cases. Several cases are similar to each other and are categorized in the same category. In order to select five cases, the most frequently presented cases were selected. To choice was made to use the most frequent presented cases as they may have an increased relevance to be further researched in the next two steps of the data collection process. The selected cases are to be considered the "leading cases" for the next two steps in the data collection process. The following five cases were selected:

1. Language: A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French.
2. "Race": A passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black".
3. Religion: An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman.
4. Special request because of religion: A passenger requests the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times.
5. National Culture: A passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger's culture.

#### 4.2. Interviews

The data collected during the second step of the data collection process answers the following sub-question: ***"How do these culturally relevant cases relate to the cultural competences of KLM service providers?"*** The participants were all presented the five leading cases (Appendix 4) which were selected in the first step of the data collection process. During the presentation of each case the participants were assessed on the following six competences: fundamental competence, social competence, interpersonal competence, linguistic competence, communicative competence and relational competence. Participants shared their

mannerisms, feelings and opinions towards these five cases. Moreover, the participants were asked to share the manner in which they would solve the conflict or the manner in which they would provide service.

The first case presented to the participants was regarding language barriers: “a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French.” Findings indicate that 20 out of 24 participants aim to stay calm and calm the passenger down. The participants carefully listen to familiar words, use hand gestures, write notes and focus on body language in order to establish a level of understanding during the interaction. SA stated: *“... So, what I do first is make sure that the passenger calms down. I try to stay calm myself and really try to express that I am listening to the passenger even though I do not understand what he or she is saying. When I notice the passenger calms down, I try to make it clear either by speaking English or hand gestures ...”* Remarkably, occasions where the service providers are not able to succeed in establishing a level of understanding during the interaction, 14 out of 24 participants ask colleagues or other passengers for assistance, forward the passenger to a service –, or transfer desk or entirely terminate the interaction. Furthermore, in these occasions all participants continued communicating in English where 4 participants mentioned they do this in order to make it clear to the passenger that there is no understanding and hope that familiar words will be picked up by the passenger to create understanding to a certain level. Other participants explained they use this method of providing service, or lack thereof, because they are convinced that “there is only so much one can do”. Five participants expressed to not assist passengers who are angry because of a language barrier. This can indicate the lack of all competences or the lack of willingness to express these competences. These participants are convinced passengers should be able to speak English at an international airport. Moreover, participants expressed the manner in which they choose to provide service depends on the context of the situation. For example, the reason for a passenger’s anger or a passenger’s body language. This indicates that participants may dispose of competences. However, chooses not to express these competences in certain interactions.

The second case presented to the participants was regarding discrimination: “a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because “they are black”.” The findings indicate that 16 out of 24 participants disregards the passengers’ feelings of discrimination. The reasons for this choice of service are lack of time,

lack of empathy or avoiding he-said-she-said. Furthermore, participants are convinced that majority of the passengers use the "race card" as an excuse to avoid paying extra for their luggage. Although, there is no evidence that this claim holds any truth. The participants provide an extensive explanation of company policies. By providing this information, participants aim to eliminate any negative feelings of the passenger towards the service provider. Furthermore, 5 out of 24 participants present passengers with an ultimatum: "Either pay for the luggage or get kicked off the flight". The participants present passengers with an ultimatum because they do not want to acknowledge the passengers' feelings of discrimination as these feelings are not considered too valid. The participants are convinced they are simply following company rules which they cannot ignore. GA stated: *"... there is only so much you can do. You cannot try to convince somebody that you are not discriminating in such a short amount of time. There is simply no time. So, if a passenger would not believe me, I would give them an ultimatum 'pay for the luggage and file a complaint afterwards or do not come on this flight'..."* However, 4 out of 24 participants acknowledge the passengers' feelings of discrimination. These participants aim to eliminate the negative feelings of the passenger by asking questions, careful listening and focusing on the passengers' body language. These participants also become aware of their own body language which they take into consideration being part of the conflict. Moreover, these participants propose possible solutions such as removing items from the too heavy luggage.

The third case was regarding religion: "an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman." Findings indicate that 18 out of 24 participants consult the computer system for available seats. In case of no available seats, the service provider recommends the passenger to consult other passengers on board of the flight to switch seats or consult the cabin crew for help. Often participants solely consult the computer system because they are convinced that "there is only so much one can do". A fraction of the participants, 2 out of 24, add another approach by inviting fellow passengers to the service desk in order to inquire switching seats with the Jewish passenger. By applying this approach, participants risk embarrassment or even anger of the Jewish passenger especially in cases where fellow passengers reject the request. The participants do not provide passengers with information of the different approaches that can be taken. Furthermore, 2 out of 24 participants express understanding, respect for cultural or religious differences and provide



an explanation on what their intentions are. The participants do so by telling the passengers they are willing to do their best to solve the problem even if this may be without the desired result. These participants are convinced that showing effort is more important than the end result. CC stated: *"... I think I would do my best to switch seats with other passengers. But this can be difficult when it's a full flight. I think it is important to show that you do your best for the passenger but there is always a possibility that you might fail to change the seats ..."* However, 4 out of 24 participants are convinced that the passenger should adapt to the fact that this is a western airline and as a commercial airline there will be a mixture of genders on the flight. Therefore, service providers cannot guarantee these passengers being seated next to a man and the passenger should take this into account when booking the flight.

The fourth case was regarding special requests: *"a passenger requested the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times."* This case displays similarity to the third case where a request is made because of religious reasons. However, this case presents a requests that can be considered more challenging by participants. The aim of presenting two similar cases related to religion (or culture) is to research whether the context of the situation has influence on the competences participants choose to display. Findings indicate that 16 out of 24 participants rejected the request of the passenger. The participants expressed not offering the passenger an explanation for this rejection because they do not find the need to do this, they don't have the knowledge as to what to give as an explanation or they are convinced the passenger should adapt to the western culture as this is a western airline company. Furthermore, participants experience this situation to be a "yes" or "no" case and find the request unrealistic as service providers would not be able to do their job if they did not reject this request. SA stated: *"... passengers often know that what is normal and common for them and their culture does not have to be normal and common for me simply because we do not have the same culture or religion. And of course, in certain situations you keep it in mind however, passengers also understand that some things are just common sense. How can I do my job if I am cleaning toilets every two seconds?"* Furthermore, 8 out of 24 participants would express understanding for the passengers' culture and religion. A remarkable finding displayed the participants aiming to make the passenger feel comfortable. Participants explain that they would make the passenger feel comfortable in order for the passenger not to feel embarrassed by having

certain requests or feel offended in cases where requests are rejected. They express their respect for each culture and religion and provide the passenger with an extensive explanation as to why they reject the request of the passenger.

The last case is regarding national culture: “a passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger’s culture.” The aim of this case is to research which competences participants choose to express when their boundaries are crossed. The findings indicate that 17 out of 24 participants aim to remain calm and explain to the passenger that this behavior is unacceptable. However, when providing this explanation, participants do not take the passenger’s culture into consideration. The participants expect the passenger to adapt to the local culture and are convinced that the expression of respect for each other’s culture is a two-way street. Furthermore, 5 out of 24 participants cancels the passengers’ acceptance onto the flight and expects an apology or threatens the passenger with the consequences when an apology is not issued. This apology serves as a confirmation for the service provider that the passenger understands not to repeat this behavior. On the other hand, 2 out of 24 participants explains to the passenger that their behavior has consequences, reports this behavior or calls on the assistance of security. On the other hand, 2 out of 24 participants chooses to remain calm, show understanding for the passengers’ culture and provide an extensive explanation on the cultural differences between the service provider and the passenger in order reach an understanding and resolve the conflict. GA states: “... personally I would first count to ten because this I find highly offensive. But it is important to keep my composure and stay calm and collective. I would then tell the passenger that this behavior is unacceptable, and I find it highly offensive. I would try to explain that this behavior is not common here ...”

#### 4.3. Questionnaires

The third step in the data collection process consisted of conducting a questionnaire. Due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19 the respondents were limited. In total, 176 passengers traveling with KLM participated in the questionnaire. The data collected answers the following sub-question: **“To what extent are customers satisfied with the service delivered by KLM service providers in these culturally relevant cases?”** The questionnaire presented the five cases (Appendix 4) and the respondents were asked to share their experiences with any of these five particular cases (Appendix 6). Furthermore, the respondents were asked to rate

their overall experience of the service provided by the airline organization. Respondents could rate their experiences using the expectancy-disconfirmation model introduced by Oliver (1981). The impact of each act of service in this case was tested onto the customer service experiences of the respondents using SPSS linear regression analysis.

Findings collected of the first case displayed 42 respondents claiming to have experienced this event (N = 42). In this case, eight acts of service were analyzed and the impact of these acts on the customer experience:

Linear regression analysis 1\_1 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	,721	,419		1,722	,093
	@1_1	,233	,124	,285	1,882	,067

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_2 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	,466	,327		1,427	,161
	@1_2	,386	,117	,461	3,290	,002

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_3 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	,161	,215		,750
	@1_3	,516	,077	,726	6,679

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_4 op 1.9:

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**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,720	,705		6,693	,000
	Q1_4	-,783	,168	-,592	-4,648	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_5 op 1.9:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,396	,337		4,146	,000
	Q1_5	,037	,143	,041	,257	,799

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_6 op 1.9:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,025	,430		2,385	,022
	Q1_6	,129	,118	,171	1,098	,279

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_7 op 1.9:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,492	,386		3,865	,000
	Q1_7	-,008	,196	-,007	-,042	,966

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_8 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,612	,267		,000
	Q1_8	-,388	,084	-,588	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

It was found that acts 1\_2 (calming down the passenger) and 1\_3 (listening carefully to the passenger) have a positive impact on the customer experience. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with 1\_2 having a Sig. = ,002 and B = ,386. Act 1\_3 has a Sig. = ,000 and B = ,516. On the other hand, acts 1\_4 (continuing speaking in a language the passenger does not understand) and 1\_8 (not providing the passenger with service at all) have a negative impact on the customer experience. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with 1\_4 having a Sig. = ,000 and B = -,783. Act 1\_8 has a Sig. = ,000 and B = -,388.

The following data displays to what extent the customer satisfaction of this case influence the overall customer satisfaction: the  $R^2$

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q10:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	3,045	,173		,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,413	,102	,542	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - I am satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM

$R^2 = ,294$ , sign. = ,000

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 29,4\%$ . This means that 29,4% of the overall customer satisfaction is influenced by the customer experience of this first case.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,201	,216		10,197	,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,357	,128	,408	2,793	,008

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,167$ , sign. = ,008

= 16,7%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 16,7\%$ . This means that 16,7% of the increased overall customer satisfaction is influenced by the customer experience of this first case.

Linear regression analysis impact of service provided on Q12:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,791	,276		10,104	,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	-,122	,164	-,118	-,745	,461

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am less satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,014$ , sign. = ,461.

= 1,4%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 1,4\%$ . This means that 1,4% of the decreased overall customer satisfaction is influenced by the customer experience of this first case.

Linear regression analysis the impact of Q11 on Q12:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,590	,310		-1,906	,064
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,479	,183	,386	2,612	,013

a. Dependent Variable: Q11minus@12

$R^2 = 0,149$ , sign. = 0,013.

= 14,9%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 14,9\%$ . This means that 14,9% of the increased overall customer satisfaction influences the decreased overall satisfaction in the first case. Conclusion of this linear regression analysis is that the customer satisfaction of this first case regarding to providing service when conflicts are caused by language barriers, determines the overall satisfaction to a significant extent.

Findings collected of the second case displayed 26 respondents claiming to have experienced this event (N = 26). In this case, eight acts of service were analyzed and the impact of these acts on the customer experience:

Linear regression analysis 2\_1 op 2.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,260	,541		4,176	,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not acknowledge my feelings of discrimination	-,245	,137	-,350	-1,791	,086

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_2 op 2.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,744	,474		3,677	,001
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided extensive knowledge on company policies	-,129	,138	-,191	-,935	,359

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_3 op 2.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,966	,396		4,972	,000



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How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member gave me an ultimatum	-,192	,111	-,340	-1,735	,096
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_4 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,397	,223		,088
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member acknowledged my feelings of discrimination	,462	,099	,696	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_5 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,627	,265		,027
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me	,310	,105	,522	,007

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_6 op 2.9:

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Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	,397	,223		1,780	,088
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed solutions to solve the problem	,462	,099	,696	4,646	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_7 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,573	,496		5,189	,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed negative body language towards me	-,337	,129	-,478	-2,610	,016

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_8 op 2.9:

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2,153	,437		4,933	,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all	-,237	,118	-,385	-2,000	,057

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

It was found that acts 2\_4 (acknowledge passenger's feelings of discrimination), 2\_5 (carefully listen to the passenger) and 2\_6 (proposing solutions to the passenger to solve the problem) have a positive impact on the customer experience. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with 2\_4 having a Sig. = ,000 and B = ,462. Act 2\_5 has a Sig. = ,007 and B = ,310. And act 2\_6 has a Sig. = ,000 and B = ,462. On the other hand, act 2\_7 (expressing negative body language towards the passenger) has a negative impact on the customer experience. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with 2\_7 having a Sig. = ,016 and B = -,337.

The following data displays to what extent the customer satisfaction of this case influence the overall customer satisfaction: the R<sup>2</sup>

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q10:

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	3,231	,244		13,255	,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,280	,164	,334	1,702	,102

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - I am satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM

This analysis is not significant.

The lack of significance indicates that the overall satisfaction is not impacted by the customer experience of this second case.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,308	,294		,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,615	,198	,544	,005

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,296$ , sign. = ,005.

= 29,6%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 29,6\%$ . This means that 29,6% of the increased overall customer satisfaction is influenced by the customer experience of this second case.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q12:

This analysis is not significant.

The lack of significance indicates that the overall satisfaction is not impacted by the customer experience of this second case.

Linear regression analysis the impact of Q11 on Q12:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	-,500	,544		-,919	,368
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,773	,367	,402	2,106	,046

a. Dependent Variable: Q11minus@12

$R^2 = ,162$ , sign. = ,046.

= 16,2%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 16,2\%$ . This means that 16,2% of the increased overall customer satisfaction influences the decreased overall satisfaction in the second case.

Findings collected of the third case displayed 8 respondents claiming to have experienced this event (N = 8). In this case, ten acts of service were analyzed and the impact of these acts on the customer experience:

Linear regression analysis 3\_1 op 3.11:

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,400	,578		2,423	,060
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member committed an act to change the seat	,200	,179	,447	1,118	,314

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_2 op 3.11:

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	2,421	,634		3,821	,012
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request without explanation	-,184	,259	-,303	-,712	,508

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_3 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,575	,655		2,405	,061
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request and provided me with an explanation	,175	,253	,296	,692	,520

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_4 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	,789	,734		1,076	,331
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed possible solutions to solve the problem	,368	,216	,607	1,708	,148

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_5 op 3.11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,425	,655		3,703	,014
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt	-,175	,253	-,296	-,692	,520

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_6 op 3.11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,000	,730		2,739	,041
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed understanding for my personal circumstances	,000	,242	,000	,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_7 op 3.11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,500	,776		1,933	,111

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member made me feel comfortable	,167	,247	,289	,674	,530
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_8 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,000	,923		,083
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted colleagues/cabin crew/other passengers for assistance	,000	,271	,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_9 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,250	,760		,161
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided service depending on the request	,350	,340	,418	,350

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?



Linear regression analysis 3\_10 op 3.11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,263	,584		3,873	,012
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all	-,092	,187	-,215	-,491	,644

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

The findings of the linear regression analysis regarding to the impact of the service provided on the customer experience, it can be concluded that none of the ten service acts has an impact on the customer experience. This finding can be a result of a too small amount of N. Furthermore, the linear regression analysis on the impact of the service provided on Q10, Q11, Q12 and the impact of Q11 on Q12 all could not be determined because of the too small amount of N.

The linear regression analysis for the fourth case could not be successfully completed as well. For the fourth case there were only two respondents who had experienced this particular case (N = 2). This resulted in none of the ten acts of service having an impact on the customer experience. Furthermore, the linear regression analysis on the impact of the service provided on Q10, Q11, Q12 and the impact of Q11 on Q12 all could not be determined because of the too small amount of N.

Findings collected of the fifth case displayed 7 respondents claiming to have experienced this event (N = 7). In this case, eight acts of service were analyzed and the impact of these acts on the customer experience:

Linear regression analysis 5\_5 op 5.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,474	,336		7,358	,001
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt to the local culture	-,316	,108	-,795	-2,928	,033

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

It was found that the service act 5\_5 (expecting the passenger to adapt to the local culture) has a negative impact on the customer experience. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with 5\_5 having a Sig. = ,033 and B = -,316.

The following data displays to what extent the customer satisfaction of this case influence the overall customer satisfaction: the R<sup>2</sup>

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q10:

No impact could be determined of the service provided of this case on the overall customer satisfaction of the service provided by KLM.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,333	,459		2,902	,034
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	1,333	,279	,906	4,781	,005

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,821$ , sign. = ,005.  
= 82,1%

The data of the linear regressions analysis displays  $R^2 = 82,1\%$ . This means that 82,1% of the increased overall customer satisfaction is influenced by the customer experience of this fifth case.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q12:

No impact could be determined of the service provided of this case on the overall customer satisfaction of the service provided by KLM to be less than expected.

Linear regression analysis impact of the service provided on Q11 - Q12:

No impact could be determined of the service provided of this case on the overall customer satisfaction of the service provided by KLM.

#### 4.3.1. Linear regression analysis including control variables

The similar linear regression analysis was implemented with the inclusion of control variables, which are: gender, age, country of birth, background and travel frequency with KLM. The following results were determined:

For the first case it can be determined that none of the control variables have any significant impact on the customer experience. This explains that for example a passenger might have a particular background this does not impact the manner in which they experience the service provided by the service provider. The findings of the second case display age and background having impact on the customer experience.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

From the linear regression analysis it can be concluded that passengers of an older age are more satisfied with the manner in which KLM service providers handle cases of discrimination in comparison to passengers of a younger age. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with age having a Sig. = ,001 and B = ,034. 1\_2 having a Sig. = ,002 and B = ,386. Act 1\_3 has a Sig. = ,000 and B = ,516. Furthermore, passengers with a migration background are less satisfied with the manner in which service providers of KLM handle cases of discrimination in comparison to passengers with a non-migration background. This can be concluded from the linear regression analysis with Background B having a Sig. = ,048 and B = -,794 (Background B: 1 = passengers without a migration background and B = passengers with a migration background). Furthermore, Q2\_1, @2\_2 and @2\_3 have no impact.

Linear regression analysis 2\_4 op 2.9:

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276	,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748	,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
3	(Constant)	1,715	,632		2,714	,013
	Age	,017	,008	,323	2,157	,043
	BackgroundB	-,962	,301	-,387	-3,196	,005
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member acknowledged my feelings of discrimination	,371	,100	,562	3,714	,001

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_5 op 2.9:

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276	,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748	,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
3	(Constant)	1,629	,767		2,124	,046
	Age	,025	,009	,475	2,686	,014
	BackgroundB	-,931	,367	-,375	-2,535	,020
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me	,190	,106	,322	1,790	,089

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

No impact found.

Linear regression analysis 2\_6 op 2.9:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276	,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748	,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
3	(Constant)	1,636	,599		2,733	,013
	Age	,019	,007	,361	2,686	,014
	BackgroundB	-,967	,286	-,389	-3,377	,003

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed solutions to solve the problem	,373	,090	,564	4,159	,000
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_7 op 2.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized Coefficients		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276	,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748	,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
3	(Constant)	2,495	,968		2,577	,018
	Age	,028	,008	,542	3,442	,003
	BackgroundB	-,847	,360	-,341	-2,355	,029
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed negative body language towards me	-,202	,111	-,288	-1,821	,084

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

For the third case, it can be concluded that women, passengers of a younger age and passengers with a migration background are significantly less satisfied with the manner in which service providers of KLM provide service.

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized Coefficients		
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	1,229	,732		1,679	,154

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

	Age	,017	,015	,442	1,101	,321
2	(Constant)	1,582	,962		1,644	,176
	Age	,023	,019	,605	1,208	,294
	Gender	-,372	,593	-,314	-,627	,565
3	(Constant)	6,089	,477		12,754	,001
	Age	,085	,007	2,218	12,011	,001
	Gender	-1,874	,186	-1,584	-10,085	,002
	BirthplaceB	-2,556	,249	-1,673	-10,243	,002

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

For Q3\_1 till @3\_10 no difference could be concluded. The linear regression analysis including the control variables shows that none of the control variables have any impact on the customer experience because of a too small N.

The linear regression analysis including the control variables for the fifth case displayed women not being significant more satisfied than male passenger when it comes to the service provided by the service providers of KLM in this case.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,500	,447	1,118	,314
	Gender	,750	,296	,750	,052

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

When it comes to gender, Q5\_1 till Q5\_8 display nothing significantly. This also applies for the analysis excluding gender as a control variable. When it comes to 5\_5, gender is not significant anymore. Therefore, the initial impact remains valid.

The linear regression analysis including the control variables produces less significant effects of specific ways in which KLM staff deals with the cases than for the analysis excluding the control variables. However, those differences are so small, that I abstain from using the control variables and look on the gross effects of the acting options on satisfaction in the ways in which KLM staff deal with the issues. Furthermore, the introduction of the control variables and the impact on the customer satisfaction with each of the cases when it comes to the overall satisfaction (Q10, @11, @12, @11-@12) makes no difference at all. Therefore, I also abstain from using the control variables for these questions.

## 5. Conclusions

This research focused on identifying the intercultural communication competences of airline service providers and whether these competences influence the customer satisfaction through providing customer service in the airline industry. In order to answer the main research question ***“How do intercultural communication competences of KLM service providers, through customer service, influence customer satisfaction?”*** this research delivered valuable insights on which cultural related mismatches occurred, how service providers provide service during the occurrence of these cases, and whether the measures and competences used by service providers result in customer satisfaction. To answer the main research question, a literature study and a three-step data collection method was applied. The three-step data collection method included: focus groups, individual interviews and a questionnaire held amongst passengers of KLM airlines. Due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19 the data collection mainly proceeded online through Skype and other online communication channels.

Concluding from the data collected, it is remarkable that service providers mention specific cases where cultural differences play an important role. For example, claims have been made that French speaking passengers bring forward an issue where language barriers are an obstacle during an intercultural service encounter. Service providers have claimed providing service to French speaking passengers is challenging because French speaking passengers do not or refuse to speak English or the service providers do not speak French. Therefore, conflict often arises between the two participants of the intercultural service encounter. Furthermore, data collected in the second step of the data collection method shows that service providers take certain measures and display certain behavior in order to solve the conflict that arose during the intercultural service encounter or to avoid having to deal with the initial problem at hand. For example, when conflict arises because service providers are not able to provide service to French speaking passengers because of the language barrier, the service providers ask their colleagues for assistance, continue to talk in English or do not provide service at all. An important note is, certain measures which are taken by the service providers can stem from an institutional problem (are the service providers initially following company rules or policies?) rather than a cultural problem (do service providers lack cultural intelligence?). It is also important to note that during the intercultural service encounter, internal and external factors influence the performance of the service



provider and the passenger. Both play a vital role in the intercultural service encounter as both have role expectations of one another. Also do the willingness and the ability to perform impact the performance of a service provider, as do personal characteristics and work experience. It can be concluded that control variables such as age, gender, background or birthplace of the parents have little to no influence on the customer service experience hence the customer satisfaction. For example, French passengers may be dissatisfied with the service provided and service providers may link this satisfaction because of the fact that passengers are French. But data shows that this is not the case, dissatisfaction of passengers stem from the service act chosen by the service provider. For example, the fact that the service provider may display negative body language or continues to speak in English in certain situations. Based on the cases which displayed significance in the linear regression analysis, it can be concluded that intercultural communication competences do indeed influence the customer satisfaction. It is important that the manner in which service is provided is in line with the expectation of the passenger even if it is not possible to solve the problem of the passenger.

### 5.1. Discussion

The following section discusses the findings and conclusion in relation to the theoretical framework.

#### 5.1.1. Intercultural Interactions

Intercultural interactions are often negatively perceived by many service providers who experience conflict with culturally diverse. According to GA2, cultural mismatches often occur because service providers expect passengers to adapt to them and "how things in Holland are done". This thought stems from the fact that intercultural service encounters have to deal with intergroup and interpersonal elements. This finding indicates that during intercultural service encounters, the participants negatively experience this encounter because they favor their counterparty being part of their own culture, the ingroup-outgroup categorization (Brickson, 2000). This finding can also be explained through the use of the role theory, where different role expectations and different service scripts are stored in the mind of the service provider and the passenger who are culturally diverse (Wang & Mattila, 2010). This theory may serve as an explanation for the creation of misunderstandings in these intercultural interactions. On the other hand, service providers do not understand why the anger of the passenger is directed towards them since they are not the ones making up certain rules but only execute these rules: "... people are complaining but it is the (...) authorities who have all

these rules that we have to follow”. This anger can be an expression of a negative experience. In certain cases, service providers expect particular behavior from passengers with a particular background: “... this is common for (...) people. They are demanding, nothing is good enough for them”. With these expectations, service providers are pre-judging and the service which has to be provided can fail because of pre-assumptions such as these. As the work of Gumperz explained the issue of assumptions in an intercultural encounter, this finding can be a possible explanation as to why these intercultural service encounters often fail. One must ask themselves are there assumptions being made in either parties within the intercultural interaction and are the parties aware of these assumptions in which he or she knows what the counterpart assumes in particular situations (Gumperz & Hymes, 1972).

Furthermore, service providers feel unappreciated and unmotivated as they often feel that their hard work goes unnoticed with passengers. The service providers feel that they are trying their best for the passengers and always try to go an “extra mile” for them: “... (...) *passenger are getting angry when we are really doing our best for them which they think is not enough for them*”. And it is for this reason service providers get unmotivated and are not willing to provide a certain level of service: “*I still help the passenger, but I do not go the extra mile (...) I do not offer options*”. These characteristics are considered to be “normal” reactions as international customers may cause feelings of uncertainty or even frustration. However, in these situations many service providers stay calm (Wang & Mattila, 2010). Moreover, the manner in which a service provider react during an intercultural interaction depends heavily on the context of the situation and external factors such as busyness at the airport. This can be explained by the fact that the different reactions service providers have towards interactions are influenced by three moderators on of them being the service situation (Wang & Mattila, 2010). The busier it is, the more stress a service provider may experience. In context of self-service, such as an electronic check-in desk, the likelihood of stress is decreased because the passenger performs a large portion of the service themselves. A second potential moderator is customer characteristics which includes group size and customer attitude. When customers are in a group, service providers feel more stressed and intimidated since the communication barrier is multiplied. Moreover, the customer attitude are moderators as well because in case customers are rude or mean, service providers might experience feelings of frustration. Inversely, in case customers are polite, service providers genuinely make efforts in order to solve the customers’ problem. The third moderator is the service provider

characteristics such as internalized ideas about service and their personal acceptance of other cultures. In case the service providers strongly believe in satisfying customers, they will not be annoyed by the unusual behavior of the customer. Instead these service providers try their best to understand what these customers really want (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

Another factor which has impact on the service which is provided by the service providers of KLM are lack of time. Service providers find it challenging to provide service during intercultural interactions because of the lack of time as service providers often lack time to attend to the problem of the passenger. In case the service provider is occupied, the customers' unusual behavior can be more stressful because service providers have limited time and energy to cope with such problems. Furthermore, international customers might have different expectations and preferences when it comes to service styles. When it comes to the expectations and preferences, P mentioned *"I understand that people do not allow things because of their culture but they make their problem your problem and it is impossible to consider everybody's culture or religion in one plane..."*. Although, other service providers are convinced that being in this industry one must possess knowledge about different cultures to some extent in order to succeed in this industry. Such as CC mentions: *"you cannot be a flight attendant and not have knowledge about other cultures ... it is also your responsibility to do some research ..."*. The difference in service styles also explains the suggestion made by Wang & Mattila (2010) which indicates that it may be the service providers' perceptions of intercultural service encounters that has impact on their service performance (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

### 5.1.2. Intercultural Communication Competences

According to the theory, when it comes to the five leading cases which were selected, they can result in an intercultural customer performance gap which means that foreign customers might fail to perform their role which is expected by the service provider. An intercultural customer performance gap can be caused by communication difficulties, unusual requests or preferences for service interaction (Wang & Mattila, 2010). But what happens when the service provider fails to perform their role which is expected by the customer? Can it be assumed, based on the conclusion, that the service providers' ability to perform and their actual performance is related to the customers' satisfaction of the service provided?

The previous assumption is in line with the theory found in the study of Wang & Mattila (2010). When, during an intercultural service encounter, a passenger is angry in combination

with a language barrier being present the service provider remains calm, uses hand gestures, written notes or focus on body language. Service providers apply this strategy with as goal to calm angry passengers down, try to create a clear role division and to provide the level of service needed. Moreover, service providers stress their professional attitude towards service delivery. However, one must be aware that not every service provider has the ability to participate in intercultural service encounters in a proper manner. For example, several service providers might ignore international customers and therefore cause customer frustration or these service providers might ask their colleagues to assist the customer or even blame their colleagues when a service failure has occurred in a intercultural service encounter (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

According to the theory, service providers initially feel nervous dealing with international customers however, such feelings disappear when they have increased job-experience (Wang & Mattila, 2010). The younger service providers would feel uncomfortable whereas the older service providers would make sure that this passenger would be aware of their unacceptable behavior even if this meant not being able to provide service of a certain quality. GA mentions: *"... Back in the day I would really try to do everything in my power to help these people but with the years you are just quickly done with these people..."* and CC mentions: *"... over the years (...) I learned to handle different situations (...). But back then I remember that I tried to avoid this (...) as much as possible..."*.

Personal characteristics may impact the level of performance of a service provider as well. Theory suggests that service providers find enjoyment in working with people and learning about different cultures. Furthermore, they seem to share several personal traits with each other, such as being patient and having the ability to adapt to different situations. The lack of cultural interest may also be a result of lack of training as it is known that these service providers do not get selected or trained on cultural knowledge or interest. Theory shows that service providers who are not trained to solve problems of customers often leave these customers dissatisfied (Lorenzoni & Lewis, 2004). This statement proposes the previous question yet again: *"Is this a cultural problem or is this an institutional problem?"* National culture is known to be a major obstacle between the service provider and the customer because differences in norms and values between two societies can cause intense complexity in order to interculturally communicate (Harvey & Griffith, 2002). However, it might be that the service provider is "just" following the rules of the organization and therefore has to

disregard “cultural rules”. This would mean that the service provider might be well culturally educated however, it not able to express this knowledge when a conflict arises in an intercultural service encounter. This might display the possibility that organizational rules and regulations do not take cultural differences of their passengers into account.

#### 5.1.3. Customer Satisfaction

Not all intercultural service encounters are negatively perceived by passengers. According to the theory, studies have shown that passengers will adjust their standards on service evaluation and are likely to be more understanding in intercultural service encounters. Stauss and Mang (1999) have shown that customers do not find intercultural encounters to be more problematic in comparison to intra-cultural service encounters. A more recent study by Warden et al. (2003) suggests that customers taking part in intercultural service encounters tend to be more forgiving of service failures when service recovery is offered. The reason for this appears to be that the service recovery efforts remind customers of the co-existence of their cultural scripts and those of foreign service providers. As a result, customers are more likely to accept service recovery efforts which will lead to the customer holding the service provider less responsible for the failure occurred (Wang & Mattila, 2010).

Taking the results of the linear regression analysis into account, the first case displayed the manner in which service is provided in a particular case indeed impacts the customer experience hence the customer satisfaction. This can indicate that service providers of the airline organization dispose of relevant intercultural communication competences and indeed display these competences in real life. However, this cannot be stated with certainty because this was not tested or observed by the researcher. The question: “is this a cultural problem or an institutional problem?” arises once again. When acts of service negatively impact the customer experience, do the service providers of KLM get the opportunity to solve the conflict while still following organizational rules and regulations? Or can it be assumed that these conflicts arose, and left passengers dissatisfied with the service (provider) because of lack of cultural training, cultural knowledge, intercultural communication competences of the service provider?

Possible institutional problems may have been detected during this research. As CC claimed: “A lot of French passengers do not speak English .... A lot of the times they think that we are Air France and therefore they expect for us to be able to speak French. ....”. There is a possibility that passengers expect to travel with a certain airline and base their expectations

of service on this. The chance of a passenger getting disappointed is much higher in these cases when for example: a passenger expects to travel with Air France and expects service providers to be able to speak French. Therefore, code shares can be an external factor negatively influencing the service experience. It is difficult to offer quality service when multiple airline organizations are involved, as the level of service (quality) fluctuates between the multiple airline organizations and the brand perception of these organizations in the mind of the passenger.

#### 5.1.4. Intercultural Customer Performance Gap

One needs to take into account that differences in conflicts and contexts play a leading role in the expectations of both the passenger and the service provider towards the solutions of the conflict. Where one passenger may be satisfied with the solution offered, the attitude of the service provider towards the conflict may not be enough for another passenger which will leave this passenger dissatisfied. On the other hand, angry passengers or a day full of cancelled flights may influence the willingness or ability of the service provider to solve the conflict while other service providers might thrive during these challenging events. These statements bring us back to the intercultural customer performance gap. One must be aware that being competent does not directly mean that one is able to perform. There is a difference between what a person is able to do in controlled situations and what a person does in actual practice (Rethans, et al., 2002). Being able or willing to perform in actual practice may not only depend on internal factors (such as personal characteristics) but also on external factors (an angry passenger). A person may be competent to engage in certain situations however may not be willing to engage because of the context of the situation. For example, a man is not willing to speak to a woman because of his religious background (Nakane, 2007). Therefore, it might be assumed that not only competence but also performance impacts the quality of the service encounter.

Moreover, the assumption is made that where personal characteristics and past experiences fall short, proper training can fill in. However, a service provider may be trained to deal with angry passengers however has never experienced this in reality. When, for example, a service encounter gets out of hand to the level where the passenger gets physical with a service provider there is an increased chance that the service provider is not able to handle the situation correctly. The question may then be asked whether training is the ultimate solution for the service provider to be willing and able to perform. This example

shows, yet again, the importance of personal characteristics and past experiences. Furthermore, when it comes to training, the service itself can be a major issue. Services are intangible, there is no tangible product for the passenger to pick up and examine. When service is delivered, production and consumption occur simultaneously therefore, assessing the quality can be difficult. As a consequence, the organizations within the hospitality industry have to depend on effective training of frontline service providers. However, it is difficult to depend on people and their people skills because human behavior is varied and too complex to be properly explained. It is for this reason quality control is very difficult to maintain and be analyzed as people's attitude, interpersonal skills, commitment towards the organization and the levels of training change constantly (Sparks, 1992).

## 5.2. Recommendations

This section focuses on the recommendations meant for the manager of the department KLM passenger services at Schiphol Airport. This research and recommendations can relate to other managers from other airline organizations in the airline industry. Furthermore, these recommendations are based on the findings collected through the literature study and the three-step data collection method. Due to the pandemic caused by COVID-19, the relevance of this study is proven yet again. It is important for service providers to have the willingness and the ability to make the passenger feel safe while traveling and disregard one's dissimilarity. This does not only apply to the virus itself but also to the feelings of safety towards cultural norms and values that should be respected and honored during the flights. The passenger must be sure to trust the KLM service provider not to discriminate or disrespect one's culture or religion.

The following recommendations can be made based on the findings: there should be more consideration towards institutional issues. Although interactions between service providers and passengers are seldomly coordinated that can cause conflict based on cultural differences. Service providers may experience issues regarding their decision-making ability during conflict, which flows from top-down into the organization. Service providers are obligated to follow the rules and regulations of the organization which leaves little to no room to improvise when searching for a solution to the problem of the passenger. These rules and regulations should be more considered towards cultural differences which will allow the service provider to have more room in order to provide qualitative service to the culturally

diverse passenger. The second recommendation would be training. Findings of this study displayed differences in work mannerisms between more experienced service providers and less experienced service providers. Although according to the theory, training does not solve the entire problem it can perhaps serve as a base to create a uniform work style. This will prevent service providers having to feel the need to redirect passengers to their colleagues or have differences in how situations are handled. Training can also eliminate insecurities service providers might have towards culturally diverse customers that can improve their performance in such service encounters. Training on cultural knowledge may also be a helpful tool. When a service provider is aware of someone's culture, religion and cultural differences and has knowledge on how to act, react, and actions to be taken it can improve the attitude, perception and experience of the passenger. Although the service provider is not always able to solve a conflict or give in to a request of a passenger, if the service provider handles the situation in a correct manner it can positively improve the service experience of the passenger.

### 5.3. Limitations

During the process of collecting data by executing a three-step data collection, the pandemic (COVID-19) caused several limitations to this study.

The following limitations were identified: the focus groups and individual interviews could not be held face-to-face and had to proceed by using online communication channels such as Skype and Facetime. This made the interviews feel less personal and often due to connection issues, the interviews had to be cut short or cancelled. Often additional questions could not be asked which made it challenging to collect relevant data. Due to the pandemic, the sourcing of respondents for interviews was challenging as well. Often, possible respondents did not respond to invites or emails. Another remarkable limitation due to the pandemic was the lockdown of many countries causing for the entire airline industry worldwide to be shut down for several months. Therefore, only 10% of the total fleet of KLM was operating causing for a 90% decrease in passengers which made it challenging to find respondents for the questionnaire. As months passed some flights resumed however, the majority of the fleet remained on the ground. This challenged the questionnaires' target group as passengers on certain destinations such as Israel and India could not participate in the questionnaire. Due to the pandemic it was also a challenge to source a decent amount of respondents for the questionnaires as there was a major decrease in traveling passengers.



Furthermore, there were several limitations detected which are not related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire which was conducted was a Likert scale questionnaires. Intervals between points on the scale may not represent equal changes in attitude for all individuals. For example, the differences between strongly disagree and disagree may be difficult to understand for the respondent and therefore, the respondent does not give proper feedback that can affect the questionnaire. Another limitations is that of measuring performance. In order to proper measure performance of the service providers of KLM airlines, observations are needed to determine whether service providers indeed do what they say they do. This step of the research could not be established for the reason that a four-step data collection method was not feasible, and time was limited. The researcher would have to observe interviewed service providers in order to test whether they indeed perform how the say they perform in interviews.

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## Appendix 1 Sub-questions

1. Which cases of cultural relevance do KLM service providers bring forward?
2. How do these culturally relevant cases relate to the cultural competences of KLM service providers?
3. To what extent are customers satisfied with the service delivered by KLM service providers in these culturally relevant cases?

## Appendix 2 Informed Consent Form

Dear Sir/Madam,

If you are happy to participate then please complete and sign the form below, please sign this page to confirm that you agree with this statement. If you do not agree to participate in this study, please leave this form blank and inform the researcher and your participation will be withdrawn. I confirm that I have read and understood the information from the researcher and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that there are no negative consequences if I want to opt out during the interview. I understand, that I am free to decline to answer any of the questions asked during this interview. I understand that my answers will be kept confidential. Moreover, my name or any other personal information will not be linked in the results section of the paper. I agree to this interview being recorded. I understand that this recording will only be used for this research, which I would not be personally identified with. I also understand, that no one else than the researcher and the coordinator of the "Research Practicum" will have access to the original recording. I agree that my anonymized data will be stored.

I agree to take part in this interview

Name of the participant:                      Date:  
-----

Signature:  
-----

Interviewer name:                      Date:  
-----

Signature:  
-----

## Appendix 3 Transcripts (focus groups)

### Focus group 1

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent, SA1 = Service Agent 1, SA2 = Service Agent 2, SA3 = Service Agent 3 (departure hall)

<b>I: Hey Guys, thank you for participating in this focus group</b>
<b>I: I know these are weird times so let's get started (silence...)</b>
<b>I: Hmm, yes so, I am writing my thesis and I am researching whether intercultural communication competences of airline staff has influence on customer satisfaction. And I was wondering could you give an example of a customer being dissatisfied possibly due to a cultural mismatch? (silence...)</b>
<b>SA2: hmm, can you repeat the question maybe?</b>
<b>I: Yes, so hmm, have you had any experience where a passenger was angry or disappointed or told you he or she was not satisfied and gave a reason that was culturally related? (silence...)</b>
<b>I: Someone feeling discriminated or profiled, insulted something like that</b>
<b>SA3: Oh yes Africans when you have to check-in their hand luggage in the departure hall because it's too big to fit in the overhead bins and they do not agree with that. They always tell me "you are doing this because I am black". Which is funny to me because I am black. But they think you are discriminating them.</b>
<b>SA1: Yes! With flights to Accra and I have to check-in hand luggage they always get angry and tell me "because I am black".</b>
<b>SA3: Haha! They love that line I am always like dude? Do you see my skin color or? Haha</b>
<b>SA2: Or French passengers when you have to check in their hand language at the gate. They feel offended when you do not speak French.</b>
<b>SA3: French passengers are so annoying they never want to speak English I wonder how they travel and only speak French</b>
<b>I: Haha, and are you able to help a French passenger who only speaks French? How does that work?</b>
<b>SA2: Not always especially with Air France flights those are quick turnaround flights so when you are at the gate and the flight arrives from Paris all the incoming passengers</b>

come up to the desk asking you all sorts of questions but in French and I am always like English please!

I: And at that point if they do not speak English what happens?

SA2: Well they walk away or they continue talking to you in French sometimes you see they get angry because you do not speak French but this is an international airport so I think they have to adapt so yeah (silence...)

SA1: Yes, often with hand gestures you try to make sense and give an explanation and often they understand. But sometimes people have a short connection and they do not have the time to figure out what you are saying or for me to understand what they are saying so they instantly walk away when you do not speak French

SA2: Yeah you know in these cases it is often obvious that they want to know which gate they have to go to so they just scream the destination and we look up the gate (silence...)

SA2: ... Like a slave haha no kidding but in case of delays or there is a storm and the flight is canceled how do you explain with hand gestures that they have to be rebooked or book a hotel and they can claim it afterwards online with customer care haha so it does not always work out good

I: Hmm yes that can be difficult (silence...)

I: And you? (directed to the gate agent)

I: Do you have any examples?

GA: Hmm let me think (silence...)

GA: This is not really a cultural related case but there was one time when a Dutch passenger who was very long and he wanted a seat change but for free because he was convinced it should be free because he said it was not his fault that he was this long.

GA: So, he wanted a free upgrade to economy comfort. (silence...)

SA3: And another example what I can think of is in the departure hall. There was an African lady with excess luggage and she had to pay for it. So...

SA3: She got mad and told me are you going to treat a "sister" like this? Meaning because we are both black we have to stick with each other so she expected me to give her a pass because she was black

SA3: Yes so she got mad (silence...)

I: Haha everything not to pay for luggage! And anyone have other examples? (silence...)



**GA: I remember there was an American woman who did not want to eat the meals served on board because she said they make her nauseous...**

**GA: So, I told her this is not a problem she can eat here at the airport there are many options but she said I was discriminating her because I would not give her a voucher haha**

**GA: I said to her that we do not give free vouchers for these reasons so haha sorry I keep laughing but she told me I was the blackest hooker on this airport**

**I: Haha she did not!? And how did you respond?**

**GA: Well I won't repeat what I said but she left immediately after haha**

**GA: And another example with Arabic men they are very difficult as well. When they are dissatisfied they always ask for a supervisor and when they see that the supervisor is a woman they demand to speak to a male supervisor for example (silence...)**

**I: Ok, does anybody want to add something or share other examples?**

**SA1: No, I do not think so (silence...)**

**I: Ok, I want to thank everyone for participating I truly appreciate it**

## Focus group 2

I = Interviewer, GA1 = Gate Agent 1, GA2 = Gate Agent 2, SA1 = Service Agent 1, SA2 = Service Agent 2, TA = Ticket Agent

**I: Hello everybody**

**I: Thanks Guys for participating in this focus group**

**I: Let's begin before we are all send home haha**

**I: So, I was wondering can you give examples of situations where a passenger was dissatisfied with you and this was culturally related (silence...)**

**TA: Hmm, I have to be honest I actually never experience any difficulty with people of color. It is always those French people who always think that the service that is offered to them is not enough because they always want to upgrade.**

**I: That is a good example**

**TA: Haha, ok good**

**I: Do the French people make it known that they expect a certain level of service?**

TA: Yes! And that a rebooking alone it not enough. And I explain to them that customer care will take care of the rest when it comes to service recovery, but they instantly want more. An upgrade, access to the lounge those kind of things.

TA: And do not get me started how much angrier they get when you do not speak French (silence...)

I: Hmm any other examples that you would like to share?

SA1: I had to check-in hand luggage at a flight to America and I came across a black man and he instantly became mad and told me I was doing this because he was black.

SA1: I said Sir I am black too (silence...)

SA1: He made a whole scene and security even had to show up

I: Oh wow...

SA1: And guess what haha... it turned out he “took” a lot of airplane supplies with him which he had stored in his hand luggage hahaha! Oxygen masks, blankets etc.

I: Haha, oh my God! The passenger just wanted to distract you from finding all these supplies.

SA1: Yes, and talking about flights to America (silence...)

SA1: With these whole situation of the Corona virus now that we have to check every single passenger their passports and stamps and visa’s and ask them whether they have been in China or Iran the past fourteen days...

SA2: Yes! There were a few times where passengers felt offended. Because we have to ask them “have you been in China or Iran the past fourteen days?” but simultaneously we have to check their passports for visa’s and stamps of those countries so...

SA1: Yes, so basically, we are checking if the passenger is lying or not that can cause for tension of course.

GA1: Yes, indeed I noticed that Asian people feel offended or discriminated. Some are not aware that we are checking everybody, so they feel like we are only checking Asian people or Chinese people

SA2: Passengers also make comments like “don’t you believe me when I tell you no?”

GA2: In my experience I have been working for KLM over the past twenty-five years now and a lot of cultural mismatches happen because we often feel like the passenger has to adapt to us

I: Hmm please explain
GA2: Yes so, me and I know a lot of colleagues as well who think like this we often say or think this difficult passenger should adapt to how we do things here in Holland (silence...)
GA2: Like the example of the American flights I think well people are complaining but it is the American authorities who have all these rules that we have to follow it is not our country so why are you doing like this is our fault you just have to go with it (silence...)
I: Ah ok yes
GA2: And hmm like the example she gave with the French passenger this is common for French people they are demanding nothing is good enough for them. But here in Holland we are like "doe maar gewoon dan doe je al gek genoeg" you know what I mean? (silence...)
GA2: But these French passengers are getting angry when we are really doing our best for them which they think is not enough for them. So, I get an attitude like well just adjust you are not in France now it is what it is. Of course, I do not say this to the passenger but my attitude changes towards the passenger if I am honest
I: How does your attitude change? Do you still help the passenger afterwards?
GA2: Hmm yes I still help the passenger but I maybe do not go the extra mile if you know what I mean it is just clear cut yes or no and I do not offer options to the passenger for example
I: Ok I understand what you mean (silence...)
I: Does anybody have anything to add? Or other examples?
Everybody: No
I: Ok hmm thank you haha

## One-on-one Skype interviews (focus group)

Interview 1

I = Interviewer, CC1 = Cabin Crew 1

<b>I: Hi! Thank you for Skyping with me</b>
<b>CC: No problem can you hear me ok?</b>
<b>I: Yes, loud and clear!</b>
<b>I: So, hmm, let's get started. I really would like to know whether you can share any examples of situations you have encountered during a flight where a passenger was dissatisfied because of a cultural mismatch?</b>
<b>CC: Hmm well with me it's actually never occurs haha to be honest</b>
<b>I: No? really? I did not expect that</b>
<b>CC: Well yes, I think it is because I speak many languages and I have extensive knowledge about other cultures</b>
<b>I: Oh ok well that maybe explains it haha</b>
<b>CC: Yeah so, I think this makes it easier for me adapt easier and properly handle every situation (silence...)</b>
<b>CC: So I think I am not that much help to you haha sorry!</b>
<b>I: No, no worries but maybe you can explain to me hmm what makes it easier in comparison to your colleagues who do not speak as many different languages or do not have extensive knowledge about other cultures?</b>
<b>CC: Hmm well you cannot be a flight attendant and not have knowledge about other cultures even if you are new you learn as you go of course but it is also your responsibility to do some research about the Japanese culture if you are working on a flight to Japan just to name an example and hmm (silence...)</b>
<b>CC: Yeah so before every flight we have a meeting "briefing" and you know you tell your colleagues to pay extra attention to certain things especially if they have previous experiences with particular cultures and when it comes to language yeah for me I love learning languages but not everybody speaks so many different languages (silence...)</b>
<b>CC: It's... It comes in handy to speak different languages because saying something in English or in someone's native language is two very different things someone may</b>

understand it better in the sense that the way you want it to come across. If English for example is not their native language then someone can receive the thing that you are saying very negative even though you did not mean it that way so I think that is where a lot of misunderstandings begin between colleagues and passengers

I: Ah yes that makes sense haha

I: Hmm well I think I have to interview you for my next step of data collection to get more insights haha

CC: I do not mind haha so sorry I cannot be more help to you now

I: No problem we will stay in contact thank you

CC: Bye!

#### Interview 2

I = Interviewer, CC2 = Cabin Crew 2

I: Hello, thank you for taking this Skype meeting

I: I would like to know if you have any examples of situations where passengers on board of a flight were not satisfied because of cultural related reasons.

CC: Hmm, let me think I have experienced so many things over the years (silence...)

I: Take your time (silence...)

CC: On the flight to Tel Aviv I can give you two examples on this flight

CC: A man did not want to sit next to a woman because you know they are Orthodox Jew and he demanded to be reseated.

I: And did you reseat him?

CC: No! because I feel like we are not always able to do something for someone. And of course I understand that someone has their religion and culture but we cannot take everybody's religion and culture in to account (silence...)

CC: Otherwise it is a never-ending story with wishes and demands

I: So, you feel that the passenger should also show understanding and adapt to these situations?

CC: Yes, because in this case I did not reseat the passenger so he got really mad and was very offended. For me this is not a problem but I can understand that for my colleagues it is not a nice work atmosphere with angry passengers on board.

**CC: Hmm so the second example on this flight is of course the Kosher food and besides that they do not want any service of a woman (silence...)**

**I: Can you give examples of this?**

**CC: Yes hmm so when you serve the meal you take of the plastic sealing of the meal box and then put the platter on the table tray but they do not want you to do that because they think you are not Kosher so to speak (silence...)**

**CC: Hmm what else ... let's see**

**CC: Hmm yes so on the flight to Lagos a passenger sitting in business class haha**

**CC: The passenger was sitting with his bare feet leaning on the seat before him no shoes and no socks it was really nasty**

**CC: Mind you nobody wanted to say something! Not the purser on the flight nobody so they asked me to do it because according to others I was the one who could bring it differently**

**CC: Passengers were looking around like "is nobody going to say something about this?" haha**

**CC: So, yes I went over and whispered "Sir the fellow passengers on board mind it very much that you rest your bare feet on the seat before you so please put on your socks and keep your feet underneath the seat in front of you"**

**CC: Haha of course the answer was "it is because I'm black"**

**CC: I told him "no sir, they just don't like the sight of the bare feet" haha so eventually he put on his socks and put his feet on the ground. He did not like it that I asked him to do so**

**I: Ok, haha well thank you for these examples. Do you have any other examples?**

**CC: Well not that I can think of right now hmm (silence...)**

**I: No worries thank you so much**

Interview 3

I = Interviewer, CC3 = Cabin Crew 3

**I: Hey thank you so much for Skyping with me**

**CC: No worries I am happy to help**

**I: Yes thank you! So let's get started shall we. I was wondering if you could give me any examples of situations where passengers were unhappy with your service because of a culturally related issue**

**CC: Hmm well I can give you an example which is not that recent but I will never forget this haha**

**I: Haha please share**

**CC: So on board of flight to India there was this Indian man pitching me in my butt. This happened a very long time ago I was still very young and insecure so I did not react because I was so in shock**

**I: Oh my God! Really?! I was not expecting this**

**CC: Yes, over the years you know I learned to handle different situations and of course I have my boundaries so it this would happen to me now this man would definitely have a problem. But back then I remember that I tried to avoid this man as much as possible...**

**CC: But this is really a culture thing with Indian men they are known not to have much respect for women (silence...)**

**CC: You know there are other examples like them call you by snapping their fingers like "come here immediately!" you feel like a slave honestly**

**CC: And they get mad when you do not respond to them you really have to raise them like they are your children and tell them this is not appropriate and they look at you like you are crazy**

**CC: I tell them "may I..." and "please" and they look at you like this is a crazy woman haha**

**I: Yes, I can imagine how bad you must feel to be on such a long flight with them**

**CC: Yes and it can get much worse. One time a man peed and left feces on the bathroom floor in the airplane. Often these people come from rural areas or at least back then and they would not understand that you have to use toilet paper. So they would do it on the floor and leave it there. It was really horrible**

**I: NO! I am in shock! And how would you handle these situations?**

**CC: Well, I would explain to them that they have to use the toilet paper and show them what toilet paper was. They would look at me like I am crazy haha**

**CC: And of course, I would ask them to clean it up because I sure as hell was not doing it**

**CC: Hmm yes so I cannot think of anything else that fast but these are some examples that I can think of**

**I: Well I want to thank you for these examples!**

Interview 4

I = Interviewer, P = Purser

**I: Hi thank you for Skyping with me**

**P: No problem I am happy to help you with your thesis**

**I: Hmm so yeah I would like to know if you have any examples of situations where passengers were dissatisfied because of a cultural related issue**

**P: Hmm well I worked on a flight once where a religious leader was on board who absolutely refused to be served by woman. Unfortunately for him there were only women on that flight so yeah that was quite a challenge to come up with a solution**

**I: And how did you solve this problem?**

**P: Hmm he discussed it with his subordinate? The person working under him. He was traveling in a group of only men I think who were working for him or under him and the first person working under him came to the pantry and told us that we can set up the tray and the drinks and the food and everything and he would be the one serving it to him and when the leader was done eating he would be the one who would bring the tray back to the kitchen**

**I: Ok, so it could be solved luckily**

**P: Yes you know we did not expect someone to be on board who could not be served by a woman. And at that point you think well this is not our problem because we are able to serve both men and women so when someone on board tells you he does not want to be served by you or your colleagues you think ok well how are we going to solve this?**

**I: Do you think that passengers should adapt when flying?**

**P: Yes definitely! I understand that people do not allow things because of their culture but they make their problem your problem and it is impossible to consider everybody's culture or religion in one plane so I expect that people who have special requests that we cannot comply to passengers have to solve them themselves (silence...)**



**P: Something similar also happens a lot with Jewish passengers you know not wanting to be served by women because they believe that we are impure. I remember a Jewish family on our flight to New York asked us to clean the bathrooms after every visit of a passenger so that his wife and children could go to a clean bathroom. He said because of his religion he and his family could not go to the bathroom otherwise**

**I: Haha that is an odd request**

**P: You know people are sometimes really small-minded. How can you expect the whole world living up to your religious standards? Do such people consider other religions or cultures? Maybe in my religion I am not allowed to clean bathrooms just saying haha but we get really odd requests sometimes**

**I: Yes I can imagine**

**P: Yes and besides religious examples there are also a lot of discrimination examples as well but not towards passengers but towards employees**

**I: Oh really?!**

**P: Yes a few years ago I was stationed in London and we had charters flying from London to several destinations. So there was one time the door to the cockpit was open and there were two black pilots so there was a group of English passengers walking on board of the flight and they saw the black pilots and they demanded to be taken of the flight because they refused to fly with two black pilots**

**I: Wow really and they were taken of the flight?**

**P: Yes of course it was on their request and we would not have taken them on anyway because you do not know what people who think like this will do during the flight so it would be unsafe. I also experienced where a black cabin crew agent asked a woman if she needed help with her bag and she replied by saying she did not want a nigger carrying her bag**

**I: I am in shock (silence...)**

**P: Yes sometimes you really do not know what you are hearing but you know what the funny thing is? People are not even ashamed of themselves when they act like this that is more shocking to me. People can be so mean (silence...)**

**P: And with this whole corona virus situation I hope that it will open people's eyes. This virus does not discriminate! Everybody can get it black white purple yellow is does not matter. So, I hope people will realize we are all people!**

**I: Yes, that is true I hope people will stop discriminating**

**P: Yes, but you know in our jobs discrimination is often also used when passengers do not get their way. Often people use the discrimination card because they do not want to pay for luggage or they want to get an upgrade. So it is sad that people will say "you are doing this because I am black or Turkish" or whatever just so they can reach their goal while there are people who really suffer because of discrimination.**

**I: Yes that is sad (silence...)**

**I: Hmm do you have any other examples?**

**P: Hmm not right now but if you need more examples you know where to find me**

**I: Yes haha thank you so much for this conversation**

**P: No problem!**

**I: Bye!**

**P: Bye!**

#### Interview 5

I = Interviewer, CC5 = Cabin crew 5

**I: Hello, can you hear me?**

**CC: Yes, very well hi there**

**I: Hey, thank you for this interview**

**I: Hmm, let's get started**

**I: Hmm, I wanted to know if you can share any experiences with dissatisfied passengers on board in which the situation was culturally related**

**CC: Hmm yes hmm let me think for a second (silence...)**

**CC: Well I have some examples which are not all on board because I worked on the ground for such a long time as well if that is ok?**

**I: Yes, no problem just mention all the examples you can think of**

**CC: Hmm, well an African man coming to me saying “hey sister” and he missed his flight and he wanted all these things from me which I would not give him such as hotel stay and vouchers so he said I was discriminating (silence...)**

**CC: Hmm, the second example is a Nigerian passenger. You know there is a difference between Ghanaian and Nigerian passengers. Nigerian passengers truly believe that when they have purchased a ticket they have purchased the whole company haha**

**CC: So, he had a false ticket and when I discovered it I confronted him about it and he got very angry with me because he knew he got caught but he acted like I had insulted him**

**CC: So, he took the computer screen behind the desk and threw it at me and yelled at me so the royal military or police or whatever had to come and help me haha**

**CC: Luckily this passenger got blacklisted and is never able to fly with us ever again**

**I: Oh wow that is intense haha my God aren't you afraid to confront passengers after this happened?**

**CC: Well, you know with this job there is always something and it comes with a lot of responsibility so if I am scared to do or say something then I cannot do my job anymore**

**I: Yeah that is true and of course you have security at the airport so that helps**

**CC: Yes, it does so (silence...)**

**I: Would you say that people with a particular background are more difficult than the other?**

**CC: Hmm, I would say Jewish people are very difficult. I remember a Jewish passenger who was onboard and demanded to be reseated because he was sitting next to a women. But it was a full flight.**

**CC: So, I really believe that people should adjust especially in public but in light of being service minded and trying to please the customer I placed another man next to this Jewish passenger haha**

**CC: And then the Jewish passenger complained again because the man now sitting next to him was overweight and he could not sit comfortably haha I must say it felt good to tell him that it is a full flight and there was nothing further I could do about it.**

**CC: You know we deal with so many cultures, religions and what not on a daily basis and you want to please everybody but I truly believe it is a two-way street. We all have to**

**adapt a little bit just so we can get from A to B safe and sound. And some passengers have to accept that this is sometimes next to a woman (silence...)**

**CC: Another example is a French passenger who wanted to order coffee at the coffee bar at the airport and I was standing there in my uniform. And he only spoke French and he became angry because the employee of the coffee bar did not speak French. So he started talking to me in French saying that he find it very unacceptable that she did not speak French and I answered in French and told him that this is an international airport where the official language is English so it is unacceptable that you do not speak English sir.**

**I: Haha, you know I have spoken to some colleagues now and I must say many of you just say to the passenger what is on your mind haha but aren't you scared to get a complaint or an official warning?**

**CC: Haha, well no because some passengers truly think that they can do and say whatever especially nowadays people are so disrespectful so you have to stand up for yourself or others sometimes**

**I: Yes that is true**

**CC: And very often you see that that passengers are shocked when you tell them about themselves but afterwards they realize that they were out of line and often in situations they apologize even so it helps haha**

**I: Haha, well I hope so**

**CC: Haha, yes it is like raising children at the airport**

**I: Haha, well do you have any other examples?**

**CC: (Silence...) hmm well not that I can think of right now**

**I: Ok, no worries I think I have enough I want to thank you very much for your time and help**

**CC: No problem and if I can think of something I will let you know**

**I: Yes thank you very much**

**I: Bye!**

**CC: Bye!**

## Appendix 4 Interview Script

These interview questions were drafted after the first step of data collection. The questions are based on the five leading cases which were selecting from data collected through the organization of two focus groups and five one-on-one Skype interviews with ground staff and cabin crew employees.

### Questions

First, employees will be asked to assess themselves on the following five cases:

1. Language: A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French.
2. "Race": A passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black".
3. Religion: An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman.
4. Special request because of religion: A passenger requests the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times.
5. National Culture: A passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger's culture.

Second, based on the answers provided by the employee, the employee will be asked additional questions to determine whether one is fully competent or not.

**Competences that will be assessed:**

1. *fundamental competence* entails the general ability to effectively adapt to a new and unknown environment to achieve specific goals. In context of an intercultural service encounter between a service provider and a customer, the goal could be selling an upgrade to a passenger while this satisfies the need for a seat change because the passenger is not able to sit next to a woman because of religious reasons. Fundamental competence consists of cognitive capabilities that a service provider must have in order to be effective in any situation that may occur.
2. *Social competence* involves specific abilities instead of general abilities such as in fundamental competence. When one is social competent one has the skills of empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity and interaction management.
3. *Interpersonal competence* is having the ability to accomplish tasks and achieve goals through successful communication. In context of an intercultural service encounter, the service provider would be able to provide information even when the passenger does not speak English as their native language. Although, to dispose of interpersonal competence one must dispose of the fundamental and social competence, the interpersonal competence distinguishes itself from these two competences because one must be able to execute certain skills in a particular manner in order to control the environment in which the encounter takes place in order to achieve goals.
4. *Linguistic competence* is the ability to use language properly.
5. *Communicative competence* is the knowledge of how to use language properly, but it also entails the knowledge on how to execute this knowledge of language properly. One is communicative competent when one is able to appropriately get messages across in a particular context of interaction. This would mean that one is linguistically able to adapt in an intercultural service encounter where the passenger may speak the same language as the service provider however, they the level of fluency may differ.
6. *Relational competence* consists of many of the previously mentioned competences, but to be relationally competent one must be able to establish certain degrees of relationships with others before he or she can interact effectively with them and achieve his or her goals.

## Appendix 5 Transcripts (interviews)

### Interview 1

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

<b>I: Hi, thank you for this Skype meeting.</b>
<b>GA: No problem I have nothing to do anyways haha since we have to stay home Rutte said haha</b>
<b>I: Haha indeed!</b>
<b>I: Hmm so, first let me explain what I actually want to know from you haha. Hmm so, I will present you five cases in total. These are situations that may or may not be familiar situations and for each situation I would like to know how you would handle this situation step by step.</b>
<b>GA: Ok, I will try my best.</b>
<b>I: Ok, let's start!</b>
<b>I: Hmm, so the first case I will just read the situation and you can respond</b>
<b>GA: Alright</b>
<b>I: Hmm, yes so, the first case is... A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?</b>
<b>GA: Oh, I have experienced this a lot haha hmm let me think... (silence)</b>
<b>GA: So, hmm first thing I do is try to explain that I do not understand the passenger by speaking English "I do not understand you" or "I do not speak French". With angry passengers it is most important to stay calm. When the passenger seems to be angry, I would first try to calm the passenger down. Hmm, I would do my best to try to understand what the passenger is trying to ask or tell me and try to communicate with hand gestures. Hmm (silence...)</b>
<b>GA: Often at this point I am talking English while trying to express myself by using hand gestures so I can imagine a passenger who does not understand the language and is angry cannot clearly understand what I am trying to say (silence...)</b>
<b>I: So, what happens when you have followed these steps and the passenger gets angrier or keeps on talking in French?</b>

**GA: Hmm, I would look for another solution because apparently my first approach did not work. I would try to ask my colleague whether they speak French or could help solve the situation. Hmm, often in situations like these there are other passengers who do speak the language and will help translate but of course that is not always the case so yes (silence...)**

**I: Oke, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their excessive luggage and feels discriminated by you because of this. The passenger tells you "you are doing this because I am black". How would you handle this situation? So, the passenger maybe expected you to waive the excessive luggage and you did not do this "because the passenger is black".**

**GA: Hmm, (silence...)**

**GA: Hmm, in this situation first I would try to make it clear that I am absolutely not discriminating. Hmm, in situations like these I would try to make sure that it is clear that the process that I am following is according to the rules of the airline and not just a decision I made based on someone's skin color. So, I will try to explain this to the passenger.**

**I: And what if the passenger does not believe you?**

**GA: Well, hmm, there is only so much you can do. You cannot try to convince somebody that you are not discriminating in such a short amount of time. There is simply no time. So, if a passenger would not believe me, I would give them an ultimatum "pay for the luggage and file a complaint afterwards or do not come on this flight". Of course, the decision then is quickly made by the passenger. It is often that they use the "race card" in situations they want to come out of like not wanting to pay extra for luggage.**

**I: How can you be sure that it is not about "race"?**

**GA: Hmm, because when I feel like if a passenger really feels discriminated, they would not want to fly with an airline company that employs staff who discriminates.**

**I: Oke, the third case is hmm an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. Tell me what would you do? Haha**



**GA: Hmm, if a passenger wants to be resealed, I would tell this passenger I will have a look to see if there are any available empty seats. In these cases, I always ask if a passenger would like to purchase an upgrade if this is available of course.**

**I: And what if it is a full flight and there are no empty seats available and there is no possibility for an upgrade or the passenger does not want to buy an upgrade?**

**GA: Hmm, it depends on the situation. So, it is really important to listen to the situation of the passenger. In this case the passenger has a religion related reason for wanting to be resealed. But if there is no real reason for a passenger to be resealed and it is a full flight, the passenger would have to accept their current seat and maybe try to switch seats on board with another passenger. In this case I would try to check in the system whether I can switch the seat with another passenger but this is not always possible. Sometimes there are only upgrades available and the passenger does not want to pay extra for another seat so then I would tell the passenger that it is either a paid upgrade or try to switch on board with another passenger. There is not always something you can do for a passenger when the options you have presented are not accepted by the passenger.**

**I: Hmm, the fourth case is maybe not so familiar like the other cases because this occurred inflight. But I present this case as a case to think about all the weird requests you maybe have had and to think about how you would respond in situations like these. So, the case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean all the time.**

**GA: Yuck! Haha HELL NO!**

**I: Haha, how would you handle this situation? Please tell me!**

**GA: Hmm, I would be the one who would not do this. And not so much because I think it is nasty but I know that the restrooms on board, especially on long flights, get cleaned a few times during the flight but I think that there is a certain limit to requests in the name of culture or religion. So, NO! I have to adapt but so does the passenger. This is an international environment sorry. Staff and passengers have to meet each other half way so (silence...)**

**I: Hmm, do you adapt? And do you think that it is enough?**

**GA:** Hmm, yes, I adapt because I could not do my job otherwise. But I have my limits. When I first started working for the company, I had a hard time saying no or maybe knowing how to respond in certain situations. I wanted to please everybody all the time and want to be understanding and show respect for all religions and cultures. Don't get me wrong I still try to do this but I have limits now. I think it is the manner in which you explain to the passenger why you would not do something for them even if it is against their religion or culture and then they understand it.

**I:** So, in this case what would you tell the passenger?

**GA:** Hmm, I would say sir I understand that this is a religious matter for you however I am not able to clean the restroom after every visit because then I cannot do my job properly.

**I:** Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you do?

**GA:** Hmm, personally I would first count to ten because this I find highly offensive. But it is important to keep my composure and stay calm and collective. I would then tell the passenger that this behavior is unacceptable and I find it highly offensive. I would try to explain that this behavior is not common here. Hmm, I would expect an apology so yeah (silence...)

**I:** And what happens if the passenger does not understand your explanation and does not apologize?

**GA:** It depends on the behavior of the passenger in that time. So, if the passenger is calm and listens and would not understand why this behavior is not acceptable I would make it clear not to do this again. I can understand that when it comes to culture some habits are so installed in a person's character, daily routine or behavior it is hard for them to understand that this is wrong. You can tell if a person does not WANT to understand you or simply does not understand. So, if a passenger does not WANT to understand me and does not apologize, I would have to remove him from the flight and file a complaint for harassment.

**I:** Oke, well those were all the cases. I want to thank you so much for this interview.

**GA:** Oh yes, no problem.

**I:** Bye!

**GA:** Bye!

## Interview 2

I = Interviewer, SA: Service Agent

<b>I: Hi there! Thank you for agreeing to this interview!</b>
<b>SA: Hey, no worries glad I can help.</b>
<b>I: Yeah, so let's get started. Hmm I will explain a bit about what we are going to do and if you have any questions just let me know</b>
<b>SA: Yes</b>
<b>I: Hmm, I will present to you five situations in total. These situations may be familiar to you some may not. And I would like to know how you would handle or solve these situations while at work. So how you would react or what actions you make take in these different situations so...</b>
<b>SA: Ok, I think I understand. So, I will just explain what I would do in every situation separately?</b>
<b>I: Yes! I will just start with a case and you will tell me what you would do after I mentioned the case.</b>
<b>SA: Ok, got it!</b>
<b>I: Oke, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry with you because you do not speak French. So, what would you do or say in this situation?</b>
<b>SA: Hmm, this one is tricky. First, I would try to explain in English or with hand gestures that I do not understand him. Or her! I would I think ask my colleague if he or she speaks French. And if that is not the case then I am not able to help the passenger.</b>
<b>I: And if you come to the point where you think ok, I am not able to help this passenger what do you do?</b>
<b>SA: Hmm, yeah nothing actually. Mostly I just hold up my hands like "I don't know". And then the passenger often just walks away because they notice that I do not understand them.</b>
<b>I: And do you try to calm the angry passenger down?</b>
<b>SA: Well, I try to stay calm and talk calmly. But it is hard to calm a passenger down when you do not understand him or her or when the passenger does not understand you. So yeah, most of the time they walk away (silence...)</b>

**I: Hmm, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their too heavy luggage and feels that you are doing this because “they are black”. How would you solve this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that it is not the reason why the passenger has to pay extra for the luggage. And I am not discriminating.**

**I: And if the passenger does not believe you?**

**SA: Hmm, yeah, hmm, I don’t know to be honest that is not really my problem haha. There are rules and I have to follow these rules and so does the passenger. He has to pay for the luggage.**

**I: What if the passenger gets even more upset and does not want to pay for the luggage?**

**SA: I would tell the passenger that it is a possibility he or she will not be accepted on the flight. So, it is a risk if they do not pay for the luggage.**

**I: Oke, so another case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, first I would ask where he was seated now and check whether there are seats available. Often flights are full or overbooked so I would not be able to reseat this passenger. I have to keep in mind that other passengers often pay for a specific seat so I cannot just switch seats with other passengers in the system so (silence...)**

**I: And what would you tell this passenger when a reseating is not available?**

**SA: I would recommend him to ask a passenger on board to switch with them or I would mention this to the cabin crew and maybe they can assist him in switching seats on board.**

**I: Hmm, oke, hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. What would you do?**

**SA: Hmm, (silence...)**

**I: And I just want to mention that it might not be a familiar case but have you had any experience of odd requests because of religion or culture where you had to solve the situation.**

**SA: Hmm, well, in this case or keeping in mind other odd requests I would tell the passenger that I cannot do that.**

**I: And do you give additional explanations to these passengers as to why you cannot give in to certain requests?**

**SA: It depends on the request and the situation and the passenger of course. But often it is a yes or no for me. Passengers do not even ask for the reason behind the answer.**

**I: Do you keep in mind that certain requests are culture or religion related?**

**SA: Hmm, yes but passengers often know that what is normal and common for them and their culture does not have to be normal and common for me simply because we do not have the same culture or religion. And of course, in certain situations you keep it in mind but passengers also understand that some things are just common sense. How can I do my job if I am cleaning toilets every two seconds?**

**I: Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is normal in the passenger's culture. How would you solve this case?**

**SA: Oh my God, haha. Hmm well I would tell the passenger that this is not OK! And that he should not do this! In most occasions where something happens that is unacceptable, I always tell a colleague maybe a Gate Agent. And often we discuss whether we would accept someone like this on the flight. He might do it to other colleagues during the flight as well. So, it is important to see whether it is safe to accept someone on the flight or not (silence...)**

**I: Ok, I want to thank you! That were all the cases.**

**SA: Yeah, no problem! Bye Bye!**

**I: Bye!**

### Interview 3

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I: Hi there, thank you for joining me on Skype!**

**SA: Hey hey!**

**I: So, I will explain a bit what I want to know and then we can start the interview (silence...)**

**I: Hmm, yes, so, I will present five cases to you and I would like to know what you would do in certain situations or how you would solve certain situations hmm yes so, after every case I would like to hear that from you.**

**SA: Ok, duidelijk!**

**I: Yes, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I experience this a lot haha. So, what I do first is make sure that the passenger calms down. I try to stay calm myself and really try to express that I am listening to the passenger even though I do not understand what he or she is saying. When I notice the passenger calms down, I try to make it clear either by speaking English or hand gestures. In these situations it's usually a mixture of both. I try to understand what the passenger wants which can be difficult because you don't understand the passenger hmm so (silence...)**

**SA: You know when you have worked here for a while you will know automatically what a passenger might want from you mostly it are questions about the boarding time, where is the gate? Where is the toilet? So, you know how to pick little words that sound familiar to you because you hear them quite a lot and then I usually write the gate number on a piece of paper or I point out the direction where the toilet is.**

**I: And what happens when you really do not understand why the passenger is angry?**

**SA: After my own approach does not work, I ask a colleague for help. Often it is someone who has more work experience than me. I notice that it is most important to calm an angry passenger down because being angry or upset just complicates the communication even more.**

**I: And often passengers are in a hurry. Are you able to carry out all these steps when a passenger is really in a hurry?**

**SA: Passengers are always in a hurry haha. No but it can frustrate a passenger even more when they are in a hurry and don't know where the gate is for example and asks someone who doesn't speak the language. But it is really choosing your battles here at work. I cannot solve every problem unfortunately haha. But I experience often is that when passengers get in situations like these and language is a problem, they quickly I think like make a decision in their mind like do I stay and wait for the answer or do I go and figure it out myself. So, often when they really don't have the time or maybe they really don't want to wait for me to figure it out they just walk away from the conversation.**

**I: And how do you deal with the passenger walking away? Because you did not solve their problem**

**SA: Hmm, well I don't run after the passenger. Communication is a two-way street, when a passenger approaches me, they also have to give me the opportunity to make sense of it all and to give me the opportunity to solve their issue. If they don't give me this then the conversation has already failed.**

**I: Ok, now the second case. Hmm, a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, in this situation I think it is important to state very clearly why the passenger has to pay extra for their luggage. By making this clear the passenger should know that this is because of the rules and that this has nothing to do with "race". Of course, I state that I am not discriminating but mostly I mention this after I have explained the rules. Because a passenger will not believe me when I just say "No, of course I am not discriminating you".**

**I: Hmm the third case is next. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do in this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, in seating situations I always check the system first. Where is the passenger seated right now? Are there any empty seats available? Is there an upgrade available? Does the passenger want to buy an upgrade? So, I tackle all these questions first. I always explain to the passenger that I will check and see in the system if there are any options for reseating. Because I cannot just say "Ok, I will reseat you" and make false promises. This will make the passenger angry and upset when I cannot keep my promise. In "normal" situations when I cannot reseat the passenger I apologize for the inconvenience and always advice the passenger to buy a preferable seat when booking a ticket to ensure a seat. But in this case because religion plays a role, I will ask a Gate Agent and discuss with them what other options there are. So, the Gate Agent will check whether it is possible to switch seats with another passenger. And if this is not possible, I will tell the passenger to ask a passenger on board to switch seats. The Gate Agent will let the Cabin Crew know about this situation so that they can assist this passenger on board.**

**I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom must be clean at all times. What would you do?**

**SA: Hmm, this is difficult because I do not work on board hmm (silence...)**

**I: You can think of all the odd requests you have received being religion or culture related. What do you do in situations which are not common for you?**

**SA: Hmm, well in cases like that it is either a yes or a no. If something is possible to do then I will do it because you always think I have to be service minded. But for example, in a case like this I would explain that this is not possible because... I would explain you know. Even in my mind I think it is a weird request I try to not show that I find it weird because I do not want to offend anybody. Everybody has their own thing their own culture so (silence...)**

**I: Ok, and the last one. Hmm, a passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is a normal thing in their culture. What would you do?**

**SA: Haha oh, hmm, I would not feel comfortable. I would be, I think, shocked at first. But I will have to calmly explain that this is unacceptable behavior and if this happens again, I have to report this and then there will be consequences for him. I hope the passenger would understand this when I explain this to him haha.**

**I: Haha, well this was it. Thank you!**

**SA: No problem, it was fun! Let me know if you have any other questions.**

**I: I will, thank you! Bye Bye!**

**SA: Bye!**

#### Interview 4

I = Interviewer, SA: Service Agent (former Cabin Crew member)

**I: Hi, thank you for participating in my research**

**SA: Of course, no problem glad I can help.**

**I: Hmm, so I was wondering if you can help me with the following scenarios. I will ask you five cases so to speak and I would like from you to tell me step by step what you would do or say in these situations (silence...)**

**SA: Ok, Ok, no problem.**



**I: Hmm, ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. What would you do in this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I think it's unreasonable when someone actually gets angry about this, so I feel show very little understanding in this situation.**

**I: And when you show little understanding, how does the conversation proceed? Or does it stop?**

**SA: Well, in cases like these I just ask my colleagues who are at the gate at that moment if anyone speaks French and if they want to help the passenger. But if there is nobody who speaks French, I will just have to work it out with the passenger and my other colleagues since I don't speak French.**

**I: And how do you continue when none of your colleagues speaks French? How do you then communicate with the passenger?**

**SA: Hmm, yeah, I would try to communicate with hand gestures or something. Just try to make sense of it all. Sometimes you recognize certain words and even a person expressions you can make sense of what someone is trying to say. But really, you don't have all day to just help one passenger so yeah if hand gestures don't work then I don't know what else to do.**

**I: Ok, so the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". What would you do?**

**SA: I try to explain to the passenger that we follow the same procedure for every passenger and I will not go into the part where he or she feels discriminated.**

**I: So you mean that you don't say anything about the passenger thinking that you are doing this because they are black?**

**SA: No, I don't. I just explain that these are the rules and that these rules are the same for everybody.**

**I: And what if the passenger still does not want to pay, what happens then?**

**SA: I would make clear that the passenger will not be able to go on the flight. So it is either paying or not flying.**

**I: Hmm, so another case. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What do you do in situations like these?**

**SA: I try to make this happen, if necessary, by calling another passenger to the desk to ask if he or she is willing to change seats with this particular passenger.**

**I: What happens when no one wants to switch? Or when it is not possible to reseat this passenger?**

**SA: I would tell the passenger that he can try to ask somebody on board to switch.**

**I: And aren't you afraid that the Jewish passenger feels embarrassed or other passengers feel offended because you ask them to switch seats?**

**SA: Well, no because they are the one asking it. And as for the other passengers I don't go into detail but just ask if they are willing to switch.**

**I: Ok, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. What would you do?**

**SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is not our procedure, no exceptions can be made. There are normally a number of fixed moments when the toilets are cleaned.**

**I: Ok, and the last one. A passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is normal behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you do?**

**SA: I would ask the passenger not to touch me, because I don't accept this behavior.**

**I: Ok, thank you that was it. If I have any other questions I will contact you!**

**SA: That is totally fine. Thanks bye!**

**I: Bye! Have a good day!**

## Interview 5

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I: Hi, thank you for taking the time to help me.**

**SA: No problem. I have nothing to do anyways haha.**

**I: Haha, so, I am just going to explain what I want to know and then you can answer the questions.**

**SA: Ok, that's fine.**

**I: Hmm, so, I will present five different cases to you and for every case I would like to know from you what you would do or say in these situations.**

**SA: Ok!**

**I: So, let's start. Hmm, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Since I don't speak French and English is an International language I always find it strange how passengers can get angry because you don't speak their language. In this situation I would ask the colleagues standing at the gate with me if anyone speaks French and if not, I would ask another passenger who speaks French to help with the translation.**

**I: What happens when there is no one willing to translate? And your colleagues don't speak French?**

**SA: Hmm, I use my hands and my feet to try to make sense of what I am saying haha. But if I notice that someone doesn't WANT to speak English then I just leave it for what it is. If we don't understand each other then I can't help you.**

**I: Ok, so the second case is hmm, a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels that they have to pay for their luggage because "they are black". What would you do?**

**SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is our policy, but if he would continue on about the situation then I would tell him there is no other possibility but just to pay and I will not continue this discussion.**

**I: Would you acknowledge the passenger's feelings on being discriminated?**

**SA: NO! I feel like this is often just an excuse because they have to pay. It is common sense and everybody knows that for extra luggage you have to pay! It has nothing to do with "race"!**

**I: Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do?**

**SA: I'd do anything to make it happen. I would look up the passenger list of that flight and check if there are passengers traveling alone. These passengers are maybe willing to switch seats. If there are passengers traveling alone, I would call them to the desk and ask if they want to switch seats with the Jewish passenger.**

<b>I: And what do you tell the passenger when it is not possible to reseat him?</b>
<b>SA: Well, I don't make promises that it is always possible. So when I am not able to change the seat at the gate I tell the passenger that he can try on board and ask the cabin crew if they can help him be resealed or he can ask another passenger on board to switch seats.</b>
<b>I: Ok, so the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times.</b>
<b>SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is not our procedure, where no exception can be made. I would also explain to the passenger that the cleaning of the toilets is done by a company which is specialized before and after the flight.</b>
<b>I: Ok, hmm, so the last question. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is normal in their culture. What would you do?</b>
<b>SA: I would say that he should stop this behavior. Hmm, and if he continues this behavior I will remove him from the flight.</b>
<b>I: Ok, thank you so much!</b>
<b>SA: I hope I could help enough.</b>
<b>I: Yes, I think I have enough information thank you.</b>
<b>SA: Ok, bye! Have a nice day and stay safe!</b>
<b>I: Yes, you too! Bye Bye!</b>

## Interview 6

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

<b>I: Hi, thanks for Skyping!</b>
<b>CC: Yes, of course! What would you like to know?</b>
<b>I: Hi, yes, so, I will explain this. Hmm, I will present five cases to you. These five situations may or may not be familiar to you but you can answer these questions with your own experiences. I would like to know what you would do or say in these situations. You don't have to solve the problem but I would like to know step by step what kind of actions you would take in these situations.</b>
<b>CC: Ok, let's go!</b>

**I: Haha, ok so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. What would you do?**

**CC: A lot of French passengers do not speak English and this often occurs on European flights. A lot of the times they think that we are Air France and therefore they expect for us to be able to speak French. In this case, I would personally tell the passenger that I do not speak French and I have experienced this a lot. I always tell the passengers I would like to help them but I can only do this in the languages I can speak.**

**I: And what happens when the passenger does not understand this explanation? And he does not speak any other language that you speak?**

**CC: I see if there are passengers who can translate**

**I: And what happens when the passenger stays angry? How do you handle this?**

**CC: I would let them vent first and then, in English, I would ask another passenger what the problem is. I would then try to solve the problem or just try to communicate. You know if that doesn't solve the problem they can file a complaint with customer service haha. There is only so much you can do really.**

**I: Ok, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black".**

**CC: Hmm, well I have really experienced this during check-in. In cases such as this one it is important to put your foot down and stick to the point. But what is also important is that you make the passenger feel comfortable. I would say that the luggage is too heavy and how much the total price would be. I would also try to suggest other options such as asking if there is anything in the luggage that can be put in the trolley so that the passenger doesn't have to pay for the too heavy luggage. Important here is that you hold every passenger to the same standard. If I don't let this passenger pay for the too heavy luggage and the passenger behind him has too heavy luggage as well I cannot say "well sir, he didn't have to pay but you have to".**

**I: How do you let this passenger feel comfortable?**

**CC: Listening is very important and immediately after that asking questions. I probably also would summarize what I've heard from the passenger just to make sure I understood what I've heard so that I can respond to the passenger.**

**I:** Ok, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do?

**CC:** Orthodox Jewish passengers are indeed not allowed to sit next to women however, it is not always possible to take this into account on a flight. This is a western airline company. I would tell the passenger that he can ask another passenger if they are willing to switch seats with him. If there is enough time I would be the one asking this on behalf of the passenger because I always want to take the culture and religion of passengers into account. I do this so that passengers feel like they matter and that they are heard.

**I:** Hmm, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be cleaned at all times.

**CC:** Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is not possible because the most important task during the flight is to ensure safety for all the passengers. I would explain that me and my colleagues are here to ensure safety and we want to ensure that everybody has a pleasant flight so it is not possible to clean the restroom the entire flight. I would also make it clear that I am not a toilet lady haha. Yeah, so, I would just try to explain this that I am willing to help as much as possible but there are limits.

**I:** And the last case, a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you say or what would you do to handle this situation?

**CC:** I would explain that this is not acceptable behavior and ask if the passenger could stop this behavior and not do it again. If the passenger does not stop this behavior I would explain that there are consequences when this behavior does not change.

**I:** Ok, that was it. I want to thank you!

**CC:** Of course, no problem. Have a good day.

**I:** You too. Bye!

**CC:** Bye!

## Interview 7

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent (former Cabin Crew member)

**I: Hey, thanks for Skyping with me today.**

**GA: No problem! What are we doing today?**

**I: Hmm, I will just jump right to it. I will ask you five questions on situations and how you would handle these situations. What would you do and what would you say?**

**GA: Ok.**

**I: Hmm, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak the language. Tell me what would you do or what would you say?**

**GA: Hmm, I would try to explain to the passenger that I want to help him even if I don't speak the same language. I want to make sure that the passenger notice that I am listening.**

**I: And what do you do when you have established this?**

**GA: Hmm, so after the passenger has calmed down you mean?**

**I: Yeah...**

**GA: You search for all kinds of options to solve this so you ask passengers to translate or colleagues if they speak French.**

**I: Ok, hmm the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". What would you do?**

**GA: Oh, I get this a lot at European flights when we have to check in luggage at the gate. Hmm, honestly here I just make sure I stand my ground. I just make sure that I explain these are the rules and these rules count for everybody. I always try to make the passenger feel that I am not only holding him accountable but everybody before and after him I am checking their bags too.**

**I: What happens when the passenger still does not want to pay after you have made it clear that these are the rules that are for everybody?**

**GA: Then I get stricter in the sense that I don't take the feelings into account that much. At this point I have already explained that this is not a case of discrimination, this are the rules that apply to everybody. And if at this point the passenger does not want to follow the rules I will tell the passenger the consequences.**

**I: Ok, the next case. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How do you handle this situation?**

**GA: In this situation it is important to show understanding. But also make it clear to the passenger that it is not always possible to be reseated. It is important to let passengers know that you understand, you will do your best, but you cannot guarantee solutions. I think this is important in every situation. Especially when it comes to differences in culture and religion. People want to know that you have understood for their differences but I think it is also important to let them know that sometimes they are the ones that have to adapt.**

**I: Ok, hmm, and the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Hmm, well again even though this is a really weird request haha. I would show understanding just to make sure that the passenger is comfortable with me telling him that it is not possible. So "I understand that this is your religion but unfortunately I am not able to do this because bla bla...".**

**I: Is there always understanding towards staff when you have to tell a passenger no?**

**GA: Not always. But I think it depends on the manner in which you tell the passenger no. Often passengers get upset with colleagues of mine but when I explain to the passenger why and show understanding then you see them get calmer and also more understanding towards you. Passengers just want to notice that you listen and that you explore all the options instead of just telling them NO!**

**I: Oke, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and in his culture this is very normal. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Hmm, I would feel offended and very uncomfortable. It is very degrading and I think it would also be hard to explain to someone that this is not normal. I would definitely explain that this behavior is unacceptable for me and to never do that again. I think it is important to stay calm although I would find it very difficult to keep my composure with someone who I am not comfortable with. But I think it is also important to keep in mind**



**that this person really believes that this is ok behavior. So actually, you cannot really blame this person for doing this.**

**I: Ok, thank you for your answers. This was it haha.**

**GA: Glad I could help.**

**I: It is appreciated! Stay safe and stay healthy!**

**GA: Yes, you too! Bye Bye!**

**I: Bye!**

## Interview 8

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I: Hey, how are you? Thanks for Skyping!**

**SA: Hey hey, no problem. I have to mention that I do not have a lot of time so I hope I can answer all the questions.**

**I: No problem, it will not take that long. Let's see how far we can come.**

**SA: Yes, otherwise tomorrow we can continue?**

**I: Yes, no problem.**

**SA: Ok, great!**

**I: Yes, so I will quickly explain what I want to know hmm. I will present five scenarios and if you could tell me how you would handle these situations so, hmm, what you would do what you would say or even feel and think that is fine.**

**SA: Ok, I can do that.**

**I: Ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry with you because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would first try to calm the passenger down. I think it is important to stay calm myself and maybe try to make clear that I want to help. Yeah, how do you do that in this situation when the passenger doesn't even understand you? Haha, hmm. I know it sounds stupid but I always talk English with passengers who don't even speak English. I think it's just something that goes automatically because I know they don't speak Dutch so yeah English is something that automatically comes out my mouth then haha. I often hope that they understand some words and that they can try to make sense of it.**

**I: Ok and...(interrupted)**

**SA:** And also what I wanted to say, sorry, is that body language is very important in situations like these and things like hand gestures. You can make so much sense of someone's body language and even hand gestures. So it is important to really pay attention in this situation. Mostly when passengers see that you are really trying they are not even mad anymore. They can appreciate you doing your best to help them.

**I:** Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** Hmm, I actually never experience this. Maybe because I'm black too? Haha. But I would explain to them that this is not the case. I don't discriminate and I would explain why the passenger has to pay for the luggage. It is I think important to make it clear that these are the rules and that these rules are for everybody not just him.

**I:** Ok, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** Hmm, first I would show understanding for the situation and tell the passenger that I can check what is possible and that I will do my best. I'll check the system and look if it is possible to reseat him.

**I:** How do you handle the situation when it is not possible to reseat him?

**SA:** Hmm, I will have to tell him the bad news and explain to him that unfortunately I'm not able to reseat him. I can recommend checking onboard and maybe check if somebody on board is willing to switch with him or ask the cabin crew to help him with this.

**I:** Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** I would explain to the passenger that this is not possible. I can't think of anything that I could do or say in this situation to make it any better or more understanding. I would expect the passenger to adapt to this situation because that is the risk of commercial flying. It cannot be guaranteed that you are the only one using that one particular restroom during the flight.

**I: Ok, the last case because I know you have to run after this. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in his culture. How do you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is unacceptable behavior and that if he does this again there will be consequences. In situations like these or when you are in a discussion with someone who are from male dominant cultures it is very important as a woman to make it clear where your boundaries are. It is often very difficult because you don't want to insult anyone and most of the time I am very uncomfortable but I think it is important to let these men know that certain things that are accepted in their country is not accepted here.**

**I: Ok, thank you for participating.**

**SA: No worries, sorry I have to go. But if you have any questions just WhatsApp me.**

**I: I will, thank you. Bye!**

**SA: Bye!**

#### Interview 9

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

**I: Hey, thanks for Skyping. How are you?**

**GA: Hey, I'm fine. How are you? What difficult times are these huh?**

**I: Yes, but I'm doing fine and still healthy haha.**

**GA: Good. (silence...)**

**I: So, I just want to explain what I want to know from you. I will ask you questions about five cases. This can be situations you have experienced as a Gate Agent. Just tell me how you would handle the situation, what you would say, what you would do, how you may feel ok?**

**GA: Yes, ok.**

**I: Ok, so, hmm, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation? Also, you don't have to solve the situation but just take me through the process of how such an encounter proceeds.**

**GA: Ok, I would still speak English to the passenger because he or she is at an international airport.**

**I: How would you establish a level of understanding even when the passenger doesn't speak or understand English?**

**GA: I would use a combination of English and use my hands or write something down. Just in the hope that this combination something would make sense to the passenger. But also for me because I don't understand what the passenger actually wants so I am trying to figure this out as well.**

**I: How do you handle the fact that the passenger is angry?**

**GA: Well, you stay professional because you have to provide service. In the worst case, I would use modern technology and use Google translate. But if I've tried every resource I have and the communication is not successful unfortunately it is out of my hands. Then I can't help the passenger.**

**I: Ok, hmm, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Well, I would tell him that this are the rules of the airline and I would not entertain that the remarks "because I'm black". I would not go into a discussion with this passenger. Because these are just the rules that everybody has to follow.**

**I: What is the reason behind the fact that you don't entertain the passenger his or her feelings of discrimination?**

**GA: Hmm, because hmm, his expression "because I'm black" are his words not mine. It is not relevant to express my feelings on that matter.**

**I: Ok, hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: I would ask the question why he doesn't want to sit next to a woman. And if he explains this and the flight is full and I am not able to change his seat I would tell him that the only option would be to put him onto another flight. I just think that people should adapt because this is a commercial airline. Otherwise you should fly private.**

**I: Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Hmm, I would tell him that I respect his religion or culture but this request I'm not able to answer to this request. Hmm, I would explain that this is not possible because it is not common in our culture or religion. The passenger just has to adapt to this.**

**I: I can imagine you getting a lot of requests that are not common for the Dutch culture. Do you handle all the special requests the same?**

**GA: Hmm, no! It depends on the request. I mean I respect all cultures and religions don't get me wrong. But it depends on the requests. There are limits and I think people often forget that we as staff differ in culture from them. But yeah, it depends on the request.**

**I: Ok, so the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is "normal" behavior in their culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: I would feel humiliated that is one. And I would explain to him that I do not have to accept this behavior from him even though it is normal in his culture. I would have to make clear that as a western woman he has crossed a line. And there will be consequences if he doesn't change this behavior. So, even though he might think it is normal for his culture, in my culture it is not so it is unacceptable.**

**I: Would you say that push your own boundaries to make other passengers from other cultures more comfortable even though some things might make you uncomfortable?**

**GA: NO! Because it is the same that when I am in a country where they live by the law of the Islam. You know not to walk around to naked for example and you respect their culture over there. I adapt. So, for the same reason, the passenger has to adapt in the country that he is. We have to respect each other's culture so we both have to adapt and find a common ground.**

**I: Ok, thank you for participating.**

**GA: No problem, bye! Stay safe!**

**I: Bye Bye, you too!**

## Interview 10

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

**I: Hi, thanks for taking this Skype meeting.**

**CC: No problem. How can I help?**

**I: Well, I would like for you to answer some questions about five situations that you may have experienced yourself. If not that's ok as well. Just would like to know what your thoughts are on certain situations, how you would react, what you would do or say in these situations.**

**CC: Ok. (silence...)**

**I: Hmm, ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Well, first of all I think that as a cabin crew member it is important to speak other languages other than just English. I mean you don't have to be fluent but just some words in order to have the ability to help someone. It can go a long way. Communication is key especially with our job. We are there to ensure safety and to assist might something be wrong. Imagine not being to explain to someone that there is an emergency and this are the steps that need to be taken and the person doesn't even understand you haha. I speak 8 languages so I barely have any issues during flights and I have extensive knowledge of other cultures, I think haha. I think important is that you should be able to place yourself in the shoes of the passenger. What would you want from a service provider if you were in the shoes of the passenger? I think that's the question to ask.**

**I: Ok, so, hmm, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Hmm, yeah, you know "race" is a very sensitive issue. Especially in the time that we live in now. From my experience "race" is something that is used often when a passenger doesn't want to pay extra or want an upgrade. They just want something so they abuse this to actually get it. Not saying this is what all passengers do but I think as staff you have to read people a little bit. Body language is as important as actual communication through words. I can imagine someone feels discriminated when a staff member has a body language and attitude that is a bit offensive and stand-off-ish towards the passenger of color. Especially when they have noticed you interacting "normal" with someone who is**

not of color. It may also be that you don't hold everybody to the same standards and apply the rules for everybody. So, it depends on the context of the situation as well. This is important to know how to deal with the situation. Because if these things did not occur, I think it is not even necessary to acknowledge the persons feelings on being discriminated. Because that's not the problem here. Do you get what I'm saying? So, it really depends on I would say other things that happened around the situations which will then help you decide how to approach the situation.

I: Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of his religious background he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Hmm, I just recently experienced a group of Orthodox Jewish passengers. I must say religion and culture play a big part in someone's attitude towards you but also characteristics. Some Orthodox Jewish passengers are very like "no we don't talk to women and we don't want to sit next to them and we don't want to be served by women". But some don't have a problem with these things at all. So, it depends. What I recently experienced is that the group of Orthodox Jewish passengers came on board. I told them at the beginning of the service that we don't have Kosher snacks and meals on board. I offered them some water because this was actually the only thing they could have. So, they were very understanding and happy that I offered them some water. The same for Muslim passengers when the chicken is not Halal, I just mention it immediately and they are so understanding and I offered them other options like peanuts and cookies. You know they were happy because they get the feeling that you understand their culture and you think about them.

I: Hmm, ok, another case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Hmm, Yeah, again communication is key. Try to explain as much as possible that you have understanding but also tell a passenger the reasons why you are not able to do something.

I: And the last case, a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is seen as something normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?

**CC:** Hmm, yeah I think experience with difficult situations can help you deal with other difficult situations. A common reaction would be to be angry at a passenger and of course this behavior is unacceptable. But we also have to keep in mind that we work with so many different cultures. We have to be aware that what is normal and acceptable for us doesn't have to be for the passenger. But besides experiences, I think it is the personal characteristics that are also important. Is someone able to adapt to certain situations. Are they able to place themselves in the shoes of the passenger? Of course, we work for a western airline company and some people will keep this point of view for every situation. So, yeah, I would say in this case hold my composure and try to think that the passenger doesn't even know he is doing something wrong. Just try to make him aware of his mistake and that he shouldn't do it again.

**I:** Ok, I want to thank you for your insight on things.

**CC:** Glad I could help. Bye!

**I:** Bye have a nice day.

#### Interview 11

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I:** Hi there, thank you for wanting to answer some questions.

**SA:** Hey, No problem!

**I:** Ok, let's get started right away. So, I will just present different situations to you and I would like to know from you how you would handle these situations, what you think or feel, what you would say, why you would have a certain approach to things.

**SA:** Ok.

**I:** So, hmm, the first case. Hmm, so, a French passenger refuses to speak English or he doesn't understand it nor speak it. He gets angry because he is not able to communicate with you because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** Hmm, what I often do is try to communicate in English but then I would use my hands or maybe right something down just to see maybe it will help in understanding each other. I often seek help from colleagues. But if they don't speak the language as well I have to try to help the passenger. Often passengers try to speak with their hands as well so I try to focus on what they might mean.



**I: And how do you feel about this? Is it a risk that you might interpret his expressions the wrong way and make the situation even worse?**

**SA: Yes, it is often stressful. Hmm, stressful in the sense that I want to help the passenger but he is mad and then I want to help him even more because I don't want him to be mad anymore. But also sort of scared to do or say the wrong thing or like send him to the wrong gate which will make it even worse haha. Yeah, often I'm like what should I do?!**

**I: The next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would stick to the script. "Sir these are the rules, everybody has to follow the rules". It is challenging to not react to everything a passengers says to you but when you go into a discussion with them it can be a "he said, she said" type of situation and that is not the issue at hand. The fact is the luggage is too heavy, so the passenger needs to pay.**

**I: Ok, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: So, I would do my best to reseat him. But I would tell the passenger that this may not be possible so he has to take that into account as well.**

**I: The next case hmm, a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, haha this one is a bit strange. But I would just tell the passenger that this is not possible. Because we have to provide service to other passengers as well.**

**I: Ok, and the last case. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is very normal in the passenger's culture he doesn't know that he is doing something wrong. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this behavior is really unacceptable and that the passenger shouldn't do this ever again. I do not accept this behavior. And I would really make it clear.**

**I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.**

**SA: Yes, no problem. Hope you are holding up ok during this time.**

**I: Yes, I'm managing. Stay safe and stay healthy!**

**SA: You too, bye bye!**

**I: Bye!**

## Interview 12

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

**I: Hi there, thanks for Skyping. How are you?**

**TA: I'm fine. How are you?**

**I: I'm fine, thank you (silence...)**

**I: So, I would like to ask you some questions. I want to know how you would handle certain situations and what you would say or do or how you would think in certain situations. Maybe you have a particular reason for doing things a certain way. So (silence...)**

**TA: Yes, that's fine.**

**I: Ok, hmm, so, I will give you five cases and ask you what you would do.**

**TA: Ok.**

**I: Hmm, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How do you handle the situation?**

**TA: It depends on the context of the situations you know other factors that may play a role. As a Ticket Agent I deal with passengers who have missed their flight, their flight got cancelled or their flight is delayed. So, of course all passengers are different and every passenger has another story. But most of the time passengers are already irritated, angry, disappointed or sad. Most of the time when I have to deal with French passengers at the desk and for example, their flight got cancelled they expect you to give them A1 service. Of course, this is the ultimate goal to keep the passenger happy but this is not always possible. They demand so many things from you that I often think to myself these things are not even reasonable. In this case when someone refuses to speak the language but is able to speak the language then I would most likely continue to speak English.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and they feel like they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**TA:** Hmm, I would explain that this is absolutely not the case. And I would explain that these are the rules of the company. I think really explain how the pricing works just to make it more understandable for the passenger. I would never offend another culture, or at least not on purpose. So, yeah, I also think that staff who works with a lot of different cultures should be aware of what they say, how they say it, when they say it.

**I:** Do you think that one should have extensive knowledge of other cultures and be able to speak different languages besides English in order to provide good service?

**TA:** Hmm, well I think that having some knowledge on other cultures is a plus. It can help in certain situations to know something about the culture you know what to say, what to do, what to expect. But I think it is also someone's characteristics that plays a role too. Because maybe you have a lot of knowledge about a culture but if you choose not to apply this knowledge in real life situations, you are the problem!

**I:** Ok, so, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

**TA:** Hmm, I would reseat this passenger. Or even just do my best to look for options. If I am not able to reseat him I would leave a comment in the system for the Gate Agent so that my colleagues can have a look at the gate.

**I:** When a passenger has a request because of religious reasons like this, do you always give in to such request?

**TA:** Hmm, I think so yes. Because I try to be understanding and I also want passengers to have a pleasant flight regardless of religion and culture. So, yeah, if like in this case the passenger does not want to sit next to a woman then who am I to say "no you have to sit next to a woman"?

**I:** Ok, then what would you do in a situation when a passenger demands the toilets to be cleaned after every visit because his religion demands clean toilets at all times?

**TA:** Haha, ok, then I want to change my previous answer. I think I would want to add that it depends on the request. But not even because I don't want to clean toilets all day. I also have to take into account if the request is reasonable. I don't think my boss would be very happy with me cleaning toilets all day and not helping other passengers.

**I: Haha, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Hmm, I would probably tell the passenger that this behavior is not acceptable. I would explain to him how things work here in this country. That behavior like that is not accepted here.**

**I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.**

**TA: No problem. Bye!**

**I: Bye Bye!**

### Interview 13

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

**I: Hi there, Thank you for Skyping.**

**CC: Of course!**

**I: So, I want to ask you some questions and just tell me how you feel about certain situations, what you think, what you would do and why you would do it this way and what you would say.**

**CC: Ok, sure.**

**I: So, the first case. A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Hmm, I would calm the passenger down by trying to make clear that I am here to help. Even if I don't speak the language.**

**I: Can you give a little more detail about how you are going to make this clear?**

**CC: Hmm, I would use hand gestures or write things down maybe. I would keep on talking English in the hopes that it will help the situation. If this doesn't work I would ask a colleague or another passenger to translate.**

**I: Ok, hmm, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: I would ask the passenger why they think that I'm discriminating them. Maybe this can be a learning moment for me. Is it something that I did or said? Or maybe I expressed**

myself wrong? I would love to know how a passenger came to the conclusion that he has to pay for his luggage because he is black.

I: Do you expect an answer to this question that indeed educational for you?

CC: Hmm, that is a good question. I actually don't know what to expect. I would think the passenger can tell me that I am discriminating because of something I did. This would give me the opportunity to apologize and tell the passenger that this was not my intention.

I: Hmm, ok. The next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Hmm, I think I would do my best to switch seats with other passengers. But this can be difficult when it's a full flight. I think it is important to show that you do your best for the passenger but there is always a possibility that you might fail to change the seats for example.

I: Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all time. How would you handle this situation?

CC: I have experienced a lot of "weird" requests and often I just have to disappoint people by telling them that it is not possible. I just make sure that I make them feel comfortable and not feel ashamed that they have asked me something. So, I just try to be understanding and not let them know that it is maybe because I wouldn't want to clean toilets all day. And to be fair this request wouldn't even be possible because you have to guarantee safety onboard and I can't do that cleaning toilets the entire flight.

I: As you get "weird" request often, how do you handle uncomfortable situations? Let's say a passenger hits you on the buttocks because in his culture this is totally normal. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Hmm, I think just make clear where your boundaries are. You are human as well. You don't have to accept everyone's behavior just because it's their culture and you have to provide service. Just like you have to be understanding they have to be understanding of your situation as well. Because in order to provide good quality service you have to be comfortable as well.

I: Thank you so much. That were all the cases.

**CC: Thanks. This was fun.**

**I: Ok, well if I have any other questions can I contact you again?**

**CC: Sure!**

**I: Ok, bye have a nice day.**

**CC: Have a nice day.**

#### Interview 14

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

**I: Hi, hope you are doing well. Thanks for Skyping.**

**GA: No problem. What can I help you with?**

**I: I just need some questions to be answered haha. I want to know what you would do, think, say, feel in certain situations and why perhaps.**

**GA: Ok, hmm...**

**I: Yeah, so I will just present a case, a situation and then you just tell me what you would do or say or how you would feel about it.**

**GA: Ok.**

**I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Hmm, I think in all situations where language is an issue I just try to use my hands to communicate. Sometimes I write things down or I ask a colleague if they can help. But if I see that the communication really isn't going anywhere I have to stop the communication unfortunately.**

**I: And how do you stop the communication?**

**GA: Yeah, hmm, I think body language? Hand gestures again? Sometimes I just don't give the attention to the passenger anymore to make it clear. I know it sounds harsh, but especially at the gate and you are very busy and working under time pressure you don't always have the time to communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color who has to pay for their too heavy luggage feels discriminated. The passenger feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**GA:** Oh, ugh, I don't even give attention to that statement anymore. I just make it clear that they have to pay for the luggage or they will be removed from the flight. I just can't understand that people link "race" to having to pay for their luggage.

**I:** Do you find it stressful that passengers might get the wrong idea and maybe, in this case, see you as somebody that is discriminating?

**GA:** Hmm, sometimes. But I think that the experiences that I have I can easier let things go and try not to think about it as much. I don't go home with my work so to speak. In situations where things got very escalated and sometimes passengers call you names it can hurt. And it is stressful sometimes that certain things always has to be a discussion with people. You get tired of discussing things with people. But I've learned not to be bothered of people's opinion about me that much anymore.

**I:** Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to woman. How would you handle this situation?

**GA:** Hmm, I would try and see in the system if it is possible to change the seats. But if I'm not able to change the seat then I would ask the cabin crew if they can help the passenger on board. But if they are not able to fix it then the passenger has to accept the fact that this is what it is.

**I:** The next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?

**GA:** It is of course important to show understanding for everyone's culture and religion. However, some things are really not possible. A passenger needs to understand that we are a western airline. So, we do things differently here.

**I:** And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks because in his culture this is normal behavior. How would you handle this situation?

**GA:** Oh, no! Some things really go too far. It is like passengers from India expect to be carried or brought to the gate and you have to carry their bags. Because of their caste system they feel like when they are carried or brought to the gates they are from a higher rank in their society. But it just doesn't work like that here. I am not here to carry bags because your culture says it's normal to do so. The same for this case, I think. I am not

here to accepting everything you think is normal just because your culture says so. There are boundaries. It is important to let these people know what the boundaries are. Keep your hands to yourself!

I: Thank you for your answers.

GA: Yes, no problem.

I: Yes, have a nice day and stay safe!

GA: Thank you, bye!

#### Interview 15

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

I: Hey thank you for Skyping.

SA: Yes, of course.

I: So, I would really like to know what you think of certain situations. So, how you feel, what you would do and say and why you would choose a particular approach towards certain situations.

SA: Ok (silence...)

I: So, to start, a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?

SA: I would continue to speak in English maybe throw a little Spanish in there haha. And use hand gestures to make sense of it all. I think if the communication is not successful at the gate and my colleagues don't know to speak the language then I would send him to someone higher up. Maybe a shift leader? Or I would send the passenger to the service desk, the transfer desk. I would assume that if I try to help the passenger that the passenger would at least be happy about it or thankful or something and not be mad. But if all these options don't work I would have to tell him to ask his question on board of the flight. You know at some point you have to send the passenger away and just accept the fact that this communication attempt was a big fail haha. Because there is only so much you can do and you don't have all day to do it so.

I: So, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?



**SA:** Hmm, I just stay to the issue. I would tell the passenger what the rules are and how policy works and that it has nothing to do with "race". I get tired to always have to explain myself. Not everything it about "race", religion or culture. These are rules, there are policies people just stick to it. Just follow these policies. My work would be so much more fun I could focus more on the passenger then focusing on defending myself all of the time. Often, I also seek support or some sort of back up from colleagues in these situations. From somebody who has a higher function then me. More to show that see a supervisor says the same thing so I am not discriminating.

**I:** The next case, an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** Hmm, yes, I would check in the system if this is possible to reseat. But most of the times I tell the passengers to check on board or to ask the cabin staff. Because, well not now with Corona virus, but before flight were almost always full. It is hard to change seats because passengers also pay for their preferred seats. And this is still a commercial airline. We want to make money as well. So, we cannot switch a paid seat for a passenger who has an issue because of their culture.

**I:** A passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in the order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situations?

**SA:** I would tell the passenger that this is not possible. People really think of the craziest things. I would tell the passenger that I have other responsibilities on the job so I cannot be cleaning toilets all day. The passenger just has to adapt to the environment.

**I:** And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is something that is very normal in their culture. How would you handle this situation?

**SA:** Wow, I would report it. I think if the passenger does it to me he can also do it on a nine-hour flight. Which can cause for bigger problems I think because cabin crew can feel really uncomfortable. I would make it clear that this behavior is really unacceptable.

**I:** Ok, thank you.

**SA:** No problem. Bye!

**I:** Bye, have a nice day!

## Interview 16

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

<b>I: Hi, how are you? Thanks for Skyping!</b>
<b>TA: Hey, no problem. Glad I can help.</b>
<b>I: Yes, so I would like to know what you would do in certain situations. I will present five cases to you and then you can answer some questions.</b>
<b>TA: Ok, no problem.</b>
<b>I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situations?</b>
<b>TA: Hmm, French can be very difficult when it comes to speaking English. Even though I don't speak French I still will do my best to communicate with the passenger. I would try to help the passenger so that he can calm down.</b>
<b>I: Do you find it stressful to communicate when there is a language barrier and the passenger is angry?</b>
<b>TA: Yes, I feel a lot of pressure sometimes. Because when the communication is challenging you cannot always solve the issue. And that is stressful.</b>
<b>I: The second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?</b>
<b>TA: I would explain to him that this is not the case. It is hard to convince someone that you are not doing something when they are entitled to their own feelings and opinions. But I would explain to the passenger that these are the rules.</b>
<b>I: The third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demand to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?</b>
<b>TA: Hmm, I would check the system to see if it is possible to reseat the passenger. But I would make the passenger aware that this is not always possible. If I am not able to solve the situation I will send him to the gate and ask at the gate what the options are. At the transfer desk I am not always able to change seating because the Gate Agent has the last word about this matter.</b>

**I: The next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that I am not able to clean the restrooms after every visit.**

**I: How do you expect the passenger to react to this?**

**TA: I expect him to understand and that he has to accept the situation as it is.**

**I: Ok, the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be normal behavior in his culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: I would tell this passenger that this behavior is unacceptable. And that he must not do this anymore.**

**I: Ok, thank you for participating.**

**TA: Your welcome. Bye Bye!**

**I: Bye!**

#### Interview 17

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I: Hey hey, thanks for Skyping! How are you?**

**SA: I'm fine, thanks. How are you?**

**I: I'm fine. Hmm, so shall we get started? I will just explain what we're going to do...**

**SA: Yes, let's get started.**

**I: So, hmm, I want to know some things from you haha. Hmm, I will present five cases to you and I just want to know from you what you would do in these situations, what you think or feel or say and why.**

**SA: Ok.**

**I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, how would I handle this situation? Hmm... I would try to calm the passenger down although I would continue to speak English just because I wouldn't know what else to speak. I would also use hand gestures in the hopes that the passenger could understand me and see that I'm trying to help him.**

**I: Does it take a lot of time to communicate with passengers in these cases?**

**SA: Hmm, yes, you have to have patience. And it can be irritating sometimes, frustrating, because you are trying to help somebody but the other person doesn't understand you. So, you feel like you are not doing your job correct. But often I cut people off really quickly. Because often it takes a long time and you have to make a decision that you are not able to help the passenger.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, in situations like these I try to explain to the passenger what the rules are. I try to explain that the rules are for everybody.**

**I: Is there a reason why you don't address the passengers' feelings of discrimination?**

**SA: I think that when I explain the rules and just explain that I'm just following the policy of the company I want to make it clear that this is not discrimination.**

**I: So, hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would check the system if there is a possibility to change seats. If not, I would tell the passenger to ask the cabin crew on board.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Haha, hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is not possible.**

**I: And what happens when the passenger reacts to this answer in an unexpected way? Like get angry or upset...**

**SA: Hmm, yeah, I don't know I would just explain that I am not going to do this. Because I'm not going to or able to clean the restrooms all day. That is just unrealistic.**

**I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be normal behavior in the passenger's culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would feel really weird about it. And get really mad I think because I wouldn't accept this behavior at all. I wouldn't let anybody touch me like that. I would probably call security.**

**I: Would you give any consideration to the fact that this is normal in the culture of the passenger?**

**SA: No because the passenger has to adapt. There are things normal here in the Netherlands that you would get jail time for in other countries for example. You have to be considered of the rules and the culture of the country you are in.**

**I: Ok, thank you for your answers. Have a good day! Bye!**

**SA: Bye.**

#### Interview 18

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

**I: Hi there, thank you for this interview.**

**CC: Hey, no problem.**

**I: Ok. So, I will ask you five cases and I want to know what you would do or say or think or feel in these situations.**

**CC: Ok, I will do my best. Haha.**

**I: Ok, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Hmm, often in situations like this there are lovely passengers in the plane that help to translate. Or my colleagues help translate. There is always somebody to help. Or at least in my case haha. But often I try to use hand gestures and I pay attention to someone's body language and really focus on what a person could want. Often you know what they want. I think it is something that I've learned along the years. You just know...**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has a pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel like they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Hmm, I would definitely acknowledge the passengers feelings however, I also think it is important that when you try to get your point across you explain why you do what you do even though it may seem as if this is discrimination, in this case. Not just say "it is not because you are black, you have to pay!". I think the lack of communication in cases like these make the situation even worse. Often you want passengers to go away fast haha,**

just so you don't have to deal with them any longer than you have to. But sometimes a good conversation is also important.

I: Ok, hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Important here is to show understanding for his situation. Although sometimes these passengers can come off as arrogant and that they expect you to make this happen like they are entitled. But I can also imagine for a woman sitting next to an Orthodox Jewish male passenger feeling uncomfortable because probably she also knows that they are not allowed to sit next to women. So, you do your best to switch seats. And when it is a full flight passengers are always willing to switch for such a passenger because they show understanding as well. You just hope that when these passengers are reseated they show gratitude. Because that is what you do it for that you are recognized for your work.

I: When a passenger doesn't show gratitude or doesn't recognize your hard work. How does that make you feel? Or what do you do?

CC: It makes me feel angry maybe? I don't want to go that extra mile for the passenger. I'm just like "zoek het uit" haha.

I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?

CC: Well, haha, I get stranger requests all the time. In this case I would tell the passenger that this is not possible because if there is a plane full of people I would be cleaning the restroom the entire flight. This is not realistic. Also, I have to make sure that everything is safe. You have to oversee everything on the flight and provide service to all the passengers. So, if I'm cleaning toilets all day I'm not able to do my job correctly. I think it is important to respectfully explain that although you care about the passenger's religion or culture you are not always able to say yes to a request.

I: Hmm, ok, so, the next case is... a passenger hits you on the buttocks and in his culture this is very normal behavior. You know in the passenger's culture they treat women very degrading. How would you handle this situation?

**CC:** Haha, hmm, this makes me think of an experience of my own. A male passenger once told me my bum looks very nice in my uniform. I felt uncomfortable on the entire flight and I didn't even say anything, I just laughed and kept it moving. But I remember being so uncomfortable when walking past him because I taught "my God, is he looking at me? What is he thinking? Is he going to touch me?" Thinking of this situation now, I think it definitely helped me to stand up for myself now in uncomfortable situations. You know, I let people know where my boundaries are really quick. I think it is important to do so because when you are uncomfortable you are not able to do your job believe me. And I think people can learn from each other. Just tell somebody what is acceptable here and what is not. It can save that person a lot of trouble I guess so yeah...

**I:** Thank you for your story. Well, these were all the questions I have.

**CC:** You're welcome. Have a nice day.

**I:** You too, bye!

#### Interview 19

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

**I:** Hey, thank you for Skyping with me.

**GA:** No problem, what are we doing today tell me haha.

**I:** Hmm, well... haha. I just want to ask you some questions. I will present five cases in total to you and I would like to know from you how you would handle these situations. Please tell me how you would feel, what you would do and say and why maybe. Give me some insights.

**GA:** Ok, I can do that.

**I:** Ok, good. Haha. So, hmm, the first case is a French passenger doesn't speak English, the passenger refuses to speak English. The passenger is angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

**GA:** Oh, don't get me started on these people! Haha. Back in the day I would really try to everything in my power to help these people but with the years you are just quickly done with these people. This is an international airport. If you don't speak English then this is your problem I think. When these people go to America, do they speak French there? They should speak English!

**I: Ok, so we move on to the next case. A passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because “they are black”. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: I experience this a lot as well. I always tell these passengers “sir, these are the rules and you just have to deal with it”. I don’t have time to go into a discussion. Passengers often use this as an excuse just so they think they don’t have to pay. So, sir just pay and we can move on with our lives haha.**

**I: Hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him. Because of religious reasons this passenger is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Hmm, I often check the system if there are seats available. But if it’s a full flight I tell the passenger that it is not possible. Hmm, I feel like we cannot take every little rule of every religion or culture into account. So, I do what I can but a full flight is a full flight.**

**I: Do passengers express disappointment in cases like these? Do they get angry for example when you are not able to give them another seat?**

**GA: Yes, of course. But it is what it is. We don’t have a male flights. That is something these passengers have to keep in mind when they book with a commercial airline. I just don’t pay that much attention when they get angry about such things. I just tell them to ask a passenger on board themselves. There is nothing that I can do about it.**

**I: Ok, so, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for this passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: Haha, if a passenger would ask me this I would just look at them and laugh. How can someone really expect from you to do this. Passengers really expect you to be their private assistant. I think it’s crazy.**

**I: Ok, the last case hmm, a passenger hits you on the buttocks and behavior like this is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**GA: This passenger would have a problem. I don’t accept behavior like this. I would definitely let him know that this is unacceptable. It is not ok to make people feel uncomfortable and just touch them. If we have to have respect for you then you have to**



**have respect for us. It could be that I would cancel this passenger's acceptance onto the flight. Because if he can do it to me, he can do it to my colleagues as well. Unacceptable!**

**I: Ok, that were all the cases. Thank you so much!**

**GA: No problem, glad I could help.**

**I: Stay safe and have a nice day!**

**GA: You too, bye bye!**

## Interview 20

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent (former intern)

**I: Hi, how are you?**

**SA: I'm fine. How are you? I hope you can hear me ok. I had some technical difficulties earlier.**

**I: Yes! I can hear you. Hmm, I would like to ask you some questions.**

**SA: Sure, ask away.**

**I: Hmm, so, I am going to present to you five cases, five situations. And just tell me how you feel about these situations, what you think, what you would do to handle this situations and say and why.**

**SA: Ok.**

**I: So, the first case is a French passenger, refuses to speak English, and the passenger is angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would ask around if someone can speak French and would like to help me. If not, I don't really feel bad if that person is unable to speak English and is mad about me not being able to speak French. I think you should be able to speak English because this is an international language.**

**I: How does the interaction continue? Or does it stop immediately after you couldn't find anybody to translate?**

**SA: Hmm, yeah it stops immediately after. I mean I cannot communicate with you if you don't speak English. So, I just nod my head and I think passengers understand that I don't speak the language so they walk away.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: As a woman of color I wouldn't really feel a type a way, I will just make sure that it is done that the passenger pays for the luggage. It is either that or the passenger will be kicked off the flight so it's their choice.**

**I: Hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands his seat to be changed because he is not allowed to sit next to a woman because of religious reasons. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I will try to replace myself in their shoe and show some understanding and compassion and see if I'm able to swap him.**

**I: What happens if you're not able to do it?**

**SA: I will have to tell the passenger the bad news. I will explain to him that I was not able to change the seats because of whatever reason. He can try it on board and ask someone to swap with him. But other than that there is nothing that I can do for him.**

**I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restrooms to be cleaned after every visit. Because of religious reasons the restrooms have to be clean at all times otherwise they are not able to use the restroom during the flight. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I would explain to them that we have other more important responsibilities and they should have considered this before flying. We cannot do everything and passengers should think about every scenario that will hinder their religion, the rules or their culture before they book a flight.**

**I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. This behavior is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I will feel angry, as I find it very disrespectful. You can't just be touching people inappropriately.**

**I: Would you say something to the passenger? Would you express yourself and your feelings about this situation?**

**SA: I would definitely express my feelings about this situation. And tell the passenger that this is unacceptable. I just hope that the passenger realizes that this is a serious matter and not just look at me like he doesn't know what I'm talking about.**

**I: Ok, thank you for participating. Have a nice day. Bye!**

**SA: No worries. You too.**

**I: Bye.**

## Interview 21

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

**I: Hey, how are you? Thanks for taking your time to answer some questions.**

**SA: Hey, of course! No problem.**

**I: So, hmm, I just want to ask you some questions about maybe situations that you have experienced yourself. And I just want to know how you would handle these situations, how you would feel, think, say and maybe why.**

**SA: Ok.**

**I: Yeah, so, hmm, in total there are five cases or situations so hmm, I will just read them one by one and ask you how you would handle these situations.**

**SA: Ok.**

**I: Ok, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, is angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm (silence...)**

**I: It can be that this passenger wants to ask a question, maybe is in a hurry and is irritated that they are not able to communicate with you in their native language.**

**SA: Hmm, yeah I always stay calm when passengers get angry. I think it is important to show that you are listening and willing to help. So, I stay calm and try to calm the passenger down. In this case I would maybe use google translate or ask a colleague if they understand and can help translate.**

**I: What if you don't have these tools and the conversation still doesn't go into the right direction? So, you are not able to answer the passenger's question because of the language barrier?**

**SA: Hmm, yeah then I often direct them to a transfer desk. Then I just can't help the passenger so there is nothing left to do. Maybe there is someone at the transfer desks who does understand the passenger.**

**I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because “their black”. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I would tell them and explain to them that this is not the case. It has nothing to do with “race”. I would also explain that these rules are for everybody. If the passenger stays angry I would send him to another colleague at another check-in desk just to prove that everybody maintains the same rules.**

**I: The next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because he is seated next to a woman on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I would do my best to change the seat and respect that he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. If I’m not able to change his seat, I would direct him either to the gate, transfer desk or to the cabin crew on the flight so that they can check for possibilities. Often the flight is very full and people often pay for seats so I’m not always able to change seats for passengers.**

**I: Hmm, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restrooms to be cleaned after every visit of other passengers. Because of religious reasons the passenger can only use the restroom if it has been cleaned. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: Hmm, I would check for a cleaner and see whether the cleaner can clean the toilet once more. But during a flight I don’t think it’s possible to clean after every passenger. So, I guess the passenger has to accept that this is something that is not possible.**

**I: It is often that you have to turn down requests and how does that make you feel? How do you deal with rejection?**

**SA: Hmm, yes I get requests often. It doesn’t have to be anything religion or culture related. But I deal with rejection pretty well. Let’s say I’m not afraid to tell the passenger no as long as I have a good reason for it. I always look for options to solve a passenger’s problem. But passengers also have to realize that we can’t do everything at the airport.**

**I: Ok, so, we’re at the last case. A passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**SA: I would make it clear I don’t want to be touched despite it being normal in his culture. That is unacceptable. If this happens again I would cancel the acceptance of the passenger**

**on that flight and he would not be able to travel until he is able to behave according to the rules here in the Netherlands.**

**I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time again.**

**SA: Yes, no problem. Have a nice day.**

**I: Bye.**

## Interview 22

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

**I: Hey there!**

**CC: Hey!**

**I: Thank you for Skyping. I hope all is well.**

**CC: Yes, all is well!**

**I: So, I will directly jump to the case. I want to ask you some questions.**

**CC: Of course, go ahead.**

**I: So, I will ask you some questions about situations. And I would like to know how you feel and what you would do or say and why.**

**CC: Ok.**

**I: Yeah, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Well, I'm always willing to help but don't get angry when you are the one who is not able to speak an international language. But besides that haha, I would use my hands, write things down, ask my colleagues or other passengers if they could help me translate.**

**I: Ok, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Hmm, just stick to the facts. There needs to be a payment because of the luggage that is too heavy and not give attention to statements that are not true. I think it will be a long discussion and that is discussion which you don't have time for nor will it solve the problem which is a too heavy luggage.**

**I: Ok, so the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Demand? On my flight? No, No. You ask polite and I can see if there is something that I can do for you. But the passenger must know that I can do my best but if there are no empty seats available and no one wants to switch seats than there is nothing I can do for this passenger.**

**I: Hmm, ok, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: I would tell the passenger that this is not possible. And also explain why this is not possible. But my reaction also depends on how the passenger asks something. There should be mutual respect. I know passengers have their culture and religion and everything but sometimes passengers think that I'm obligated to do whatever their religion or culture says.**

**I: Ok, so the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And this is totally normal in their culture. So, how would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Haha, I would tell him I'm married. No but everybody should keep their hands to themselves. And I can imagine female colleagues of mine would feel really offended and I think that is totally unacceptable behavior. So, I would tell the passenger that this is unacceptable and not to do this ever again. At least when he is out of his own country.**

**I: I want to thank you for participating!**

**CC: No problem. I hope everything works out well for you.**

**I: Thank you. Bye!**

**CC: Bye!**

## Interview 23

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

**I: Hey hey, thank you for Skyping with me.**

**CC: No problem.**

**I:** Hmm, so let's get started. I want to ask you some questions about certain situations that might have happened to you at work or sound familiar. And I would like to know how you would handle these situations, how you feel, what you would say etcetera.

**CC:** Ok.

**I:** So, let's get started with the first case. Hmm, a French passenger refuses to speak English and gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

**CC:** Hmm, it depends on the situation. I don't think it's reasonable if a passenger gets angry because you don't speak their language. I can understand when you have had a long flight and still have a long way to get to your final destination, or maybe you're late to your own wedding because of delays you get angry when you have questions that can't be answered because of a language barrier. Simply because it just gets too much. I think it is important as a staff member that you are able to identify the frustration of the passenger and make them feel as if you have compassion for their situation rather than just reacting in the same way they react towards you. So, try to identify why the person is angry even if you don't speak the same language. Hand gestures, colleagues, passengers who can translate. Even Google, it's all there.

**I:** Do you think that airline staff should be able to speak different languages besides English in order to provide good service?

**CC:** No, it can definitely help of course. But I don't think it should be necessary. English that's the main language and if passengers don't understand English I think character comes into play at that point. It's not needed to speak the same language for someone to understand that you are willing to help, or that you are sad for somebody, or happy for somebody, trying to listen to somebody. If passengers see that you are trying to make a way for them to understand you, what you are saying or what they are trying to say that is enough. I don't think it's the final service that's important. Of course, it's not totally irrelevant. But trying to provide good service that is what sticks with people the most.

**I:** Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?

**CC:** Hmm, I would try to explain why the passenger has to pay. So, the rules and how much per kilogram a passenger has to pay. I hope that by explaining this the passenger can understand that this has nothing to do with "race" but this is just following the rules.

**I:** Hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

**CC:** I have experienced this a lot. I just always try to do my best to reseat the passenger. I think it is important that you have respect for everybody's culture or religion. But I think you have to explain to the passenger that although you respect the culture or the religion it is not always possible to do the things that their culture or religion requires. You know we deal with full flights, well not know haha, but before Corona.

**I:** Do you think that airline staff should have extensive knowledge on different cultures or religions in order to provide good service?

**CC:** Yes, I think we should indeed know a lot about certain cultures and religions. Just due to the fact that our environment is full of different cultures. Some cultures find pointing highly offensive. Imagine not knowing this and being on a plane and just pointing your life away haha. I mean, knowledge about cultures and religions can also prevent so much trouble for yourself. Because people of certain cultures can get really mad when they feel like you are disrespecting their culture even if you are not aware of it.

**I:** And does everybody at the airline have access to tools where they can learn about different cultures and religions?

**CC:** I don't think we have all the tools because we don't get trained on different cultures or religions. It's focused on the service, smile, be polite and the most important thing is safety. So, I think it is kind of our own responsibility to gain knowledge on that part. But I think we have the majority of the tools and experience to gain knowledge on our own. But I often think that we don't want to put this knowledge and tools to use haha. Because sometimes when having an annoying passenger or a disrespectful passenger that does create the feeling that you wouldn't want to do everything possible to help them. You would just send them to another colleague or just leave it alone haha.



**I: Another case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use I order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**CC: Yeah, I would again really make sure that I show understanding for one's religion or culture but also explain that because of safety reasons I am not able or my colleagues are not able to clean the restroom the entire flight. So that the passenger also understand that we as a cabin crew have good reasons not to do something for the passenger.**

**I: Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And in his religion it's a normal thing. Normal behavior. How you would you handle this situation?**

**CC: I would be shocked. I wouldn't expect that someone would actually touch me.**

**I: Would it be harder in this case to stay polite because this is a very uncomfortable situation?**

**CC: Yeah, I honestly think it's normal for me to say now oh yeah, I would handle this a certain manner. But it is really hard to tell what you would actually do in situations like these because they take you by surprise. So, I would now say that I would try to tell the passenger that he is overstepping a boundary. And although it's his culture I would want to explain that in my culture this is not acceptable. So, we have to be respectful of each other's culture.**

**I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.**

**CC: No problem. Hope this is enough information.**

**I: Yes, definitely. Thank you. Have a nice day. Bye.**

**CC: Bye bye.**

## Interview 24

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

**I: Hi, how are you? Thanks for joining me on Skype.**

**TA: No problem.**

**I: So, I would like to ask some questions. I just want to know in situations what you would do to handle these situations, how you would feel, say and why.**

**TA: Ok...**

**I: Ok, so let's start with the first case. A French passenger refuses to speak English. This passenger gets upset or angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Hmm, if the passenger wants to get angry about such a thing I'm not helping the passenger anymore. Because I'm not wrong and only want to help the passenger. So, if the passenger does not give me a chance to help then that's his problem.**

**I: Ok, the next case hmm, a passenger of color is angry because he has to pay for his too heavy luggage. He thinks he has to pay for his luggage because he is "black". How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: If that is what he thinks he should keep thinking that. I'm just here to follow the rules and he has to follow the rules. So, the passenger should pay or not fly simple. I'm not going back and forth with a passenger because he thinks something.**

**I: Hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Hmm, so, hmm, I would explain to him that I can check but if it's not possible there is nothing I can do about it. That is the risk of flying and the passenger has to accept this. Maybe somebody wants to switch on board with him. But I hate it when passengers demands all kinds of things but they don't understand that they have to consider these things before flying. We have men and women on board.**

**I: Hmm, ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Haha, people are crazy. I would tell this passenger that this is not possible.**

**I: Would you give an explanation on why this is not possible? Or offer options for a possible solution?**

**TA: Hmm, yeah, what can you say? No sir I am not hired to clean toilets. Haha. Sometimes it's best to just say no and not give explanation because you will hurt somebody's feelings.**

**I: Ok, hmm, the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And this is normal in their culture. How would you handle this situation?**

**TA: Haha, well I don't think that somebody would hit me on the buttocks. I would give him the business.**

**I: Haha, perhaps if you would see that he hits a colleague on the buttocks. How would you handle that situation?**

**TA: Hmm, this depends whether or not my colleague needs my help to say something about it. But if not, I would definitely say something. Such behavior is just unacceptable. He would have a big problem with me. And if he doesn't apologize, he would be kicked off the flight. No questions asked.**

**I: Ok, that were all the cases. Thank you for your answers.**

**TA: Yes! No problem.**

**I: Bye bye.**

**TA: Bye! Stay safe!**

## Appendix 6 Questionnaire Script

This questionnaire presents different cases. Please fill in the manner in which service has been provided in these or similar cases and please express the expectancy rate of this service.

1. Gender (drop down options):
  - Male
  - Female
  - Both
2. Age (open option):
3. Country of birth mother (open option):
4. Country of birth father (open option):
5. Your country of birth (open option):
6. How often have you flown with KLM? (drop down options):
  - This is the first time
  - 2 – 10 times
  - 11 – 20 times
  - 21 – 30 times
  - 31 – 40 times
  - 41 – 50 times
  - More than 50

1. Have you been in a situation where you had to communicate with an KLM staff member but there was no language in which you and the staff member could communicate?

**\* Never, Once, Several times**

In case of once or several times - How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred)

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

1\_1• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member stayed calm

1\_2• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member calmed me down

1\_3• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me

1\_4• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member continued to speak in a language I did not understand

1\_5• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member wrote notes to me

1\_6• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted colleagues for assistance

1\_7• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted other passengers for assistance

1\_8• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all

1.9 How did you experience this service?

**3-point Likert scale: Worse than expected - Just as expected - Better than expected**

2.1 Was there a particular situation with a KLM staff member in which you felt discriminated against?

**\* Never, Once, Several times**

In case of once or several - How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred)

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

2\_1• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not acknowledge my feelings of discrimination

2\_2• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided extensive knowledge on company policies

2\_3• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member gave me an ultimatum

2\_4• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member acknowledged my feelings of discrimination

2\_5• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me

2\_6• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed solutions to solve the problem

2\_7• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed negative body language towards me

2\_8• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all

2.9 How did you experience this service?

**3-point Likert scale: Worse than expected - Just as expected - Better than expected**

3.1 Have you been in a situation where you requested a seat change because of the gender of the passenger sitting next to you?

**\* Never, Once, Several times**

In case of once or several times - How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred)

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

Q3\_1• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member committed an act to change the seat

Q3\_2• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request without explanation

@3\_3• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request and provided me with an explanation

@3\_4• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed possible solutions to solve the problem

@3\_5• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt

@3\_6• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed understanding for my personal circumstances

@3\_7• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member made me feel comfortable

@3\_8• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted colleagues/cabin crew/other passengers for assistance

@3\_9• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided service depending on the request

@3\_10• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all

3.11 How did you experience this service?

**3-point Likert scale: Worse than expected - Just as expected - Better than expected**

4.1 Have you requested a KLM staff member to clean the toilets after being used by each passenger?

**\* Never, Once, Several times**

In case of once or several times - How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred)

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

Q4\_1• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member committed an act to change the seat

Q4\_2• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request without explanation

Q4\_3• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request and provided me with an explanation

Q4\_4• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed possible solutions to solve the problem

Q4\_5• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt

Q4\_6• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed understanding for my personal circumstances

Q4\_7• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member made me feel comfortable

Q4\_8• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted colleagues/cabin crew/other passengers for assistance

Q4\_9• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided service depending on the request

Q4\_10• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all

4.11. How did you experience this service?

**3-point Likert scale: Worse than expected - Just as expected - Better than expected**

5.1 Have you been in a situation where you made physical contact with a KLM staff member during a flight or at the check-in process?

**\* Never, Once, Several times**

In case of once or several times - how did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred)

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

Q5\_1• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member remained calm

Q5\_2• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided me with an extensive explanation on cultural differences

Q5\_3• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member removed me from the flight

Q5\_4• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member disregarded my culture

Q5\_5• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt to the local culture

Q5\_6• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed understanding/respect for my culture

Q5\_7• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member reported my behavior/consulted security

Q5\_8• The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all

5.9. How did you experience this service?

**3-point Likert scale: Worse than expected - Just as expected - Better than expected**

Overall Customer Satisfaction:

**5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree – Disagree – Neutral – Agree – Strongly Agree**

Q10 I am satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM

Q11 Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

Q12 Overall, I am less satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected



## Appendix 7 Questionnaire Results

The following results have emerged from the linear regression analysis with SPSS.

### Case 1

**N = 42**

When the Sig. is higher than ,05 the act of service is not significant. This means that that the manner in which the service provider provides service does not impact the customer experience. The results of the linear regression analysis show that 1\_2 and 1\_3 positively impact the customer experience. And 1\_3 and 1\_8 negatively impact the customer experience.

Linear regression analysis 1\_1 on 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,721	,419		,093
	@1_1	,233	,124	,285	,067

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_2 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,466	,327		,161
	@1_2	,386	,117	,461	,002

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_3 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	,161	,215		,750	,457
	@1_3	,516	,077	,726	6,679	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_4 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4,720	,705		,000
	Q1_4	-,783	,168	-,592	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_5 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,396	,337		,000
	Q1_5	,037	,143	,041	,799

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_6 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,025	,430		,022
	Q1_6	,129	,118	,171	,279

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_7 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,492	,386		,000

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

Q1_7	-,008	,196	-,007	-,042	,966
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 1\_8 op 1.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,612	,267		,000
	Q1_8	-,388	,084	-,588	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Conclusion for case 1:

1\_2 and 1\_3 positively influence's the customer service experience.

1\_4 and 1\_8 negatively influence's the customer service experience.

The following data shows the impact of the customer experience of the service provided in this case on the overall customer satisfaction. The data shows that 29,4% of the passengers are satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM. 16,7% is more satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected. And 1,4% is less satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected.

The effect of the service provided on Q10:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	3,045	,173		,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,413	,102	,542	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - I am satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM

$R^2 = ,294$ , sign. = ,000

= 29,4 %

The effect of the service provided on Q11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,201	,216		,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,357	,128	,408	,008

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,167$ , sign. = ,008

= 16,7%

The effect of the service provided on Q12:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,791	,276		,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	-,122	,164	-,118	,461

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am less satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,014$ , sign. = ,461.

= 1,4%

The effect of the service provided on Q11-Q12:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-,590	,310		,064

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,479	,183	,386	2,612	,013
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a. Dependent Variable: Q11minus@12

$R^2 = 0,149$ , sign. = 0,013.

= 14,9%

Conclusion: The satisfaction of this case determines the overall satisfaction for a significant part.

### Case 2

**N = 26**

When the Sig. is higher than ,05 the act of service is not significant. This means that that the manner in which the service provider provides service does not impact the customer experience. The results of the linear regression analysis show that 2\_4, 2\_5 and 2\_6 positively impact the customer experience. And 2\_7 negatively impact the customer experience.

Linear regression analysis 2\_1 op 2.9:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2,260	,541		4,176	,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not acknowledge my feelings of discrimination	-,245	,137	-,350	-1,791	,086

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_2 op 2.9:

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,744	,474		3,677	,001
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided extensive knowledge on company policies	-,129	,138	-,191	-,935	,359

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_3 op 2.9:

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,966	,396		4,972	,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member gave me an ultimatum	-,192	,111	-,340	-1,735	,096

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_4 op 2.9:

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,397	,223		1,780	,088

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member acknowledged my feelings of discrimination	,462	,099	,696	4,646	,000
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_5 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,627	,265		,027
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me	,310	,105	,522	,007

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_6 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	,397	,223		,088
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed solutions to solve the problem	,462	,099	,696	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_7 op 2.9:

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,573	,496		,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed negative body language towards me	-,337	,129	-,478	,016

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_8 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,153	,437		,000
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all	-,237	,118	-,385	,057

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Conclusion:

2\_4, 2\_5 and 2\_6 positively influence the customer service experience.

2\_7 negatively influence the customer service experience.

The following data shows the impact of the customer experience of the service provided in this case on the overall customer satisfaction. The data shows the second case has no impact on the customer satisfaction of the overall service provided by KLM. Furthermore, 29,6% is more satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected. And the data shows that this case has no impact on the overall service provided for passengers to be less satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected.



The effect of the service provided on Q10:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3,231	,244		13,255	,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,280	,164	,334	1,702	,102

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - I am satisfied with the overall service delivered by KLM

Not significant.

The effect of the service provided on Q11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,308	,294		7,861	,000
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,615	,198	,544	3,109	,005

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM then I expected

$R^2 = ,296$ , sign. = ,005.

= 29,6%

The effect of the service provided on Q12:

No effect.

The effect of the service provided on Q11-Q12:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	-,500	,544		-,919	,368
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	,773	,367	,402	2,106	,046

a. Dependent Variable: Q11minus@12

$R^2 = ,162$ , sign. = ,046.

= 16,2%

### Case 3

**N = 8**

When the Sig. is higher than ,05 the act of service is not significant. This means that that the manner in which the service provider provides service does not impact the customer experience. The results of the linear regression analysis show none of the acts of service have impact on the customer experience. This is due to the small amount of N.

Linear regression analysis 3\_1 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,400	,578		,060
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member committed an act to change the seat	,200	,179	,447	,314

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_2 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	2,421	,634		3,821	,012
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request without explanation	-,184	,259	-,303	-,712	,508

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_3 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,575	,655		2,405	,061
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member rejected my request and provided me with an explanation	,175	,253	,296	,692	,520

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_4 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,789	,734		1,076	,331
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed possible solutions to solve the problem	,368	,216	,607	1,708	,148

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_5 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,425	,655		,014
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt	-,175	,253	-,296	,520

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_6 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,000	,730		,041
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed understanding for my personal circumstances	,000	,242	,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_7 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	1,500	,776		1,933	,111
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member made me feel comfortable	,167	,247	,289	,674	,530

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_8 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,000	,923		2,166	,083
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member consulted colleagues/cabin crew/other passengers for assistance	,000	,271	,000	,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_9 op 3.11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,250	,760		1,645	,161
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member provided service depending on the request	,350	,340	,418	1,030	,350

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 3\_10 op 3.11:

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,263	,584		3,873	,012
	How did the staff member handle the situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred?) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member did not assist me at all	-,092	,187	-,215	-,491	,644

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Conclusion:

There are no positive or negative influences on the customer service experience due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q10:

There is no effect due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q11:

There is no effect due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q12:

There is no effect due to the small amount of N.

#### Case 4

**N = 2**

When the Sig. is higher than ,05 the act of service is not significant. This means that that the manner in which the service provider provides service does not impact the customer experience. The results of the linear regression analysis show none of the acts of service have impact on the customer experience. This is due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q10:

There is no effect detected due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q11:

There is no effect detected due to the small amount of N.

The effect of the service provided on Q12:

There is no effect due to the small amount of N.

## Case 5

### N = 7

When the Sig. is higher than ,05 the act of service is not significant. This means that that the manner in which the service provider provides service does not impact the customer experience. The results of the linear regression analysis show none of the acts of service have impact on the customer experience. This is due to the small amount of N. Except for the service act 5\_5 which has a negative influence on the customer experience with a Sig. = ,033 and a B = -,316.

Linear regression analysis 5\_5 op 5.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	2,474	,336		,001
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expected me to adapt to the local culture	-,316	,108	-,795	,033

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Conclusion:

5\_5 has a negative influence on the customer service experience.

The following data shows the impact of the customer experience of the service provided in this case on the overall customer satisfaction. The data shows the fifth case has no impact on the customer satisfaction of the overall service provided by KLM. Furthermore, 82,1% is more satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected. And the data shows that this case has no impact on the overall service provided for passengers to be less satisfied with the overall service provided by KLM than expected.

The effect of the service provided on Q10:

There is no effect detected.

The effect of the service provided on Q11:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	1,333	,459		,034
	Customer experience - How did you experience this service?	1,333	,279	,906	,005

a. Dependent Variable: Overall Customer Satisfaction - Overall, I am more satisfied with the service provided by KLM than I expected

$R^2 = ,821$ , sign. = ,005.

= 82,1 %

The effect of the service provided on Q12:

There is no effect detected.

The effect of the service provided on Q11-Q12:

There is no effect detected.

**The same analysis has been performed using the control variables: age, gender, frequency of flying, birthplace of parents and background.**



**Case 1**

For this case none of the control variables have any significant effect on the customer service experience of a passenger. This means that, for example, the cultural background of a passenger does not influence the customer service experience.

**Case 2**

For this case the control variables: age and background do have an influence on the customer service experience:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	,048

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Passengers of an older age are more satisfied with the manner in which KLM service providers provide service when it comes to situations where discrimination occurs. Furthermore, as for passengers with a migration background which is significantly less than passengers without a migration background.

Q2\_1: no effect

@2\_2: no effect

@2\_3: no effect

Linear regression analysis 2\_4 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		-,276	,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	3,945	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		1,748	,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	4,324	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	-2,103	,048
3	(Constant)	1,715	,632		2,714	,013
	Age	,017	,008	,323	2,157	,043
	BackgroundB	-,962	,301	-,387	-3,196	,005
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member acknowledged my feelings of discrimination	,371	,100	,562	3,714	,001

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_5 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	,048
3	(Constant)	1,629	,767		,046
	Age	,025	,009	,475	,014
	BackgroundB	-,931	,367	-,375	,020
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member listened carefully to me	,190	,106	,322	,089

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

There is no effect detected.

Linear regression analysis 2\_6 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	,048
3	(Constant)	1,636	,599		,013
	Age	,019	,007	,361	,014
	BackgroundB	-,967	,286	-,389	,003
	How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member proposed solutions to solve the problem	,373	,090	,564	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Linear regression analysis 2\_7 op 2.9:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	-,105	,382		,785
	Age	,034	,009	,644	,001
2	(Constant)	1,388	,794		,095
	Age	,034	,008	,657	,000
	BackgroundB	-,794	,378	-,319	,048
3	(Constant)	2,495	,968		,018
	Age	,028	,008	,542	,003
	BackgroundB	-,847	,360	-,341	,029

## Intercultural communication, the new customer service

How did the staff member handle this situation? (concentrate on the last time this occurred) - The last time this occurred the KLM staff member expressed negative body language towards me	-,202	,111	-,288	-1,821	,084
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a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

There is no significance detected

Linear regression analysis 2\_8 op 2.9:

Not significant

Conclusion:

2\_4 and 2\_6 has a positive influence on the customer service experience.

Conclusion (taking the control variables into consideration):

2\_4, 2\_5 and 2\_6 positively influence's the customer service experience.

2\_7 negatively influence's the customer service experience.

### Case 3

For the third case women, youngsters and passengers with a migration background are less satisfied with the manner in which KLM service providers handle this case:

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	1,229	,732		1,679
	Age	,017	,015	,442	1,101
2	(Constant)	1,582	,962		1,644
	Age	,023	,019	,605	1,208
	Gender	-,372	,593	-,314	-,627
3	(Constant)	6,089	,477		12,754
	Age	,085	,007	2,218	12,011
	Gender	-1,874	,186	-1,584	-10,085
	BirthplaceB	-2,556	,249	-1,673	-10,243

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

Q3\_1 till @3\_10 no difference was detected.

#### Case 4

The control variables do not have any influence due to the small amount of N.

#### Case 5

For this case, women are not significant.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	,500	,447		1,118	,314
	Gender	,750	,296	,750	2,535	,052

a. Dependent Variable: Customer experience - How did you experience this service?

#### Conclusion:

For Q5\_1 till Q5\_8 there is no significance when the control variable gender is added. For 5\_5 the control variable is no longer significant therefore the initial effect remains valid. Furthermore, the introduction of control variables in the effects of satisfaction with each of the cases with overall satisfaction (Q10, @11, @12, @11-@12) makes no difference at all. So, also here the control variables can be left out.

The analysis with control variables produces less significant effects of specific ways in which KLM staff deals with the situation than in the analysis without control variables. However, those differences are so small, that I abstain from using the control variables and look on the gross effects of the acting options on satisfaction in the ways in which KLM staff deal with the issues.

## Appendix 8 Coding

### Focus group 1

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent, SA1 = Service Agent 1, SA2 = Service Agent 2, SA3 = Service Agent 3 (departure hall)

Focus group 1	Initial Code	Selective Code
I: Hey Guys, thank you for participating in this focus group		
I: I know these are weird times so let's get started (silence...)		
I: Hmm, yes so, I am writing my thesis and I am researching whether intercultural communication competences of airline staff has influence on customer satisfaction. And I was wondering could you give an example of a customer being dissatisfied possibly due to a cultural mismatch? (silence...)		
SA2: hmm, can you repeat the question maybe?		
I: Yes, so hmm, have you had any experience where a passenger was angry or disappointed or told you he or she was not satisfied and gave a reason that was culturally related? (silence...)		

<b>I: Someone feeling discriminated or profiled, insulted something like that</b>		
<b>SA3: Oh yes Africans when you have to check-in their hand luggage in the departure hall because it's too big to fit in the overhead bins and they do not agree with that. They always tell me "you are doing this because I am black". Which is funny to me because I am black. But they think you are discriminating them.</b>	A participant provides an example of a case where the passenger feels discriminated because the passenger has to check in hand luggage and feels this is done because of his skin color	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>SA1: Yes! With flights to Accra and I have to check-in hand luggage they always get angry and tell me "because I am black".</b>	A participant confirms the example case provided by the previous participant and shares similar occurrences to the case presented by the previous participant	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>SA3: Haha! They love that line I am always like dude? Do you see my skin color or? Haha</b>		
<b>SA2: Or French passengers when you have to check in their hand language at the gate. They feel offended when you do not speak French.</b>	The participant explains a case where a passenger feels offended because the service provider does not speak the language of the passenger	Case of cultural mismatch: language
<b>SA3: French passengers are so annoying they never want to</b>	The participant confirms the previous case by stating their own experiences	

<b>speak English I wonder how they travel and only speak French</b>		
<b>I: Haha, and are you able to help a French passenger who only speaks French? How does that work?</b>		
<b>SA2: Not always especially with Air France flights does are quick turnaround flights so when you are at the gate and the flight arrives from Paris all the incoming passengers come up to the desk asking you all sorts of questions but in French and I am always like English please!</b>	The participant provides additional information on the case previously presented. The participant explains how situations are handled when this case occurs	Case of cultural mismatch: language
<b>I: And at that point if they do not speak English what happens?</b>		
<b>SA2: Well they walk away or they continue talking to you in French sometimes you see they get angry because you do not speak French but this is an international airport so I think they have to adapt so yeah (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case and further explains how the situation is handled when this case occurs	Case of cultural mismatch: language
<b>SA1: Yes often with hand gestures you try to make sense and give an explanation and often they understand. But sometimes people have a short connection and they do not have the time to figure out what you are saying or</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous mentioned case and further explains how the situation is handled when this case occurs	Case of cultural mismatch: language



<b>for me to understand what they are saying so they instantly walk away when you do not speak French</b>		
<b>SA2: Yeah you know in these cases it is often obvious that they want to know which gate they have to go to so they just scream the destination and we look up the gate (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous mentioned case and further explains how the situation is handled when this case occurs	Case of cultural mismatch: language
<b>SA2: ... Like a slave haha no kidding but in case of delays or there is a storm and the flight is canceled how do you explain with hand gestures that they have to be rebooked or book a hotel and they can claim it afterwards online with customer care haha so it does not always work out good</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous mentioned case and the challenges it brings forth	Case of cultural mismatch: language
<b>I: Hmm yes that can be difficult (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: And you? (directed to the gate agent)</b>		
<b>I: Do you have any examples?</b>		
<b>GA: Hmm let me think (silence...)</b>		
<b>GA: This is not really a cultural related case but there was one time when a Dutch passenger who was very long and he wanted a seat change but for free because he was convinced it should be free</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger had a special request	Case: special request

<b>because he said it was not his fault that he was this long.</b>		
<b>GA: So, he wanted a free upgrade to economy comfort. (silence...)</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger had a special request	Case: special request
<b>SA3: And another example what I can think of is in the departure hall. There was an African lady with excess luggage and she had to pay for it. So...</b>	The participant provided a case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>SA3: She got mad and told me are you going to treat a "sister" like this? Meaning because we are both black we have to stick with each other so she expected me to give her a pass because she was black</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger felt discriminated	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>SA3: Yes so she got mad (silence...)</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger felt discriminated	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>I: Haha everything not to pay for luggage! And anyone have other examples? (silence...)</b>		
<b>GA: I remember there was an American woman who did not want to eat the meals served on board because she said they make her nauseous...</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger had a special request	Case: special request
<b>GA: So, I told her this is not a problem she can eat here at the airport there are many options</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger had a special request	Case: special request

<b>but she said I was discriminating her because I would not give her a voucher haha</b>		
<b>GA: I said to her that we do not give free vouchers for these reasons so haha sorry I keep laughing but she told me I was the blackest hooker on this airport</b>	The participant provided additional information on the case previously mentioned and the challenge this case brought forth	Case: special request
<b>I: Haha she did not!? And how did you respond?</b>		
<b>GA: Well I won't repeat what I said but she left immediately after haha</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous mentioned case and further explains how the situation is handled when the case occurred	Case: special request
<b>GA: And another example with Arabic men they are very difficult as well. When they are dissatisfied they always ask for a supervisor and when they see that the supervisor is a woman they demand to speak to a male supervisor for example (silence...)</b>	The participant provided a case where a passenger demanded speaking to a male supervisor	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>I: Ok, does anybody want to add something or share other examples?</b>		
<b>SA1: No, I do not think so (silence...)</b>		

**I: Ok, I want to thank everyone for participating I truly appreciate it**

### Focus group 2

I = Interviewer, GA1 = Gate Agent 1, GA2 = Gate Agent 2, SA1 = Service Agent 1, SA2 = Service Agent 2, TA = Ticket Agent

Focus group 2	Initial Code	Selective Code
<b>I: Hello everybody</b>		
<b>I: Thanks Guys for participating in this focus group</b>		
<b>I: Let's begin before we are all send home haha</b>		
<b>I: So, I was wondering can you give examples of situations where a passenger was dissatisfied with you and this was culturally related (silence...)</b>		
<b>TA: Hmm, I have to be honest I actually never experience any difficulty with people of color. It is always those French people who always think that the service that is offered to them is not enough because they always want to upgrade.</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where conflict only arises with a group of passengers with a specific background	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>I: That is a good example</b>		
<b>TA: Haha, ok good</b>		
<b>I: Do the French people make it known that they expect a certain level of service?</b>		

TA: <b>Yes! And that a rebooking alone it not enough. And I explain to them that customer care will take care of the rest when it comes to service recovery, but they instantly want more. An upgrade, access to the lounge those kind of things.</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case and adds that conflict arises due to demands of these passengers	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
TA: <b>And do not get me started how much angrier they get when you do not speak French (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case and adds conflict also exists due to language differences	Case of cultural mismatch: language
I: <b>Hmm any other examples that you would like to share?</b>		
SA1: <b>I had to check-in hand luggage at a flight to America and I came across a black man and he instantly became mad and told me I was doing this because he was black.</b>	A participant provides an example of a case where the passenger feels discriminated because the passenger has to check in hand luggage and feels this is done because of his skin color	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
SA1: <b>I said Sir I am black too (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
SA1: <b>He made a whole scene and security even had to show up</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case	Case of cultural mismatch: race
I: <b>Oh wow...</b>		

SA1: <b>And guess what haha... it turned out he “took” a lot of airplane supplies with him which he had stored in his hand luggage hahaha! Oxygen masks, blankets etc.</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previous case	Case of cultural mismatch: “race”
I: <b>Haha, oh my God! The passenger just wanted to distract you from finding all these supplies.</b>		
SA1: <b>Yes, and talking about flights to America (silence...)</b>		
SA1: <b>With these whole situation of the Corona virus now that we have to check every single passenger their passports and stamps and visa’s and ask them whether they have been in China or Iran the past fourteen days...</b>	The participant provides an example of a case of cultural mismatch concerning extra document checks for passengers traveling to the USA	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
SA2: <b>Yes! There were a few times where passengers felt offended. Because we have to ask them “have you been in China or Iran the past fourteen days?” but simultaneously we have to check their passports for visa’s and stamps of those countries so...</b>	The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned and adds that the passengers feel offended	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
SA1: <b>Yes, so basically, we are checking if the passenger is lying or not which can cause for tension of course.</b>	The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture

GA1: <b>Yes, indeed I noticed that Asian people feel offended or discriminated. Some are not aware that we are checking everybody, so they feel like we are only checking Asian people or Chinese people</b>	The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned where passengers with an Asian background feel offended	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
SA2: <b>Passengers also make comments like "don't you believe me when I tell you no?"</b>	The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned and the challenges this case brings forth	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
GA2: <b>In my experience I have been working for KLM over the past twenty-five years now and a lot of cultural mismatches happen because we often feel like the passenger has to adapt to us</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches and the reasons these may occur	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
I: <b>Hmm please explain</b>		
GA2: <b>Yes so, me and I know a lot of colleagues as well who think like this we often say or think this difficult passenger should adapt to how we do things here in Holland (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned personal views and adds a foreign passenger should adapt to the local national culture	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
GA2: <b>Like the example of the American flights I think well people are complaining but it is the American authorities who</b>	The participant provides examples that serve as additional information on the previously mentioned	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture

<b>have all these rules that we have to follow it is not our country so why are you doing like this is our fault you just have to go with it (silence...)</b>	personal views on cultural mismatches	
<b>I: Ah ok yes</b>		
<b>GA2: And hmm like the example she gave with the French passenger this is common for French people they are demanding nothing is good enough for them. But here in Holland we are like "doe maar gewoon dan doe je al gek genoeg" you know what I mean? (silence...)</b>	The participant provides examples that serve as additional information on the previously mentioned personal views on cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>GA2: But these French passengers are getting angry when we are really doing our best for them which they think is not enough for them. So, I get an attitude like well just adjust you are not in France now it is what it is. Of course, I do not say this to the passenger but my attitude changes towards the passenger if I am honest</b>	The participant provides examples that serve as additional information on the previously mentioned personal views on cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>I: How does your attitude change? Do you still help the passenger afterwards?</b>		



<b>GA2: Hmm yes I still help the passenger but I maybe do not go the extra mile if you know what I mean it is just clear cut yes or no and I do not offer options to the passenger for example</b>	The participant provides examples that serve as additional information on the previously mentioned personal views on cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>I: Ok I understand what you mean (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: Does anybody have anything to add? Or other examples?</b>		
<b>Everybody: No</b>		
<b>I: Ok hmm thank you haha</b>		

### One-on-one Skype interviews (focus group)

Interview 1

I = Interviewer, CC1 = Cabin Crew 1

Participant 1	Initial Code	Selective Code
<b>I: Hi! Thank you for Skyping with me</b>		
<b>CC: No problem can you hear me ok?</b>		
<b>I: Yes, loud and clear!</b>		
<b>I: So, hmm, let's get started. I really would like to know whether you can share any examples of situations you have encountered during a flight where a passenger was dissatisfied because of a cultural mismatch?</b>		
<b>CC: Hmm well with me it's actually never occurs haha to be honest</b>	The participant is not able to provide an example of a case of cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch: none

<b>I: No? really? I did not expect that</b>		
<b>CC: Well yes, I think it is because I speak many languages and I have extensive knowledge about other cultures</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned statement and adds the reason in order to avoid cases of cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>I: Oh, ok well that maybe explains it haha</b>		
<b>CC: Yeah so, I think this makes it easier for me adapt easier and properly handle every situation (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned statement and adds being able to easily adapt	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>CC: So, I think I am not that much help to you haha sorry!</b>		
<b>I: No, no worries but maybe you can explain to me hmm what makes it easier in comparison to your colleagues who do not speak as many different languages or do not have extensive knowledge about other cultures?</b>		
<b>CC: Hmm well you cannot be a flight attendant and not have knowledge about other cultures even if you are new you learn as you go of course but it is also your responsibility to do some research about the Japanese culture if you are working</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned statement and adds personal opinions on adapting to different cultures and attaining	Personal views on cultural mismatches

<b>on a flight to Japan just to name an example and hmm (silence...)</b>	knowledge about different cultures	
<b>CC: Yeah so before every flight we have a meeting “briefing” and you know you tell your colleagues to pay extra attention to certain things especially if they have previous experiences with particular cultures and when it comes to language yeah for me I love learning languages but not everybody speaks so many different languages (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned statement and adds information on the work process	Personal views and cabin crew work process
<b>CC: It’s... It comes in handy to speak different languages because saying something in English or in someone’s native language is two very different things someone may understand it better in the sense that the way you want it to come across. If English for example is not their native language then someone can receive the thing that you are saying very negative even though you did not mean it that way so I think that is where a lot of misunderstandings begin between colleagues and passengers</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned statement and provides information possible causes that may create conflict due to cultural mismatches	Personal views and possible causes of cultural mismatches
<b>I: Ah yes that makes sense haha</b>		
<b>I: Hmm well I think I have to interview you for my next step of</b>		

<b>data collection to get more insights haha</b>		
<b>CC: I do not mind haha so sorry I cannot be more help to you now</b>		
<b>I: No problem we will stay in contact thank you</b>		
<b>CC: Bye!</b>		

## Interview 2

I = Interviewer, CC2 = Cabin Crew 2

Participant 2	Initial Code	Selective Code
<b>I: Hello, thank you for taking this Skype meeting</b>		
<b>I: I would like to know if you have any examples of situations where passengers on board of a flight were not satisfied because of cultural related reasons.</b>		
<b>CC: Hmm, let me think I have experienced so many thinks over the years (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: Take your time (silence...)</b>		
<b>CC: On the flight to Tel Aviv I can give you two examples on this flight</b>	The participant provides two examples of cases of cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch
<b>CC: A man did not want to sit next to a woman because you know they are Orthodox Jew and he demanded to be reseated.</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where a passenger refuses to sit next to a woman because of religious reasons	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
<b>I: And did you reseat him?</b>		

CC: <b>No! because I feel like we are not always able to do something for someone. And of course I understand that someone has their religion and culture but we cannot take everybody's religion and culture in to account (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case and explains the actions taken in this case and shares personal views	Case of cultural mismatch: religion / personal views on cultural mismatches
CC: <b>Otherwise it is a never-ending story with wishes and demands</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case and adds personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal view on cultural mismatches
I: <b>So, you feel that the passenger should also show understanding and adapt to these situations?</b>		
CC: <b>Yes, because in this case I did not reseat the passenger so he got really mad and was very offended. For me this is not a problem but I can understand that for my colleagues it is not a nice work atmosphere with angry passengers on board.</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case and shares personal view on cultural mismatches	Case of cultural mismatch: religion / personal view on cultural mismatches
CC: <b>Hmm so the second example on this flight is of course the Kosher food and besides that they do not want any service of a woman (silence...)</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where the passenger did not want to be served by a woman because of religious reasons	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
I: <b>Can you give examples of this?</b>		

CC: <b>Yes hmm so when you serve the meal you take of the plastic sealing of the meal box and then put the platter on the table tray but they do not want you to do that because they think you are not Kosher so to speak (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
CC: <b>Hmm what else ... let's see</b>		
CC: <b>Hmm yes so on the flight to Lagos a passenger sitting in business class haha</b>	The participant provides an example of a case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>The passenger was sitting with his bare feet leaning on the seat before him no shoes and no socks it was really nasty</b>	The participant provides an example of a case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>Mind you nobody wanted to say something! Not the purser on the flight nobody so they asked me to do it because according to others I was the one who could bring it differently</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>Passengers were looking around like "is nobody going to say something about this?" haha</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>So, yes I went over and whispered "Sir the fellow passengers on board mind it very much that you rest your bare feet on the seat before you so please put on your socks and keep your</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"

<b>feet underneath the seat in front of you”</b>		
<b>CC: Haha of course the answer was “it is because I’m black”</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case where the passenger felt discriminated	Case of cultural mismatch: “race”
<b>CC: I told him “no sir, they just don’t like the sight of the bare feet” haha so eventually he put on his socks and put his feet on the ground. He did not like it that I asked him to do so</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: “race”
<b>I: Ok, haha well thank you for these examples. Do you have any other examples?</b>		
<b>CC: Well not that I can think of right now hmm (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: No worries thank you so much</b>		

Interview 3

I = Interviewer, CC3 = Cabin Crew 3

Participant 3	Initial Code	Selective Code
<b>I: Hey thank you so much for Skyping with me</b>		
<b>CC: No worries I am happy to help</b>		
<b>I: Yes thank you! So let’s get started shall we. I was wondering if you could give me any examples of situations where</b>		

<b>passengers were unhappy with your service because of a culturally related issue</b>		
<b>CC: Hmm well I can give you an example which is not that recent but I will never forget this haha</b>		
<b>I: Haha please share</b>		
<b>CC: So on board of flight to India there was this Indian man pitching me in my butt. This happened a very long time ago I was still very young and insecure so I did not react because I was so in shock</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where the passenger acted inappropriately with the service provider	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>I: Oh my God! Really?! I was not expecting this</b>		
<b>CC: Yes, over the years you know I learned to handle different situations and of course I have my boundaries so it this would happen to me now this man would definitely have a problem. But back then I remember that I tried to avoid this man as much as possible...</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case on how to handle cases where cultural mismatches occur	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture / personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>CC: But this is really a culture thing with Indian men they are known not to have much respect for women (silence...)</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case on how to handle cases where cultural mismatches occur	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture / personal views on cultural mismatches



CC: <b>You know there are other examples like them calling you by snapping their fingers like “come here immediately!” you feel like a slave honestly</b>	The participant provides an additional example of the case previously mentioned	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
CC: <b>And they get mad when you do not respond to them you really have to raise them like they are your children and tell them this is not appropriate and they look at you like you are crazy</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
CC: <b>I tell them “may I...” and “please” and they look at you like this is a crazy woman haha</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case on how to handle cases where cultural mismatches like these occur	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
I: <b>Yes, I can imagine how bad you must feel to be on such a long flight with them</b>		
CC: <b>Yes and it can get much worse. One time a man peed and left feces on the bathroom floor in the airplane. Often these people come from rural areas or at least back then and they would not understand that you have to use toilet paper. So they would to it on the floor and leave it there. It was really horrible</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where sanitary was differently used by a passenger	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture

<b>I: NO! I am in shock! And how would you handle these situations?</b>		
<b>CC: Well, I would explain to them that they have to use the toilet paper and show them what toilet paper was. They would look at me like I am crazy haha</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>CC: And of course, I would ask them to clean it up because I sure as hell was not doing it</b>	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: national culture
<b>CC: Hmm yes so I cannot think of anything else that fast but these are some examples that I can think of</b>		
<b>I: Well I want to thank you for these examples!</b>		

Interview 4

I = Interviewer, P = Purser

Participant 4	Initial Code	Selective Code
<b>I: Hi thank you for Skyping with me</b>		
<b>P: No problem I am happy to help you with your thesis</b>		
<b>I: Hmm so yeah I would like to know if you have any examples of situations where passengers were dissatisfied because of a cultural related issue</b>		

P: Hmm well I worked on a flight once where a religious leader was on board who absolutely refused to be served by woman. Unfortunately for him there were only women on that flight so yeah that was quite a challenge to come up with a solution	The participant provides an example of a case where a passenger did not want to be served by a woman because of religious reasons	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
I: And how did you solve this problem?		
P: Hmm he discussed it with his subordinate? The person working under him. He was traveling in a group of only men I think who were working for him or under him and the first person working under him came to the pantry and told us that we can set up the tray and the drinks and the food and everything and he would be the one serving it to him and when the leader was done eating he would be the one who would bring the tray back to the kitchen	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case and explains how this case was handled	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
I: Ok, so it could be solved luckily		
P: Yes you know we did not expect someone to be on board who could not be served by a woman. And at that point you think well this is not our problem because we are able to serve both	The participant provides additional information on the previously mentioned case and explains how the case was handled	Case of cultural mismatch: religion

men and women so when someone on board tells you he does not want to be served by you or your colleagues you think ok well how are we going to solve this?		
I: Do you think that passengers should adapt when flying?		
P: Yes definitely! I understand that people do not allow things because of their culture but they make their problem your problem and it is impossible to consider everybody's culture or religion in one plane so I expect that people who have special requests that we cannot comply to passengers have to solve them themselves (silence...)	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches and shares that passengers should adapt	Personal views on cultural mismatches
P: Something similar also happens a lot with Jewish passengers you know not wanting to be served by women because they believe that we are impure. I remember a Jewish family on our flight to New York asked us to clean the bathrooms after every visit of a passenger so that his wife and children could go to a clean bathroom. He said because of his religion he and his	The passenger provides an example of a case of a passenger with a special request because of religious reasons	Case of cultural mismatch: religion / special request

<b>family could not go to the bathroom otherwise</b>		
<b>I: Haha that is an odd request</b>		
<b>P: You know people are sometimes really small-minded. How can you expect the whole world living up to your religious standards? Do such people consider other religions or cultures? Maybe in my religion I am not allowed to clean bathrooms just saying haha but we get really odd requests sometimes</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>I: Yes I can imagine</b>		
<b>P: Yes and besides religious examples there are also a lot of discrimination examples as well but not towards passengers but towards employees</b>	The participant provides an example of a challenge which occurs because of a cultural mismatch and presents a case of cultural mismatch	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>I: Oh really?!</b>		
<b>P: Yes a few years ago I was stationed in London and we had charters flying from London to several destinations. So there was one time the door to the cockpit was open and there were two black pilots so there was a group of English passengers walking on board of the flight and</b>	The participant provides an example of a case where a passenger discriminated the crew	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"

<b>they saw the black pilots and they demanded to be taken of the flight because they refused to fly with two black pilots</b>		
<b>I: Wow really and they were taken of the flight?</b>		
<b>P: Yes of course it was on their request and we would not have taken them on anyway because you do not know what people who think like this will do during the flight so it would be unsafe. I also experienced where a black cabin crew agent asked a woman if she needed help with her bag and she replied by saying she did not want a nigger carrying her bag</b>	<p>The participant provides additional information of the case previously mentioned</p> <p>The participant provides a new example of a case similar to the previous case</p>	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
<b>I: I am in shock (silence...)</b>		
<b>P: Yes sometimes you really do not know what you are hearing but you know what the funny thing is? People are not even ashamed of themselves when they act like this that is more shocking to me. People can be so mean (silence...)</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>P: And with this whole corona virus situation I hope that it will open people's eyes. This virus does not discriminate! Everybody</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches

<b>can get it black white purple yellow is does not matter. So I hope people will realize we are all people!</b>		
<b>I: Yes that is true I hope people will stop discriminating</b>		
<b>P: Yes but you know in our job's discrimination is often also used when passengers do not get their way. Often people use the discrimination card because they do not want to pay for luggage or they want to get an upgrade. So it is sad that people will say "you are doing this because I am black or Turkish" or whatever just so they can reach their goal while there are people who really suffer because of discrimination.</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches  The participant provides examples of cultural mismatches	Personal views and examples of cultural mismatches
<b>I: Yes that is sad (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: Hmm do you have any other examples?</b>		
<b>P: Hmm not right now but if you need more examples you know where to find me</b>		
<b>I: Yes haha thank you so much for this conversation</b>		
<b>P: No problem!</b>		
<b>I: Bye!</b>		
<b>P: Bye!</b>		

## Interview 5

I = Interviewer, CC5 = Cabin crew 5

Participant 5	Initial Code	Selective Code
I: Hello, can you hear me?		
CC: Yes very well hi there		
I: Hey, thank you for this interview		
I: Hmm, let's get started		
I: Hmm, I wanted to know if you can share any experiences with dissatisfied passengers on board in which the situation was culturally related		
CC: Hmm yes hmm let me think for a second (silence...)		
CC: Well I have some examples which are not all on board because I worked on the ground for such a long time as well if that is ok?		
I: Yes, no problem just mention all the examples you can think of		
CC: Hmm, well an African man coming to me saying "hey sister" and he missed his flight and he wanted all these things from me which I would not give him such as hotel stay and vouchers so he said I was discriminating (silence...)	The participant provided an example of a case where the passenger had special requests and felt discriminated when these requests were not granted	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"



CC: <b>Hmm, the second example is a Nigerian passenger. You know there is a difference between Ghanaian and Nigerian passengers. Nigerian passengers truly believe that when they have purchased a ticket they have purchased the whole company haha</b>	The participant provided an example of a case where the passenger felt insulted	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>So, he had a false ticket and when I discovered it I confronted him about it and he got very angry with me because he knew he got caught but he acted like I had insulted him</b>	The participant provided additional information of the previously mentioned case and explains that the passenger felt insulted	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>So, he took the computer screen behind the desk and threw it at me and yelled at me so the royal military or police or whatever had to come and help me haha</b>	The participant provided additional information of the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
CC: <b>Luckily this passenger got blacklisted and is never able to fly with us ever again</b>	The participant provided additional information of the previously mentioned case	Case of cultural mismatch: "race"
I: <b>Oh wow that is intense haha my God aren't you afraid to confront passengers after this happened?</b>		
CC: <b>Well, you know with this job there is always something and it comes with a lot of responsibility</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches

<b>so if I am scared to do or say something then I cannot do my job anymore</b>		
<b>I: Yeah that is true and of course you have security at the airport so that helps</b>		
<b>CC: Yes it does so (silence...)</b>		
<b>I: Would you say that people with a particular background are more difficult than the other?</b>		
<b>CC: Hmm, I would say Jewish people are very difficult. I remember a Jewish passenger who was onboard and demanded to be reseated because he was sitting next to a women. But it was a full flight.</b>	<p>The participants provides information on cultural mismatches occur with passengers with a particular background</p> <p>The participant provides an example of a case confirming the statement previously made</p>	Personal views on cultural mismatches / case of cultural mismatch: religion
<b>CC: So I really believe that people should adjust especially in public but in light of being service minded and trying to please the customer I placed another man next to this Jewish passenger haha</b>	<p>The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches</p> <p>The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned and such cases are handled</p>	Personal views on cultural mismatches / case of cultural mismatch: religion

CC: And then the Jewish passenger complained again because the man now sitting next to him was overweight and he could not sit comfortably haha I must say it felt good to tell him that it is a full flight and there was nothing further I could do about it.	The participant provides additional information on the case previously mentioned and adds an explanation on how the case was handled	Case of cultural mismatch: religion
CC: You know we deal with so many cultures, religions and what not on a daily basis and you want to please everybody but I truly believe it is a two-way street. We all have to adapt a little bit just so we can get from A to B safe and sound. And some passengers have to accept that this is sometimes next to a woman (silence...)	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
CC: Another example is a French passenger who wanted to order coffee at the coffee bar at the airport and I was standing there in my uniform. And he only spoke French and he became angry because the employee of the coffee bar did not speak French. So he started talking to me in French saying that he find it very unacceptable that she did not	The participant provides an example of a case where a passenger got angry because the airport employee did not speak their native language	Case of cultural mismatch: language

<b>speak French and I answered in French and told him that this is an international airport where the official language is English so it is unacceptable that you do not speak English sir.</b>		
<b>I: Haha, you know I have spoken to some colleagues now and I must say many of you just say to the passenger what is on your mind haha but aren't you scared to get a complaint or an official warning?</b>		
<b>CC: Haha, well no because some passengers truly think that they can do and say whatever especially nowadays people are so disrespectful so you have to stand up for yourself or others sometimes</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>I: Yes that is true</b>		
<b>CC: And very often you see that that passengers are shocked when you tell them about themselves but afterwards they realize that they were out of line and often in situations they apologize even so it helps haha</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>I: Haha well I hope so</b>		

<b>CC: Haha yes it is like raising children at the airport</b>	The participant provides personal views on cultural mismatches	Personal views on cultural mismatches
<b>I: Haha, well do you have any other examples?</b>		
<b>CC: (Silence...) hmm well not that I can think of right now</b>		
<b>I: Ok, no worries I think I have enough I want to thank you very much for your time and help</b>		
<b>CC: No problem and if I can think of something I will let you know</b>		
<b>I: Yes thank you very much</b>		
<b>I: Bye!</b>		
<b>CC: Bye!</b>		

### Interviews (leading cases)

#### Interview 1

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 1
		I: Hi, thank you for this Skype meeting
		GA: No problem I have nothing to do anyways haha since we have to stay home Rutte said haha
		I: Haha indeed!
		I: Hmm so, first let me explain what I actually want to know from you haha. Hmm so, I will present you five cases in total.

		These are situations that may or may not be familiar situations and for each situation I would like to know how you would handle this situation step by step.
		GA: Ok, I will try my best.
		I: Ok, let's start!
		I: Hmm, so the first case I will just read the situation and you can respond
		GA: Alright
		I: Hmm, yes so the first case is... A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?
		GA: Oh I have experienced this a lot haha hmm let me think... (silence)
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Establishing a relationship first by calming down the passenger	GA: So, hmm first thing I do is try to explain that I do not understand the passenger by speaking English "I do not understand you" or "I do not speak French". With angry passengers it is most important to stay calm. When the passenger seems to be angry I would first try to calm
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Effectively adapting to the situation in order to achieve the goal of successful communication to help the passenger	

<b>Social Competence</b>	Takes control over the situation through role taking (staying calm) and interaction management (handling conflict)	the passenger down. Hmm, I would do my best to try to understand what the passenger is trying to ask or tell me and try to communicate with hand gestures. Hmm (silence...)
<b>Interpersonal competence</b>	Using hand gestures as a communication tool to achieve understanding	GA: Often at this point I am talking English while trying to express myself by using hand gestures so I can imagine a passenger who does not understand the language and is angry cannot clearly understand what I am trying to say (silence...)
		I: So, what happens when you have followed these steps and the passenger gets angrier or keeps on talking in French?
<b>Interpersonal competence</b>	Trying to look for other options as a communication tool to achieve understanding	GA: Hmm, I would look for another solution because apparently my first approach did not work. I would try to ask my colleague whether they speak French or could help solve the situation. Hmm, often in situations like these there are other passengers who do speak the language and will help translate but of

		course that is not always the case so yes (silence...)
		I: Oke, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their excessive luggage and feels discriminated by you because of this. The passenger tells you "you are doing this because I am black". How would you handle this situation? So, the passenger maybe expected you to waive the excessive luggage and you did not do this "because the passenger is black".
		GA: Hmm, (silence...)
<b>Social Competence</b>  <b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Applying interaction management in order to solve conflict  Trying to accomplish task (getting the customer to pay) through successful communication (offering an explanation)	GA: Hmm, in this situation first I would try to make it clear that I am absolutely not discriminating. Hmm, in situations like these I would try to make sure that it is clear that the process that I am following is according to the rules of the airline and not just a decision I made based on someone's skin color. So, I will try to explain this to the passenger.
		I: And what if the passenger does not believe you?



<b>Social Competence</b>	Cognitive complexity: analyzing the situation by time measurement. Realizing there is not enough time or tools to convince somebody. Therefore, making the decision to offer an ultimatum to achieve the goal and complete the task	GA: Well, hmm, there is only so much you can do. You cannot try to convince somebody that you are not discriminating in such a short amount of time. There is simply no time. So if a passenger would not believe me I would give them an ultimatum "pay for the luggage and file a complaint afterwards or do not come on this flight". Of course, the decision then is quickly made by the passenger. It is often that they use the "race" card in situations they want to come out of like not wanting to pay extra for luggage.
		I: How can you be sure that it is not about "race"?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Cognitive complexity: the participant does not perceive this situation as being discriminatory because of a particular reason	GA: Hmm, because when I feel like if a passenger really feels discriminated they would not want to fly with an airline company that employs staff who discriminates.
		I: Oke, the third case is hmm an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman

		seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. Tell me what would you do? Haha
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Adapting to the situation to achieve a specific goal: selling an upgrade in order to reseat	GA: Hmm, if a passenger wants to be resealed I would tell this passenger I will have a look to see if there are any available empty seats. In these cases I always ask if a passenger would like to purchase an upgrade if this is available of course.
		I: And what if it is a full flight and there are no empty seats available and there is no possibility for an upgrade or the passenger does not want to buy an upgrade?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Cognitive Complexity: Analyzing the situation and looking at further options	GA: Hmm, it depends on the situation. So, it is really important to listen to the situation of the passenger. In this case the passenger has a religion related reason for wanting to be resealed. But if there is no real reason for a passenger to be resealed and it is a full flight, the passenger would have to accept their
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Through successful communication trying to achieve the goal of explaining to the passenger that you are doing your best to reseat the passenger and also explaining that this is	

	not always possible / explaining what is possible	current seat and maybe try to switch seats on board with another passenger. In this case I would try to check in the system whether I can switch the seat with another passenger but this is not always possible. Sometimes there are only upgrades available and the passenger does not want to pay extra for another seat so then I would tell the passenger that it is either a paid upgrade or try to switch on board with another passenger. There is not always something you can do for a passenger when the options you have presented are not accepted by the passenger.
		I: Hmm, the fourth case is maybe not so familiar like the other cases because this occurred inflight. But I present this case as a case to think about all the weird requests you maybe have had and to think about how you would respond in situations like these. So, the case is a passenger demands the

		restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean all the time.
		GA: Yuck! Haha HELL NO!
		I: Haha, how would you handle this situation? Please tell me!
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	NO fundamental competence as the participant is not able to effectively adapt in this situation	GA: Hmm, I would be the one who would not do this. And not so much because I think it is nasty but I know that the restrooms on board, especially on long flights, get cleaned a few times during the flight but I think that there is a certain limit to requests in the name of culture or religion. So NO! I have to adapt but so does the passenger. This is an international environment sorry. Staff and passengers have to meet each other half way so (silence...)
		I: Hmm, do you adapt? And do you think that it is enough?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Explaining to effectively adapt in situations however there are limitations to	GA: Hmm, yes I adapt because I could not do my job otherwise. But I have my limits. When I first started

	adapting (depends on the situation)	working for the company I had a hard time saying no or maybe knowing how to respond in certain situations. I wanted to please everybody all the time and want to be understanding and show respect for all religions and cultures. Don't get me wrong I still try to do this but I have limits now. I think it is the manner in which you explain to the passenger why you would not do something for them even if it is against their religion or culture and then they understand it.
		I: So in this case what would you tell the passenger?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Expressing empathy towards the passenger by being understanding for their religion	GA: Hmm, I would say sir I understand that this is a religious matter for you however I am not able to clean the restroom after every visit because then I cannot do my job properly.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Achieving goal through successful communication (rejecting the request)	
		I: Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common

		behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you do?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Effectively adapting to the situation	GA: Hmm, personally I would first count to ten because this I find highly offensive. But it is important to keep my composure and stay calm and collective. I would then tell the passenger that this behavior is unacceptable and I find it highly offensive. I would try to explain that this behavior is not common here. Hmm, I would expect an apology so yeah (silence...)
<b>Social Competence</b>	Role taking (expression of boundaries)	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Achieving goal through successful communication (explaining this is unacceptable behavior and should not happen again and wanting an apology)	
		I: And what happens if the passenger does not understand your explanation and does not apologize?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Cognitive Capability: analyzing the situation and adapting the strategy of handling the communication based on this analyzation	GA: It depends on the behavior of the passenger in that time. So, if the passenger is calm and listens and would not understand why this behavior is not acceptable I would make it clear not to do this again. I can understand that when it comes to culture some habits are so installed in a person's character, daily routine or behavior it is hard

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		for them to understand that this is wrong. You can tell if a person does not WANT to understand you or simply does not understand. So, if a passenger does not WANT to understand me and does not apologize I would have to remove him from the flight and file a complaint for harassment.
		I: Oke, well those were all the cases. I want to thank you so much for this interview.
		GA: Oh yes, no problem.
		I: Bye!
		GA: Bye!

### Interview 2

I = Interviewer, SA: Service Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 2
		I: Hi there! Thank you for agreeing to this interview!
		SA: Hey, no worries glad I can help.
		I: Yeah, so let's get started. Hmm I will explain a bit about what we are going to do and if you have any questions just let me know
		SA: Yes

		I: Hmm, I will present to you five situations in total. These situations may be familiar to you some may not. And I would like to know how you would handle or solve these situations while at work. So how you would react or what actions you make take in these different situations so...
		SA: Ok, I think I understand. So, I will just explain what I would do in every situation separately?
		I: Yes! I will just start with a case and you will tell me what you would do after I mentioned the case.
		SA: Ok, got it!
		I: Oke, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry with you because you do not speak French. So, what would you do or say in this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	General ability to effectively adapt to the situation by using hand gestures, explaining in English or asking colleagues for help	SA: Hmm, this one is tricky. First, I would try to explain in English or with hand gestures that I do not understand him. Or her! I would I think ask my colleague if he or she speaks



		French. And if that is not the case then I am not able to help the passenger.
		I: And if you come to the point where you think ok I am not able to help this passenger what do you do?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	NO fundamental competence as the participant is not able to effectively adapt in this situation	SA: Hmm, yeah nothing actually. Mostly I just hold up my hands like "I don't know". And then the passenger often just walks away because they notice that I do not understand them.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	NO interpersonal competence in the first case because there is no ability to accomplish tasks and goals through successful communication	
		I: And do you try to calm the angry passenger down?
<b>Social Competence</b>	NO social competence as the participant is not able to display empathy, cognitive complexity and interaction management	SA: Well, I try to stay calm and talk calmly. But it is hard to calm a passenger down when you do not understand him or her or when the passenger does not understand you. So yeah, most of the time they walk away (silence...)
<b>Relational Competence</b>	NO relational competence as participant is not able to establish a degree of relationship in order to	

	interact effectively by staying calm	
		I: Hmm, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their too heavy luggage and feels that you are doing this because "they are black". How would you solve this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	NO fundamental competence as the participant is not able to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that it is not the reason why the passenger has to pay extra for the luggage. And I am not discriminating.
<b>Communication Competence</b>	NO communication competence because the participant does not display any possible knowledge of executing language properly. Is not able to correctly explain the reason behind the costs for luggage	
		I: And if the passenger does not believe you?
<b>Social Competence</b>	NO social competence as the participant is not able to display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	SA: Hmm, yeah, hmm, I don't know to be honest that is not really my problem haha. There are rules and I have to follow these rules and so does the passenger. He has to pay for the luggage.

<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	No interpersonal competence as the participant is not able to achieve tasks or goals through successful communication	
		I: What if the passenger gets even more upset and does not want to pay for the luggage?
<b>Social Competence</b>	NO social competence as the participant is not able to display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	SA: I would tell the passenger that it is a possibility he or she will not be accepted on the flight. So, it is a risk if they do not pay for the luggage.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	NO interpersonal competence as the participant is not able to reach goals and complete tasks through successful communication	
		I: Oke, so another case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant effectively adapts to the situation	SA: Hmm, first I would ask where he was seated now and check whether there are seats available. Often flights are full or overbooked so I would not be able to reseat this passenger. I have to keep in mind that other passengers often pay for a specific seat so I cannot just switch seats with other passengers in the system so (silence...)
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays cognitive complexity by keeping all outcomes of the situation in mind	
		I: And what would you tell this passenger when a reseating is not available?
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Achieving a task by recommending the passenger to ask onboard in order to be resealed	SA: I would recommend him to ask a passenger on board to switch with them or I would mention this to the cabin crew and maybe they can assist him in switching seats on board.
		I: Hmm, oke, hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. What would you do?

		SA: Hmm, (silence...)
		I: And I just want to mention that it might not be a familiar case but have you had any experience of odd requests because of religion or culture where you had to solve the situation.
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: Hmm, well, in this case or keeping in mind other odd requests I would tell the passenger that I cannot do that.
		I: And do you give additional explanations to these passengers as to why you cannot give in to certain requests?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill,	SA: It depends on the request and the situation and the passenger of course. But often it is a yes or no for me.

	there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	Passengers do not even ask for the reason behind the answer.
		I: Do you keep in mind that certain requests are culture or religion related?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: Hmm, yes but passengers often know that what is normal and common for them and their culture does not have to be normal and common for me simply because we do not have the same culture or religion. And of course, in certain situations you keep it in mind but passengers also understand that some things are just common sense. How can I do my job if I am cleaning toilets every two seconds?
		I: Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is normal in the

		passenger's culture. How would you solve this case?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking as the participant mentions what their boundaries are and displays interaction management by trying to resolve the conflict.	SA: Oh my God, haha. Hmm well I would tell the passenger that this is not OK! And that he should not do this! In most occasions where something happens that is unacceptable I always tell a colleague maybe a Gate Agent. And often we discuss whether we would accept someone like this on the flight. He might do it to other colleagues during the flight as well. So it is important to see whether it is safe to accept someone on the flight or not (silence...)
		I: Ok, I want to thank you! That were all the cases.
		SA: Yeah, no problem! Bye Bye!
		I: Bye!

Interview 3

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 3
		I: Hi there, thank you for joining me on Skype!
		SA: Hey hey!

		I: So, I will explain a bit what I want to know and then we can start the interview (silence...)
		I: Hmm, yes, so, I will present five cases to you and I would like to know what you would do in certain situations or how you would solve certain situations hmm yes so, after every case I would like to hear that from you.
		SA: Ok, duidelijk!
		I: Yes, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, I experience this a lot haha. So, what I do first is make sure that the passenger calms down. I try to stay calm myself and really try to express that I am listening to the passenger even though I do not understand what he or she is saying. When I notice the passenger calms down I try to make it clear either by speaking English or hand gestures. In
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to accomplish goals by trying to understand what the	



<p><b>Communicative Competence</b></p> <p><b>Relational Competence</b></p>	<p>passenger is saying using hand gestures and English</p> <p>Participant is able to display knowledge on how to use language properly</p> <p>Participant is able to establish a certain degree of relationship by calming the passenger down first</p>	<p>these situations it's usually a mixture of both. I try to understand what the passenger wants which can be difficult because you don't understand the passenger hmm so (silence...)</p>
<p><b>Linguistic Competence</b></p> <p><b>Social Competence</b></p>	<p>Participant displays how to use language properly by focusing on the particular words</p> <p>Using cognitive complexity, using experiences to successfully interact</p>	<p>SA: You know when you have worked here for a while you will know automatically what a passenger might want from you mostly it are questions about the boarding time, where is the gate? Where is the toilet? So, you know how to pick little words that sound familiar to you because you hear them quite a lot and then I usually wright the gate number on a piece of paper or I point out the direction where the toilet is.</p>
		<p>I: And what happens when you really do not understand why the passenger is angry?</p>
<p><b>Fundamental Competence</b></p>	<p>Trying to adapt to the unknown situation by seeking help from others</p>	<p>SA: After my own approach does not work I ask a colleague for help. Often it is someone</p>

		who has more work experience than me. I notice that it is most important to calm an angry passenger down because being angry or upset just complicates the communication even more.
		I: And often passengers are in a hurry. Are you able to carry out all these steps when a passenger is really in a hurry?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying cognitive complexity by analyzing the situation	SA: Passengers are always in a hurry haha. No but it can frustrate a passenger even more when they are in a hurry and don't know where the gate is for example and asks someone who doesn't speak the language. But it is really choosing your battles here at work. I cannot solve every problem unfortunately haha. But I experience often is that when passengers get in situations like these and language is a problem they quickly I think like make a decision in their mind like do I stay and wait for the answer or do I go and figure it out myself. So, often when they really don't have the time or maybe

		they really don't want to wait for me to figure it out they just walk away from the conversation.
		I: And how do you deal with the passenger walking away? Because you did not solve their problem
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying cognitive complexity by analyzing the situation	SA: Hmm, well I don't run after the passenger. Communication is a two-way street, when a passenger approaches me they also have to give me the opportunity to make sense of it all and to give me the opportunity to solve their issue. If they don't give me this then the conversation has already failed.
		I: Ok, now the second case. Hmm, a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to achieve a specific goal	SA: Hmm, in this situation I think it is important to state very clearly why the passenger has to pay extra for their luggage. By making this clear
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant is able to display empathy, role	

	taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	the passenger should know that this is because of the rules and that this has nothing to do with "race". Of course, I state that I am not discriminating but mostly I mention this after I have explained the rules. Because a passenger will not believe me when I just say "No, of course I am not discriminating you".
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to achieve a goal through successful communication by giving an explanation of the situation	
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant is able to use language properly to make sure the passenger has an understand of the situation	
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on executing language properly. Knowing how to use language in order to create understanding	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish a certain degree with the passenger by providing an explanation to take away the negative feeling of discrimination	
		I: Hmm the third case is next. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated

		because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do in this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to effectively adapt to a new and unknown environment to achieve specific goals	SA: Hmm, in seating situations I always check the system first. Where is the passenger seated right now? Are there any empty seats available? Is there an upgrade available? Does the passenger want to buy an upgrade? So, I tackle all these questions first. I always explain to the passenger that I will check and see in the system if there are any options for reseating. Because I cannot just say "Ok, I will reseat you" and make false promises. This will make the passenger angry and upset when I cannot keep my promise. In "normal" situations when I cannot reseat the passenger I apologize for the inconvenience and always advice the passenger to buy a preferable seat when booking a ticket to ensure a seat. But in this case because religion plays
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participants displays role taking, cognitive complexity and interaction management	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant displays ability to achieve goals or tasks through successful communication. Being able to successfully communicate how they are about to help the passenger	
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant displays proper use of language	
<b>Communication Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge of using language properly by	

<p><b>Relational Competence</b></p>	<p>knowing the importance of communication with the passenger and how to communicate instead of a simple “yes” or “no”</p> <p>Participant displays ability to establish a certain degree of relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>a role, I will ask a Gate Agent and discuss with them what other options there are. So, the Gate Agent will check whether it is possible to switch seats with another passenger. And if this is not possible, I will tell the passenger to ask a passenger on board to switch seats. The Gate Agent will let the Cabin Crew know about this situation so that they can assist this passenger on board.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom must be clean at all times. What would you do?</p>
		<p>SA: Hmm, this is difficult because I do not work on board hmm (silence...)</p>
		<p>I: You can think of all the odd requests you have received being religion or culture related. What do you do in situations which are not common for you?</p>

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation and considering the possibilities	SA: Hmm, well in cases like that it is either a yes or a no. If something is possible to do then I will do it because you always think I have to be service minded. But for example, in a case like this I would explain that this is not possible because... I would explain you know. Even in my mind I think it is a weird request I try to not show that I find it weird because I do not want to offend anybody. Everybody has their own thing their own culture so (silence...)
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity and interaction management	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to reject request in case this is not possible through successful communication	
<b>Communication Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to use language properly	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish a relationship of certain degree with the passenger by always showing respect for the culture or religion and not wanting to offend anybody	
		I: Ok, and the last one. Hmm, a passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is a normal thing in their culture. What would you do?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to unknown situation	SA: Haha oh, hmm, I would not feel comfortable. I would be, I think, shocked at first. But I will have to calmly explain that this is unacceptable behavior and if this happens again I have to report this and then there will be consequences for him. I hope the passenger would understand this when I explain this to him haha.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant is able to display role taking, cognitive complexity and interaction management	
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant is able to use language properly	
<b>Communication Competence</b>	Participant has knowledge on how to execute language properly by providing an explanation of how this situation makes the participant feel and this is unacceptable behavior	
<b>Relationship Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish a certain degree of relationship with the passenger	
		I: Haha, well this was it. Thank you!
		SA: No problem, it was fun! Let me know if you have any other questions. I: I will, thank you! Bye Bye!
		SA: Bye!



Interview 4

I = Interviewer, SA: Service Agent (former Cabin Crew member)

Core Categories	Category	Participant 4
		I: Hi, thank you for participating in my research
		SA: Of course, no problem glad I can help.
		I: Hmm, so I was wondering if you can help me with the following scenarios. I will ask you five cases so to speak and I would like from you to tell me step by step what you would do or say in these situations (silence...)
		SA: Ok, Ok, no problem.
		I: Hmm, ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. What would you do in this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to effectively adapt to the situation. Participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management. Participant is not able to accomplish tasks through successful	SA: Hmm, I think it's unreasonable when someone actually gets angry about this, so I feel show very little understanding in this situation.

	communication. Participant does not display proper use of knowledge nor adequate knowledge on how to use language properly. Participant is not able to establish a certain degree of relationship with passenger	
		I: And when you show little understanding, how does the conversation proceed? Or does it stop?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant adapts to the situation by asking colleagues for help	SA: Well, in cases like these I just ask my colleagues who are at the gate at that moment if anyone speaks French and if they want to help the passenger. But if there is nobody who speaks French I will just have to work it out with the passenger and my other colleagues since I don't speak French.
		I: And how do you continue when none of your colleagues speaks French? How do you then communicate with the passenger?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant adapts to the situation.	SA: Hmm, yeah, I would try to communicate with hand

<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant tries to accomplish task through successful communication by using hand gestures	gestures or something. Just try to make sense of it all. Sometimes you recognize certain words and even a person expressions you can make sense of what someone is trying to say. But really, you don't have all day to just help one passenger so yeah if hand gestures don't work then I don't know what else to do.
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Knowledge how to use language properly, focusing on certain words and expressions.	
		I: Ok, so the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". What would you do?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant adapts to the situation.	SA: I try to explain to the passenger that we follow the same procedure for every passenger and I will not go into the part where he or she feels discriminated.
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	
<b>NO other competences</b>	Participant is not able to display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management. Participant is not able to accomplish task through successful communication. Participant	

	does not establish any degree of relationship with passenger	
		I: So you mean that you don't say anything about the passenger thinking that you are doing this because they are black?
<b>NO other competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display empathy, is not able to use successful communication in order to achieve the goal, it not able to establish a relationship or display any knowledge on how to execute language properly.	SA: No, I don't. I just explain that these are the rules and that these rules are the same for everybody.
		I: And what if the passenger still does not want to pay, what happens then?
<b>NO other competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display empathy, is not able to use successful communication in order to achieve the goal, it not able to establish a relationship or display any knowledge on how to execute language properly.	SA: I would make clear that the passenger will not be able to go on the flight. So it is either paying or not flying.

		I: Hmm, so another case. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What do you do in situations like these?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Passenger is able to adapt to the situation to achieve specific goals.	SA: I try to make this happen, if necessary by calling another passenger to the desk to ask if he or she is willing to change seats with this particular passenger.
		I: What happens when no one wants to switch? Or when it is not possible to reseat this passenger?
<b>No other competences</b>	Participant does not display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, does not use communication successfully to achieve tasks, display knowledge on executing language properly and there is no display of achieving a certain degree of	SA: I would tell the passenger that he can try to ask somebody on board to switch.

	relationship with the passenger	
		I: And aren't you afraid that the Jewish passenger feels embarrassed or other passengers feel offended because you ask them to switch seats?
<b>No other competences</b>	Participant does not display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, does not use communication successfully to achieve tasks, display knowledge on executing language properly and there is no display of achieving a certain degree of relationship with the passenger	SA: Well, no because they are the one asking it. And as for the other passengers I don't go into detail but just ask if they are willing to switch.
		I: Ok, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. What would you do?

<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Using language properly	SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is not our procedure, no exceptions can be made. There are normally a number of fixed moments when the toilets are cleaned.
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation in order to achieve goals	
<b>NO other competences</b>		
		I: Ok, and the last one. A passenger hits a service provider on the buttocks as this is normal behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you do?
<b>No Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	SA: I would ask the passenger not to touch me, because I don't accept this behavior.

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		I: Ok, thank you that was it. If I have any other questions I will contact you!
		SA: That is totally fine. Thanks bye!
		I: Bye! Have a good day!

Interview 5

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 5
		I: Hi, thank you for taking the time to help me.
		SA: No problem. I have nothing to do anyways haha.
		I: Haha, so, I am just going to explain what I want to know and then you can answer the questions.
		SA: Ok, that's fine.
		I: Hmm, so, I will present five different cases to you and for every case I would like to know from you what you would do or say in these situations.
		SA: Ok!
		I: So, let's start. Hmm, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?



<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	SA: Since I don't speak French and English is an International language I always find it strange how passengers can get angry because you don't speak their language. In this situation I would ask the colleagues standing at the gate with me if anyone speaks French and if not, I would ask another passenger who speaks French to help with the translation.
		I: What happens when there is no one willing to translate? And your colleagues don't speak French?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Passenger is able to adapt to the situation till a certain extent.	SA: Hmm, I use my hands and my feet to try to make sense of what I am saying haha. But if I notice that someone doesn't WANT to speak English then I just leave it for what it is. If we don't understand each other then I can't help you.
		I: Ok, so the second case is hmm, a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which

		is too heavy, and feels that they have to pay for their luggage because "they are black". What would you do?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is our policy, but if he would continue on about the situation then I would tell him there is no other possibility but just to pay and I will not continue this discussion.
		I: Would you acknowledge the passenger's feelings on being discriminated?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through	SA: NO! I feel like this is often just an excuse because they have to pay. It is common sense and everybody knows that for extra luggage you have to pay! It has nothing to do with "race"!

	successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	
		I: Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I'd do anything to make it happen. I would look up the passenger list of that flight and check if there are passengers traveling alone. These passengers are maybe willing to switch seats. If there are passengers traveling alone, I would call them to the desk and ask if they want to switch seats with the Jewish passenger.
		I: And what do you tell the passenger when it is not possible to reseat him?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: Well, I don't make promises that it is always possible. So, when I am not able to change the seat at the gate I tell the passenger that he can try on board and ask the cabin crew if they can help him be reseated or he can ask another passenger on board to switch seats.
		I: Ok, so the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times.
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is not our procedure, where no exception can be made. I would also explain to the passenger that the cleaning of the toilets is done by a company which is specialized before and after the flight.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to accomplish goal through successful communication	
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	

		I: Ok, hmm, so the last question. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is normal in their culture. What would you do?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	SA: I would say that he should stop this behavior. Hmm, and if he continues this behavior I will remove him from the flight.
		I: Ok, thank you so much!
		SA: I hope I could help enough.
		I: Yes, I think I have enough information thank you.
		SA: Ok, bye! Have a nice day and stay safe!
		I: Yes, you too! Bye Bye!

Interview 6

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Categories	Category	Participant 6
		I: Hi, thanks for Skyping!
		CC: Yes, of course! What would you like to know?
		I: Hi, yes, so, I will explain this. Hmm, I will present five cases to you. These five situations may or may not be familiar to you but you can answer these questions with your own experiences. I would like to know what you would do or say in these situations. You don't have to solve the problem but I would like to know step by step what kind of actions you would take in these situations.
		CC: Ok, let's go!
		I: Haha, ok so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. What would you do?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management,	CC: A lot of French passengers do not speak English and this often occurs on European flights. A lot of the times they think that we are Air France and therefore they expect for

	participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	us to be able to speak French. In this case, I would personally tell the passenger that I do not speak French and I have experienced this a lot. I always tell the passengers I would like to help them but I can only do this in the languages I can speak.
		I: And what happens when the passenger does not understand this explanation? And he does not speak any other language that you speak?
		CC: I see if there are passengers who can translate
		I: And what happens when the passenger stays angry? How do you handle this?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: I would let them vent first and then, in English, I would ask another passenger what the problem is. I would then try to solve the problem or just try to communicate. You know if that doesn't solve the problem they can file a complaint with customer service haha. There
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking, interaction management	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant establishes a certain degree of relationship	

		is only so much you can do really.
		I: Ok, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black".
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: Hmm, well I have really experienced this during check-in. In cases such as this one it is important to put your foot down and stick to the point. But what is also important is that you make the passenger feel comfortable. I would say that the luggage is too heavy and how much the total price would be. I would also try to suggest other options such as asking if there is anything in the luggage which can be put in the trolley so that the passenger doesn't have to pay for the too heavy luggage. Important here is that you hold every passenger to the same standard. If I don't let this passenger pay for the too heavy luggage and the passenger behind him has too heavy luggage as well I cannot
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant is able to display role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	



		say “well sir, he didn’t have to pay but you have to”.
		I: How do you let this passenger feel comfortable?
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	CC: Listening is very important and immediately after that asking questions. I probably also would summarize what I’ve heard from the passenger just to make sure I understood what I’ve heard so that I can respond to the passenger.
<b>Communication Competence</b>	Participant is able to display knowledge on the use of proper language	
		I: Ok, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. What would you do?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and	CC: Orthodox Jewish passengers are indeed not allowed to sit next to women however, it is not always possible to take this into account on a flight. This is a western airline company. I would tell the passenger that he can ask another passenger if they are willing to switch seats with him. If there is enough

	displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	time I would be the one asking this on behalf of the passenger because I always want to take the culture and religion of passengers into account. I do this so that passengers feel like they matter and that they are heard.
		I: Hmm, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be cleaned at all times.
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to	CC: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is not possible because the most important task during the flight is to ensure safety for all the passengers. I would explain that me and my colleagues are here to ensure safety and we want to ensure that everybody has a pleasant flight so it is not possible to clean the restroom the entire flight. I would also make it clear that I am not a toilet lady haha. Yeah, so, I would just try to explain this

	establish a relationship with the passenger	that I am willing to help as much as possible but there are limits.
		I: And the last case, a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in the passenger's culture. What would you say or what would you do to handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: I would explain that this is not acceptable behavior and ask if the passenger could stop this behavior and not do it again. If the passenger does not stop this behavior I would explain that there are consequences when this behavior does not change.
		I: Ok, that was it. I want to thank you!
		CC: Of course, no problem. Have a good day.

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		I: You too. Bye!
		CC: Bye!

### Interview 7

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent (former Cabin Crew member)

Core Categories	Category	Participant 7
		I: Hey, thanks for Skyping with me today.
		GA: No problem! What are we doing today?
		I: Hmm, I will just jump right to it. I will ask you five questions on situations and how you would handle these situations. What would you do and what would you say?
		GA: Ok.
		I: Hmm, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak the language. Tell me what would you do or what would you say?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt	GA: Hmm, I would try to explain to the passenger that I want to help him even if I don't speak the same language. I want to make sure that the passenger notice that I am listening.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays empathy, role taking, Interaction management	
<b>Communicative Competence</b>		

<b>Relational Competence</b>	<p>Participant displays knowledge on proper use of language</p> <p>Participant is able to establish a relationship with passenger through listening</p>	
		I: And what do you do when you have established this?
		GA: Hmm, so after the passenger has calmed down you mean?
		I: Yeah...
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	GA: You search for all kinds of options to solve this so you ask passengers to translate or colleagues if they speak French.
		I: Ok, hmm the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". What would you do?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to	GA: Oh, I get this a lot at European flights when we have to check in luggage at the gate. Hmm, honestly here I just make sure I stand my ground. I just make sure that I explain these are the rules and these rules

	accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	count for everybody. I always try to make the passenger feel that I am not only holding him accountable but everybody before and after him I am checking their bags too.
		I: What happens when the passenger still does not want to pay after you have made it clear that these are the rules that are for everybody?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to use language properly	GA: Then I get stricter in the sense that I don't take the feelings into account that much. At this point I have already explained that this is not a case of discrimination, this are the rules that apply to everybody. And if at this point the passenger does not want to follow the rules I will tell the passenger the consequences.
		I: Ok, the next case. An Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight.

		Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How do you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	GA: In this situation it is important to show understanding. But also make it clear to the passenger that it is not always possible to be reseated. It is important to let passengers know that you understand, you will do your best, but you cannot guarantee solutions. I think this is important in every situation. Especially when it comes to differences in culture and religion. People want to know that you have understand for their differences but I think it is also important to let them know that sometimes they are the ones that have to adapt.
		I: Ok, hmm, and the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times.

		How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	GA: Hmm, well again even though this is a really weird request haha. I would show understanding just to make sure that the passenger is comfortable with me telling him that it is not possible. So "I understand that this is your religion but unfortunately I am not able to do this because bla bla..."
		I: Is there always understanding towards staff when you have to tell a passenger no?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals	GA: Not always. But I think it depends on the manner in which you tell the passenger no. Often passengers get upset with colleagues of mine but when I explain to the passenger why and show understanding then you see them get calmer



	through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	and also more understanding towards you. Passengers just want to notice that you listen and that you explore all the options instead of just telling them NO!
		I: Oke, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and in his culture this is very normal. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	GA: Hmm, I would feel offended and very uncomfortable. It is very degrading and I think it would also be hard to explain to someone that this is not normal. I would definitely explain that this behavior is unacceptable for me and to never do that again. I think it is important to stay calm although I would find it very difficult to keep my composure with someone who I am not comfortable with. But I think it is also important to keep in mind that this person really

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		believes that this is ok behavior. So actually, you cannot really blame this person for doing this.
		I: Ok, thank you for your answers. This was it haha.
		GA: Glad I could help.
		I: It is appreciated! Stay safe and stay healthy!
		GA: Yes, you too! Bye Bye!
		I: Bye!

Interview 8

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 8
		I: Hey, how are you? Thanks for Skyping!
		SA: Hey hey, no problem. I have to mention that I do not have a lot of time so I hope I can answer all the questions.
		I: No problem, it will not take that long. Let's see how far we can come.
		SA: Yes, otherwise tomorrow we can continue?
		I: Yes, no problem.
		SA: Ok, great!
		I: Yes, so I will quickly explain what I want to know hmm. I will

		present five scenarios and if you could tell me how you would handle these situations so, hmm, what you would do what you would say or even feel and think that is fine.
		SA: Ok, I can do that.
		I: Ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry with you because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	SA: Hmm, I would first try to calm the passenger down. I think it is important to stay calm myself and maybe try to make clear that I want to help. Yeah, how do you do that in this situation when the passenger doesn't even understand you? Haha, hmm. I know it sounds stupid but I always talk English with passengers who don't even speak English. I think it's just something that goes automatically because I know they don't speak Dutch so yeah English is something that automatically comes out my mouth then haha. I often hope

		that they understand some words and that they can try to make sense of it.
		I: Ok and...(interrupted)
<b>Communicative Competences</b>	Displaying knowledge on proper use of knowledge	SA: And also what I wanted to say, sorry, is that body language is very important in situations like these and things like hand gestures. You can make so much sense of someone's body language and even hand gestures. So it is important to really pay attention in this situation. Mostly when passengers see that you are really trying they are not even mad anymore. They can appreciate you doing your best to help them.
		I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management,	SA: Hmm, I actually never experience this. Maybe because I'm black too? Haha. But I would explain to them that this is not the case. I don't discriminate and I would explain why the

	<p>participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication,</p> <p>participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>passenger has to pay for the luggage. It is I think important to make it clear that these are the rules and that these rules are for everybody not just him.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>ALL Competences</b>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication,</p> <p>participant uses language</p>	<p>SA: Hmm, first I would show understanding for the situation and tell the passenger that I can check what is possible and that I will do my best. I'll check the system and look if it is possible to reseat him.</p>

	properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	
		I: How do you handle the situation when it is not possible to reseat him?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	SA: Hmm, I will have to tell him the bad news and explain to him that unfortunately I'm not able to reseat him. I can recommend checking onboard and maybe check if somebody on board is willing to switch with him or ask the cabin crew to help him with this.
		I: Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to

		use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I would explain to the passenger that this is not possible. I can't think of anything that I could do or say in this situation to make it any better or more understanding. I would expect the passenger to adapt to this situation because that is the risk of commercial flying. It cannot be guaranteed that you are the only one using that one particular restroom during the flight.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	
		I: Ok, the last case because I know you have to run after this. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be common behavior in his culture. How do you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability	SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is unacceptable behavior and that if he does this again there will be consequences. In situations like these or when you are in a discussion with someone who

	to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	are from male dominant cultures it is very important as a woman to make it clear where your boundaries are. It is often very difficult because you don't want to insult anyone and most of the time I am very uncomfortable but I think it is important to let these men know that certain things that are accepted in their country is not accepted here.
		I: Ok, thank you for participating.
		SA: No worries, sorry I have to go. But if you have any questions just WhatsApp me.
		I: I will, thank you. Bye!
		SA: Bye!

Interview 9

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 9
		I: Hey, thanks for Skyping. How are you?
		GA: Hey, I'm fine. How are you? What difficult times are these huh?
		I: Yes, but I'm doing fine and still healthy haha.
		GA: Good. (silence...)



		I: So, I just want to explain what I want to know from you. I will ask you questions about five cases. This can be situations you have experienced as a Gate Agent. Just tell me how you would handle the situation, what you would say, what you would do, how you may feel ok?
		GA: Yes, ok.
		I: Ok, so, hmm, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation? Also, you don't have to solve the situation but just take me through the process of how such an encounter proceeds.
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication,	GA: Ok, I would still speak English to the passenger because he or she is at an international airport.

	participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	
		I: How would you establish a level of understanding even when the passenger doesn't speak or understand English?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on proper use of language	GA: I would use a combination of English and use my hands or write something down. Just in the hope that this combination something would make sense to the passenger. But also for me because I don't understand what the passenger actually wants so I am trying to figure this out as well.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant displays ability to use successful communication in order to reach goal	
		I: How do you handle the fact that the passenger is angry?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	GA: Well, you stay professional because you have to provide service. In the worst case, I would use modern technology and use Google translate. But if I've tried every resource I have and the communication is not successful unfortunately it is
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking, interaction management	

		out of my hands. Then I can't help the passenger.
		I: Ok, hmm, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	GA: Well, I would tell him that this are the rules of the airline and I would not entertain that the remarks "because I'm black". I would not go into a discussion with this passenger. Because these are just the rules that everybody has to follow.
		I: What is the reason behind the fact that you don't entertain the passenger his or her feelings of discrimination?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation,	GA: Hmm, because hmm, his expression "because I'm black"

	<p>participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>are his words not mine. It is not relevant to express my feelings on that matter.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>NO Competences</b>	<p>Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through</p>	<p>GA: I would ask the question why he doesn't want to sit next to a woman. And if he explains this and the flight is full and I am not able to change his seat I would tell him that the only option would be to put him onto another flight. I just think</p>

	<p>successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>that people should adapt because this is a commercial airline. Otherwise you should fly private.</p>
		<p>I: Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>NO Competences</b>	<p>Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not</p>	<p>GA: Hmm, I would tell him that I respect his religion or culture but this request I'm not able to answer to this request. Hmm, I would explain that this is not possible because it is not common in our culture or religion. The passenger just has to adapt to this.</p>

	establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	
		I: I can imagine you getting a lot of requests that are not common for the Dutch culture. Do you handle all the special requests the same?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant display cognitive complexity	GA: Hmm, no! It depends on the request. I mean I respect all cultures and religions don't get me wrong. But it depends on the requests. There are limits and I think people often forget that we as staff differ in culture from them. But yeah, it depends on the request.
		I: Ok, so the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is "normal" behavior in their culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking, interaction management	GA: I would feel humiliated that is one. And I would explain to him that I do not have to accept this behavior from him even though it is normal in his culture. I would have to make clear that as a western woman he has crossed a line. And there

		will be consequences if he doesn't change this behavior. So, even though he might think it is normal for his culture, in my culture it is not so it is unacceptable.
		I: Would you say that push your own boundaries to make other passengers from other cultures more comfortable even though some things might make you uncomfortable?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, participant is not able to show empathy, role taking, cognitive capabilities, interaction management, participant is not able to achieve goals through successful communication, participant is not able to display knowledge on how to use language properly, Participant does not establish any degree of relationship with the passenger	GA: NO! Because it is the same that when I am in a country where they live by the law of the Islam. You know not to walk around to naked for example and you respect their culture over there. I adapt. So, for the same reason, the passenger has to adapt in the country that he is. We have to respect each other's culture so we both have to adapt and find a common ground.
		I: Ok, thank you for participating.
		GA: No problem, bye! Stay safe!

		I: Bye Bye, you too!
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Interview 10

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Categories	Category	Participant 10
		I: Hi, thanks for taking this Skype meeting.
		CC: No problem. How can I help?
		I: Well, I would like for you to answer some questions about five situations that you may have experienced yourself. If not that's ok as well. Just would like to know what your thoughts are on certain situations, how you would react, what you would do or say in these situations.
		CC: Ok. (silence...)
		I: Hmm, ok, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking,	CC: Well, first of all I think that as a cabin crew member it is important to speak other languages other than just



	<p>cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>English. I mean you don't have to be fluent but just some words in order to have the ability to help someone. It can go a long way. Communication is key especially with our job. We are there to ensure safety and to assist might something be wrong. Imagine not being to explain to someone that there is an emergency and this are the steps that need to be taken and the person doesn't even understand you haha. I speak 8 languages so I barely have any issues during flights and I have extensive knowledge of other cultures, I think haha. I think important is that you should be able to place yourself in the shoes of the passenger. What would you want from a service provider if you were in the shoes of the passenger? I think that's the question to ask.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, so, hmm, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because "they are</p>

		black”. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: Hmm, yeah, you know “race” is a very sensitive issue. Especially in the time that we live in now. From my experience “race” is something that is used often when a passenger doesn’t want to pay extra or want an upgrade. They just want something so they abuse this to actually get it. Not saying this is what all passengers do but I think as staff you have to read people a little bit. Body language is as important as actual communication through words. I can imagine someone feels discriminated when a staff member has a body language and attitude that is a bit offensive and stand-off-ish towards the passenger of color. Especially when they have noticed you interacting “normal” with someone who is not of color. It may also be that you don’t hold everybody to the same standards and apply the rules for everybody. So, it

		<p>depends on the context of the situation as well. This is important to know how to deal with the situation. Because if these things did not occur, I think it is not even necessary to acknowledge the persons feelings on being discriminated. Because that's not the problem here. Do you get what I'm saying? So, it really depends on I would say other things that happened around the situations which will then help you decide how to approach the situation.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of his religious background he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>ALL Competences</b>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity,</p>	<p>CC: Hmm, I just recently experienced a group of Orthodox Jewish passengers. I must say religion and culture play a big part in someone's</p>

	<p>interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>attitude towards you but also characteristics. Some Orthodox Jewish passengers are very like "no we don't talk to women and we don't want to sit next to them and we don't want to be served by women". But some don't have a problem with these things at all. So, it depends. What I recently experienced is that the group of Orthodox Jewish passengers came on board. I told them at the beginning of the service that we don't have Kosher snacks and meals on board. I offered them some water because this was actually the only thing they could have. So, they were very understanding and happy that I offered them some water. The same for Muslim passengers when the chicken is not Halal, I just mention it immediately and they are so understanding and I offered them other options like peanuts and cookies. You know they were happy because they get the feeling that you</p>
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		understand their culture and you think about them.
		I: Hmm, ok, another case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to execute proper language	CC: Hmm, Yeah, again communication is key. Try to explain as much as possible that you have understanding but also tell a passenger the reasons why you are not able to do something.
		I: And the last case, a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is seen as something normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management,	CC: Hmm, yeah I think experience with difficult situations can help you deal with other difficult situations. A common reaction would be to be angry at a passenger and of

	<p>participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>course this behavior is unacceptable. But we also have to keep in mind that we work with so many different cultures. We have to be aware that what is normal and acceptable for us doesn't have to be for the passenger. But besides experiences, I think it is the personal characteristics that are also important. Is someone able to adapt to certain situations. Are they able to place themselves in the shoes of the passenger? Of course, we work for a western airline company and some people will keep this point of view for every situation. So, yeah, I would say in this case hold my composure and try to think that the passenger doesn't even know he is doing something wrong. Just try to make him aware of his mistake and that he shouldn't do it again.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, I want to thank you for your insight on things.</p>
		<p>CC: Glad I could help. Bye!</p>
		<p>I: Bye have a nice day.</p>

Interview 11

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 11
		I: Hi there, thank you for wanting to answer some questions.
		SA: Hey, No problem!
		I: Ok, let's get started right away. So, I will just present different situations to you and I would like to know from you how you would handle these situations, what you think or feel, what you would say, why you would have a certain approach to things.
		SA: Ok.
		I: So, hmm, the first case. Hmm, so, a French passenger refuses to speak English or he doesn't understand it nor speak it. He gets angry because he is not able to communicate with you because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, what I often do is try to communicate in English but then I would use my hands or maybe right something down
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying role taking	

<b>Linguistic competence</b>	Ability to use language properly	just to see maybe it will help in understanding each other. I often seek help from colleagues. But if they don't
<b>Communicative competence</b>	Knowledge on how to use language properly	speak the language as well I have to try to help the passenger. Often passengers
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Establishing a certain degree of relationship with the passenger	try to speak with their hands as well so I try to focus on what they might mean.
		I: And how do you feel about this? Is it a risk that you might interpret his expressions the wrong way and make the situation even worse?
		SA: Yes, it is often stressful. Hmm, stressful in the sense that I want to help the passenger but he is mad and then I want to help him even more because I don't want him to be mad anymore. But also sort of scared to do or say the wrong thing or like send him to the wrong gate which will make it even worse haha. Yeah, often I'm like what should I do?!
		I: The next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy,



		and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying role taking, interaction management	SA: Hmm, I would stick to the script. "Sir these are the rules, everybody has to follow the rules". It is challenging to not react to everything a passengers says to you but when you go into a discussion with them it can be a "he said, she said" type of situation and that is not the issue at hand. The fact is the luggage is too heavy, so the passenger needs to pay.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Accomplishing goals through successful communication	
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Using language properly	
		I: Ok, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: So, I would do my best to reseat him. But I would tell the passenger that this may not be possible so he has to take that into account as well.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>		

	Participant has the ability to reach goal through successful communication	
		I: The next case hmm, a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competence</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: Hmm, haha this one is a bit strange. But I would just tell the passenger that this is not possible. Because we have to provide service to other passengers as well.
		I: Ok, and the last case. A passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is very normal in the passenger's culture he

		doesn't know that he is doing something wrong. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	SA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that this behavior is really unacceptable and that the passenger shouldn't do this ever again. I do not accept this behavior. And I would really make it clear.
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge how to use language properly	
		I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.
		SA: Yes, no problem. Hope you are holding up ok during this time.
		I: Yes, I'm managing. Stay safe and stay healthy!
		SA: You too, bye bye!
		I: Bye!

Interview 12

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 12
		I: Hi there, thanks for Skyping. How are you?
		TA: I'm fine. How are you?
		I: I'm fine, thank you (silence...)
		I: So, I would like to ask you some questions. I want to know how you would handle certain situations and what you would

		say or do or how you would think in certain situations. Maybe you have a particular reason for doing things a certain way. So (silence...)
		TA: Yes, that's fine.
		I: Ok, hmm, so, I will give you five cases and ask you what you would do.
		TA: Ok.
		I: Hmm, so the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How do you handle the situation?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	TA: It depends on the context of the situations you know other factors that may play a role. As a Ticket Agent I deal with passengers who have missed their flight, their flight got cancelled or their flight is delayed. So, of course all passengers are different and every passenger has another story. But most of the time passengers are already irritated, angry, disappointed or sad. Most of the time when I have to deal with French

		<p>passengers at the desk and for example, their flight got cancelled they expect you to give them A1 service. Of course, this is the ultimate goal to keep the passenger happy but this is not always possible. They demand so many things from you that I often think to myself these things are not even reasonable. In this case when someone refuses to speak the language but is able to speak the language then I would most likely continue to speak English.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and they feel like they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>ALL Competences</b>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals</p>	<p>TA: Hmm, I would explain that this is absolutely not the case. And I would explain that these are the rules of the company. I think really explain how the pricing works just to make it more understandable for the passenger. I would never</p>

	through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	offend another culture, or at least not on purpose. So, yeah, I also think that staff who works with a lot of different cultures should be aware of what they say, how they say it, when they say it.
		I: Do you think that one should have extensive knowledge of other cultures and be able to speak different languages besides English in order to provide good service?
<b>Fundamental Competences</b>	Participant is able to adapt to unknown and new situations/environments	TA: Hmm, well I think that having some knowledge on other cultures is a plus. It can help in certain situations to know something about the culture you know what to say, what to do, what to expect. But I think it is also someone's characteristics that plays a role too. Because maybe you have a lot of knowledge about a culture but if you choose not to apply this knowledge in real life situations, you are the problem!

		I: Ok, so, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Ability to adapt to the situation	TA: Hmm, I would reseat this passenger. Or even just do my best to look for options. If I am not able to reseat him I would leave a comment in the system for the Gate Agent so that my colleagues can have a look at the gate.
		I: When a passenger has a request because of religious reasons like this, do you always give in to such request?
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant tries to establish relationship with the passenger	TA: Hmm, I think so yes. Because I try to be understanding and I also want passengers to have a pleasant flight regardless of religion and culture. So, yeah, if like in this case the passenger does not want to sit next to a woman then who am I to say "no you have to sit next to a woman"?

		I: Ok, then what would you do in a situation when a passenger demands the toilets to be cleaned after every visit because his religion demands clean toilets at all times?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Adapting to a certain degree	TA: Haha, ok, then I want to change my previous answer. I think I would want to add that it depends on the request. But not even because I don't want to clean toilets all day. I also have to take into account if the request is reasonable. I don't think my boss would be very happy with me cleaning toilets all day and not helping other passengers.
		I: Haha, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Role taking, interaction management	TA: Hmm, I would probably tell the passenger that this behavior is not acceptable. I would explain to him how things work here in this country. That behavior like that is not accepted here.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Accomplishing tasks through successful communication	



<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Using language properly	
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Displaying knowledge on how to use language properly	
		I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.
		TA: No problem. Bye!
		I: Bye Bye!

Interview 13

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Category	Categories	Participant 13
		I: Hi there, Thank you for Skyping.
		CC: Of course!
		I: So, I want to ask you some questions and just tell me how you feel about certain situations, what you think, what you would do and why you would do it this way and what you would say.
		CC: Ok, sure.
		I: So, the first case. A French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Adapting to the situation	CC: Hmm, I would calm the passenger down by trying to make clear that I am here to help. Even if I don't speak the language.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Role taking, interaction management	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Establishing a relationship with the passenger	
		I: Can you give a little more detail about how you are going to make this clear?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Displaying knowledge on how to use language properly	CC: Hmm, I would use hand gestures or write things down maybe. I would keep on talking English in the hopes that it will help the situation. If this doesn't work I would ask a colleague or another passenger to translate.
		I: Ok, hmm, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management,	CC: I would ask the passenger why they think that I'm discriminating them. Maybe this can be a learning moment for me. Is it something that I did or said? Or maybe I

	<p>participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>expressed myself wrong? I would love to know how a passenger came to the conclusion that he has to pay for his luggage because he is black.</p>
		<p>I: Do you expect an answer to this question that indeed educational for you?</p>
<b>ALL Competences</b>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>CC: Hmm, that is a good question. I actually don't know what to expect. I would think the passenger can tell me that I am discriminating because of something I did. This would give me the opportunity to apologize and tell the passenger that this was not my intention.</p>
		<p>I: Hmm, ok. The next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger</p>

		demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Adapting to the situation	CC: Hmm, I think I would do my best to switch seats with other passengers. But this can be difficult when it's a full flight. I think it is important to show that you do your best for the passenger but there is always a possibility that you might fail to change the seats for example.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Accomplishing goals through successful communication	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Trying to establish a relationship with the passenger	
		I: Hmm, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all time. How would you handle this situation?

<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: I have experienced a lot of “weird” requests and often I just have to disappoint people by telling them that it is not possible. I just make sure that I make them feel comfortable and not feel ashamed that they have asked me something. So, I just try to be understanding and not let them know that it is maybe because I wouldn’t want to clean toilets all day. And to be fair this request wouldn’t even be possible because you have to guarantee safety onboard and I can’t do that cleaning toilets the entire flight.
		I: As you get “weird” request often, how do you handle uncomfortable situations? Let’s say a passenger hits you on the buttocks because in his culture this is totally normal. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity,	CC: Hmm, I think just make clear where your boundaries are. You are human as well. You don’t have to accept everyone’s behavior just

	interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	because it's their culture and you have to provide service. Just like you have to be understanding they have to be understanding of your situation as well. Because in order to provide good quality service you have to be comfortable as well.
		I: Thank you so much. That were all the cases.
		CC: Thanks. This was fun.
		I: Ok, well if I have any other questions can I contact you again?
		CC: Sure!
		I: Ok, bye have a nice day.
		CC: Have a nice day.

Interview 14

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

Core Categories	Category	Participant 14
		I: Hi, hope you are doing well. Thanks for Skyping.
		GA: No problem. What can I help you with?
		I: I just need some questions to be answered haha. I want to know what you would do, think,

		say, feel in certain situations and why perhaps.
		GA: Ok, hmm...
		I: Yeah, so I will just present a case, a situation and then you just tell me what you would do or say or how you would feel about it.
		GA: Ok.
		I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Adapting to the situation	GA: Hmm, I think in all situations where language is an issue I just try to use my hands to communicate. Sometimes I write things down or I ask a colleague if they can help. But if I see that the communication really isn't going anywhere I have to stop the communication unfortunately.
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Displaying knowledge on how to use language properly	
		I: And how do you stop the communication?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Displaying knowledge on how to use language properly	GA: Yeah, hmm, I think body language? Hand gestures again? Sometimes I just don't

		<p>give the attention to the passenger anymore to make it clear. I know it sounds harsh, but especially at the gate and you are very busy and working under time pressure you don't always have the time to communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color who has to pay for their too heavy luggage feels discriminated. The passenger feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>NO Competences</b>	<p>Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment</p>	<p>GA: Oh, ugh, I don't even give attention to that statement anymore. I just make it clear that they have to pay for the luggage or they will be removed from the flight. I just can't understand that people link "race" to having to pay for their luggage.</p>



	of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Do you find it stressful that passengers might get the wrong idea and maybe, in this case, see you as somebody that is discriminating?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	GA: Hmm, sometimes. But I think that the experiences that I have I can easier let things go and try not to think about it as much. I don't go home with my work so to speak. In situations where things got very escalated and sometimes passengers call you names it can hurt. And it is stressful sometimes that certain things always has to be a discussion with people. You get tired of discussing things with people. But I've learned not to be bothered of people's opinion about me that much anymore.
		I: Ok, so the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to

		woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Ability to adapt to the situation	GA: Hmm, I would try and see in the system if it is possible to change the seats. But if I'm not able to change the seat then I would ask the cabin crew if they can help the passenger on board. But if they are not able to fix it then the passenger has to accept the fact that this is what it is.
		I: The next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Ability to adapt to the situation	GA: It is of course important to show understanding for everyone's culture and religion. However, some things are really not possible. A passenger needs to understand that we are a western airline. So, we do things differently here.
		I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the

		<p>buttocks because in his culture this is normal behavior. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>Social Competence</b>	<p>Displaying Role taking, cognitive complexity and interaction management</p>	<p>GA: Oh, no! Some things really go too far. It is like passengers from India expect to be carried or brought to the gate and you have to carry their bags. Because of their caste system they feel like when they are carried or brought to the gates they are from a higher rank in their society. But it just doesn't work like that here. I am not here to carry bags because your culture says it's normal to do so. The same for this case, I think. I am not here to accepting everything you think is normal just because your culture says so. There are boundaries. It is important to let these people know what the boundaries are. Keep your hands to yourself!</p>
		<p>I: Thank you for your answers.</p>
		<p>GA: Yes, no problem.</p>
		<p>I: Yes, have a nice day and stay safe!</p>
		<p>GA: Thank you, bye!</p>

## Interview 15

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 15
		I: Hey thank you for Skyping.
		SA: Yes, of course.
		I: So, I will would really like to know what you think of certain situations. So, how you feel, what you would do and say and why you would choose a particular approach towards certain situations.
		SA: Ok (silence...)
		I: So, to start, a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because the service provider does not speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I would continue to speak in English maybe throw a little Spanish in there haha. And use hand gestures to make sense of it all. I think if the communication is not successful at the gate and my colleagues don't know to speak the language then I would send him to someone higher up. Maybe a shift leader? Or I would send the passenger to the service desk, the transfer desk. I would assume that if I try to help the passenger that the passenger would at least be happy
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Trying to accomplish or achieve goals through successful communication by using hand gestures and trying multiple ways of	

<p><b>Communicative competence</b></p> <p><b>Relational Competence</b></p>	<p>communicating with the passenger</p> <p>Participant displays knowledge on how to use language properly</p> <p>Participant tries to establish a relationship by offering help in order for the passenger to calm down</p>	<p>about it or thankful or something and not be mad. But if all these options don't work I would have to tell him to ask his question on board of the flight. You know at some point you have to send the passenger away and just accept the fact that this communication attempt was a big fail haha. Because there is only so much you can do and you don't have all day to do it so.</p>
		<p>I: So, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?</p>
<p><b>Fundamental Competence</b></p>	<p>Participant is able to adapt to the situation</p>	<p>SA: Hmm, I just stay to the issue. I would tell the passenger what the rules are and how policy works and that it has nothing to do with "race". I get tired to always have to explain myself. Not everything it about "race", religion or culture. These are rules, there are policies people just stick to it. Just follow these policies. My work would be so much more fun I could focus more on the passenger then focusing on defending myself all of the time.</p>

		Often, I also seek support or some sort of back up from colleagues in these situations. From somebody who has a higher function than me. More to show that see a supervisor says the same thing so I am not discriminating.
		I: The next case, an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, yes, I would check in the system if this is possible to reseat. But most of the times I tell the passengers to check on board or to ask the cabin staff. Because, well not now with Corona virus, but before flight were almost always full. It is hard to change seats because passengers also pay for their preferred seats. And this is still a commercial airline. We want to make money as well. So, we cannot switch a paid seat for a passenger who has an issue because of their culture.
		I: A passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every

		use in the order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situations?
<b>No competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: I would tell the passenger that this is not possible. People really think of the craziest things. I would tell the passenger that I have other responsibilities on the job so I cannot be cleaning toilets all day. The passenger just has to adapt to the environment.
		I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is something that is very normal in their culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt in the situation	SA: Wow, I would report it. I think if the passenger does it to me he can also do it on a nine-hour flight. Which can cause for bigger problems I think because cabin crew

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		can feel really uncomfortable. I would make it clear that this behavior is really unacceptable.
		I: Ok, thank you.
		SA: No problem. Bye!
		I: Bye, have a nice day!

### Interview 16

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 16
		I: Hi, how are you? Thanks for Skyping!
		TA: Hey, no problem. Glad I can help.
		I: Yes, so I would like to know what you would do in certain situations. I will present five cases to you and then you can answer some questions.
		TA: Ok, no problem.
		I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situations?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>       <b>Communicative Competence</b>	Adapting to the situation in order to achieve specific goals	TA: Hmm, French can be very difficult when it comes to speaking English. Even though I don't speak French I still will do my best to communicate with the passenger. I



<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge of using language properly	would try to help the passenger so that he can calm down.
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Displaying role taking and interaction management  Establishing certain degree of relationship with the passenger	
		I: Do you find it stressful to communicate when there is a language barrier and the passenger is angry?
<b>Communicative competence</b>	Knowledge on how to use language properly	TA: Yes, I feel a lot of pressure sometimes. Because when the communication is challenging you cannot always solve the issue. And that is stressful.
		I: The second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	TA: I would explain to him that this is not the case. It is hard to convince someone that you are not doing something when they are entitled to their own feelings and opinions. But
<b>Social Competence</b>	Displaying empathy, role taking, cognitive	

<p><b>Interpersonal Competence</b></p> <p><b>Linguistic Competence</b></p> <p><b>Relational Competence</b></p>	<p>complexity, interaction management</p> <p>Trying to accomplish goals through successful communication</p> <p>Using language properly</p> <p>Trying to establish a certain degree of relationship</p>	<p>I would explain to the passenger that these are the rules.</p>
		<p>I: The third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demand to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<p><b>Fundamental Competence</b></p> <p><b>Linguistic Competence</b></p> <p><b>Interpersonal Competence</b></p>	<p>Adapting to the situation</p> <p>Using language properly</p> <p>Achieving goals through successful communication</p>	<p>TA: Hmm, I would check the system to see if it is possible to reseat the passenger. But I would make the passenger aware that this is not always possible. If I am not able to solve the situation I will send him to the gate and ask at the gate what the options are. At the transfer desk I am not always able to change seating because the Gate Agent has the last word about this matter.</p>

		I: The next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	TA: Hmm, I would tell the passenger that I am not able to clean the restrooms after every visit.
		I: How do you expect the passenger to react to this?
		TA: I expect him to understand and that he has to accept the situation as it is.
		I: Ok, the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be normal behavior in his

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		culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Linguistic Competence</b>	Using language properly	TA: I would tell this passenger that this behavior is unacceptable. And that he must not do this anymore.
		I: Ok, thank you for participating.
		TA: Your welcome. Bye Bye!
		I: Bye!

### Interview 17

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 17
		I: Hey hey, thanks for Skyping! How are you?
		SA: I'm fine, thanks. How are you?
		I: I'm fine. Hmm, so shall we get started? I will just explain what we're going to do...
		SA: Yes, let's get started.
		I: So, hmm, I want to know some things from you haha. Hmm, I will present five cases to you and I just want to know from you what you would do in these situations, what you think or feel or say and why.
		SA: Ok.
		I: So, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you do not speak French. How would you handle this situation?

<b>ALL competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	SA: Hmm, how would I handle this situation? Hmm... I would try to calm the passenger down although I would continue to speak English just because I wouldn't know what else to speak. I would also use hand gestures in the hopes that the passenger could understand me and see that I'm trying to help him.
		I: Does it take a lot of time to communicate with passengers in these cases?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>  <b>Social Competence</b>     <b>Communicative competence</b>	Being able to adapt to the situation  Displaying empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	SA: Hmm, yes, you have to have patience. And it can be irritating sometimes, frustrating, because you are trying to help somebody but the other person doesn't understand you. So, you feel like you are not doing your job correct. But often I cut people off really quickly. Because often it takes a long time and you have to make a decision

	Displaying knowledge on how to use language correctly	that you are not able to help the passenger.
		I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Ability to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, in situations like these I try to explain to the passenger what the rules are. I try to explain that the rules are for everybody.
		I: Is there a reason why you don't address the passengers' feelings of discrimination?
		SA: I think that when I explain the rules and just explain that I'm just following the policy of the company I want to make it clear that this is not discrimination.
		I: So, hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is	SA: Hmm, I would check the system if there is a possibility to change

	not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	seats. If not, I would tell the passenger to ask the cabin crew on board.
		I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of	SA: Haha, hmm, I would tell the passenger that this is not possible.

	knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: And what happens when the passenger reacts to this answer in an unexpected way? Like get angry or upset...
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: Hmm, yeah, I don't know I would just explain that I am not going to do this. Because I'm not going to or able to clean the restrooms all day. That is just unrealistic.
		I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks as this is deemed to be normal behavior in the passenger's culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is	SA: Hmm, I would feel really weird about it. And get really mad I think



	not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	because I wouldn't accept this behavior at all. I wouldn't let anybody touch me like that. I would probably call security.
		I: Would you give any consideration to the fact that this is normal in the culture of the passenger?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: No because the passenger has to adapt. There are things normal here in the Netherlands that you would get jail time for in other countries for example. You have to be considered of the rules and the culture of the country you are in.

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		I: Ok, thank you for your answers. Have a good day! Bye!
		SA: Bye.

### Interview 18

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Category	Category	Participant 18
		I: Hi there, thank you for this interview.
		CC: Hey, no problem.
		I: Ok. So, I will ask you five cases and I want to know what you would do or say or think or feel in these situations.
		CC: Ok, I will do my best. Haha.
		I: Ok, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication,	CC: Hmm, often in situations like this there are lovely passengers in the plane that help to translate. Or my colleagues help translate. There is always somebody to help. Or at least in my case haha. But often I try to use hand gestures and I pay attention to someone's body language and really focus on what a person could want. Often you know what they want. I think it is

	<p>participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>something that I've learned along the years. You just know...</p>
		<p>I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has a pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel like they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>ALL Competences</b>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>CC: Hmm, I would definitely acknowledge the passengers feelings however, I also think it is important that when you try to get your point across you explain why you do what you do even though it may seem as if this is discrimination, in this case. Not just say "it is not because you are black, you have to pay!". I think the lack of communication in cases like these make the situation even worse. Often you want passengers to go away fast haha, just so you don't have to deal with them any longer than you have to. But sometimes a good conversation is also important.</p>

		I: Ok, hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: Important here is to show understanding for his situation. Although sometimes these passengers can come off as arrogant and that they expect you to make this happen like they are entitled. But I can also imagine for a woman sitting next to an Orthodox Jewish male passenger feeling uncomfortable because probably she also knows that they are not allowed to sit next to women. So, you do your best to switch seats. And when it is a full flight passengers are always willing to switch for such a passenger because they show understanding as well. You just hope that when these passengers are reseated they show gratitude. Because that is what you do it for that you are recognized for your work.

		I: When a passenger doesn't show gratitude or doesn't recognize your hard work. How does that make you feel? Or what do you do?
		CC: It makes me feel angry maybe? I don't want to go that extra mile for the passenger. I'm just like "zoek het uit" haha.
		I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language,	CC: Well, haha, I get stranger requests all the time. In this case I would tell the passenger that this is not possible because if there is a plane full of people I would be cleaning the restroom the entire flight. This is not realistic. Also, I have to make sure that everything is safe. You have to oversee everything on the flight and provide service to all the passengers. So, if I'm cleaning toilets all day I'm not able to do my job correctly. I think it is important to respectfully explain that although you care about the passenger's

	participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	religion or culture you are not always able to say yes to a request.
		I: Hmm, ok, so, the next case is... a passenger hits you on the buttocks and in his culture this is very normal behavior. You know in the passenger's culture they treat women very degrading. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: Haha, hmm, this makes me think of an experience of my own. A male passenger once told me my bum looks very nice in my uniform. I felt uncomfortable on the entire flight and I didn't even say anything, I just laughed and kept it moving. But I remember being so uncomfortable when walking past him because I thought "my God, is he looking at me? What is he thinking? Is he going to touch me?" Thinking of this situation now, I think it definitely helped me to stand up for myself now in uncomfortable situations. You know, I let people know where my boundaries are really quick. I think it is important to do so because when you are uncomfortable you are not able to do your job believe me. And I think people can learn

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		from each other. Just tell somebody what is acceptable here and what is not. It can save that person a lot of trouble I guess so yeah...
		I: Thank you for your story. Well, these were all the questions I have.
		CC: You're welcome. Have a nice day.
		I: You too, bye!

### Interview 19

I = Interviewer, GA = Gate Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 19
		I: Hey, thank you for Skyping with me.
		GA: No problem, what are we doing today tell me haha.
		I: Hmm, well... haha. I just want to ask you some questions. I will present five cases in total to you and I would like to know from you how you would handle these situations. Please tell me how you would feel, what you would do and say and why maybe. Give me some insights.
		GA: Ok, I can do that.
		I: Ok, good. Haha. So, hmm, the first case is a French passenger doesn't speak English, the passenger refuses to speak English. The passenger is angry because you don't speak

		French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	GA: Oh, don't get me started on these people! Haha. Back in the day I would really try to everything in my power to help these people but with the years you are just quickly done with these people. This is an international airport. If you don't speak English then this is your problem I think. When these people go to America, do they speak French there? They should speak English!
		I: Ok, so we move on to the next case. A passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of	GA: I experience this a lot as well. I always tell these passengers "sir, these are the rules and you just have to deal with it". I don't have time to go into a discussion. Passengers often use this as an excuse just so they think they don't



	proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	have to pay. So, sir just pay and we can move on with our lives haha.
		I: Hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him. Because of religious reasons this passenger is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	GA: Hmm, I often check the system if there are seats available. But if it's a full flight I tell the passenger that it is not possible. Hmm, I feel like we cannot take every little rule of every religion or culture into account. So, I do what I can but a full flight is a full flight.

		I: Do passengers express disappointment in cases like these? Do they get angry for example when you are not able to give them another seat?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	GA: Yes, of course. But it is what it is. We don't have a male flights. That is something these passengers have to keep in mind when they book with a commercial airline. I just don't pay that much attention when they get angry about such things. I just tell them to ask a passenger on board themselves. There is nothing that I can do about it.
		I: Ok, so, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for this passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any	GA: Haha, if a passenger would ask me this I would just look at them and laugh. How can someone really

	<p>social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship</p>	<p>expect from you to do this. Passengers really expect you to be their private assistant. I think it's crazy.</p>
		<p>I: Ok, the last case hmm, a passenger hits you on the buttocks and behavior like this is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?</p>
<b>NO Competences</b>	<p>Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a</p>	<p>GA: This passenger would have a problem. I don't accept behavior like this. I would definitely let him know that this is unacceptable. It is not ok to make people feel uncomfortable and just touch them. If we have to have respect for you then you have to have respect for us. It could be that I would cancel this passenger's acceptance onto the flight. Because if he can do it to me, he can do it to my colleagues as well. Unacceptable!</p>

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	certain degree of relationship	
		I: Ok, that were all the cases. Thank you so much!
		GA: No problem, glad I could help.
		I: Stay safe and have a nice day!
		GA: You too, bye bye!

Interview 20

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent (former intern)

Core Category	Categories	Participant 20
		I: Hi, how are you?
		SA: I'm fine. How are you? I hope you can hear me ok. I had some technical difficulties earlier.
		I: Yes! I can hear you. Hmm, I would like to ask you some questions.
		SA: Sure, ask away.
		I: Hmm, so, I am going to present to you five cases, five situations. And just tell me how you feel about these situations, what you think, what you would do to handle this situations and say and why.
		SA: Ok.
		I: So, the first case is a French passenger, refuses to speak English, and the passenger is angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: Hmm, I would ask around if someone can speak French and would like to help me. If not, I don't really feel bad if that person is unable to speak English and is mad about me not being able to speak French. I think you should be able to speak English because this is an international language.
		I: How does the interaction continue? Or does it stop immediately after you couldn't find anybody to translate?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is	SA: Hmm, yeah it stops immediately after. I mean I cannot communicate with you if you don't speak English. So, I just nod my head and I think passengers understand that I don't speak the language so they walk away.

	no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Ok, the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel that they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: As a woman of color I wouldn't really feel a type a way, I will just make sure that it is done that the passenger pays for the luggage. It is either that or the passenger will be kicked off the flight so it's their choice.
		I: Hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands his seat to be changed because he is not allowed to sit next to a woman because of religious reasons. How would you handle this situation?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I will try to replace myself in their shoe and show some understanding and compassion and see if I'm able to swap him.
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant is able to display empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant is able to establish certain degree of relationship	
		I: What happens if you're not able to do it?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt	SA: I will have to tell the passenger the bad news. I will explain to him that I was not able to change the seats because of whatever reason. He can try it on board and ask someone to swap with him. But other than that there is nothing that I can do for him.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to accomplish task by using successful communication	
<b>Linguistic competence</b>	Participant is able to use language properly	
		I: Ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restrooms to be cleaned after every visit. Because of religious reasons the restrooms have to be clean at all times otherwise they are not able to use the

		restroom during the flight. How would you handle this situation?
<b>No competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	SA: I would explain to them that we have other more important responsibilities and they should have considered this before flying. We cannot do everything and passengers should think about every scenario that will hinder their religion, the rules or their culture before they book a flight.
		I: And the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. This behavior is totally normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of	SA: I will feel angry, as I find it very disrespectful. You can't just be touching people inappropriately.



	knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Would you say something to the passenger? Would you express yourself and your feelings about this situation?
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant has the knowledge on how to execute language properly	SA: I would definitely express my feelings about this situation. And tell the passenger that this is unacceptable. I just hope that the passenger realizes that this is a serious matter and not just look at me like he doesn't know what I'm talking about.
		I: Ok, thank you for participating. Have a nice day. Bye!
		SA: No worries. You too.
		I: Bye.

Interview 21

I = Interviewer, SA = Service Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 21
		I: Hey, how are you? Thanks for taking your time to answer some questions.
		SA: Hey, of course! No problem.
		I: So, hmm, I just want to ask you some questions about maybe

		situations that you have experienced yourself. And I just want to know how you would handle these situations, how you would feel, think, say and maybe why.
		SA: Ok.
		I: Yeah, so, hmm, in total there are five cases or situations so hmm, I will just read them one by one and ask you how you would handle these situations.
		SA: Ok.
		I: Ok, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, is angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
		SA: Hmm (silence...)
		I: It can be that this passenger wants to ask a question, maybe is in a hurry and is irritated that they are not able to communicate with you in their native language.
<b>All competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant	SA: Hmm, yeah I always stay calm when passengers get angry. I think it is important to show that you are listening and willing to help. So, I stay calm and try to calm the passenger down. In this case I would maybe use google translate

	display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	or ask a colleague if they understand and can help translate.
		I: What if you don't have these tools and the conversation still doesn't go into the right direction? So, you are not able to answer the passenger's question because of the language barrier?
		SA: Hmm, yeah then I often direct them to a transfer desk. Then I just can't help the passenger so there is nothing left to do. Maybe there is someone at the transfer desks who does understand the passenger.
		I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "their black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt	SA: I would tell them and explain to them that this is not the case. It has

<b>Social competence</b>	Role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management	nothing to do with “race”. I would also explain that these rules are for everybody. If the passenger stays angry I would send him to another colleague at another check-in desk just to prove that everybody maintains the same rules.
		I: The next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because he is seated next to a woman on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I would do my best to change the seat and respect that he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. If I’m not able to change his seat, I would direct him either to the gate, transfer desk or to the cabin crew on the flight so that they can check for possibilities. Often the flight is very full and people often pay for seats so I’m not always able to change seats for passengers.
		I: Hmm, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restrooms to be cleaned after every visit of other passengers. Because of religious reasons the passenger can

		only use the restroom if it has been cleaned. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: Hmm, I would check for a cleaner and see whether the cleaner can clean the toilet once more. But during a flight I don't think it's possible to clean after every passenger. So, I guess the passenger has to accept that this is something that is not possible.
		I: It is often that you have to turn down requests and how does that make you feel? How do you deal with rejection?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>  <b>Communicative competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to situations  Participant has the knowledge on how to use language properly	SA: Hmm, yes I get requests often. It doesn't have to be anything religion or culture related. But I deal with rejection pretty well. Let's say I'm not afraid to tell the passenger no as long as I have a good reason for it. I always look for options to solve a passenger's problem. But passengers also have to realize that we can't do everything at the airport.
		I: Ok, so, we're at the last case. A passenger hits you on the buttocks and this is normal in his culture. How would you handle this situation?

<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	SA: I would make it clear I don't want to be touched despite it being normal in his culture. That is unacceptable. If this happens again I would cancel the acceptance of the passenger on that flight and he would not be able to travel until he is able to behave according to the rules here in the Netherlands.
<b>Linguistic competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to execute language properly	
		I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time again.
		SA: Yes, no problem. Have a nice day.
		I: Bye.

Interview 22

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Category	Categories	Participant 22
		I: Hey there!
		CC: Hey!
		I: Thank you for Skyping. I hope all is well.
		CC: Yes, all is well!
		I: So, I will directly jump to the case. I want to ask you some questions.
		CC: Of course, go ahead.
		I: So, I will ask you some questions about situations. And I would like to know how you feel and what you would do or say and why.

		CC: Ok.
		I: Yeah, so, the first case is a French passenger, who refuses to speak English, gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: Well, I'm always willing to help but don't get angry when you are the one who is not able to speak an international language. But besides that haha, I would use my hands, write things down, ask my colleagues or other passengers if they could help me translate.
<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to reach goals through successful communication	
		I: Ok, the second case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feel they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use	CC: Hmm, just stick to the facts. There needs to be a payment because of the luggage that is too heavy and not give attention to statements that are not true. I think it will be a long discussion and that is discussion which you don't have time for nor will it solve the problem which is a too heavy luggage.

	of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Ok, so the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on the flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	CC: Demand? On my flight? No, No. You ask polite and I can see if there is something that I can do for you. But the passenger must know that I can do my best but if there are no empty seats available and no one wants to switch seats than there is nothing I can do for this passenger.
		I: Hmm, ok, the fourth case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the



		passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: I would tell the passenger that this is not possible. And also explain why this is not possible. But my reaction also depends on how the passenger asks something. There should be mutual respect. I know passengers have their culture and religion and everything but sometimes passengers think that I'm obligated to do whatever their religion or culture says.
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to execute language properly	
		I: Ok, so the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And this is totally normal in their culture. So, how would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competence</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: Haha, I would tell him I'm married. No but everybody should keep their hands to themselves. And I can imagine female colleagues of mine would feel really offended and I think that is totally unacceptable behavior. So, I would tell the passenger that this is unacceptable and not to do this

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		ever again. At least when he is out of his own country.
		I: I want to thank you for participating!
		CC: No problem. I hope everything works out well for you.
		I: Thank you. Bye!
		CC: Bye!

### Interview 23

I = Interviewer, CC = Cabin Crew

Core Category	Categories	Participant 23
		I: Hey hey, thank you for Skyping with me.
		CC: No problem.
		I: Hmm, so let's get started. I want to ask you some questions about certain situations that might have happened to you at work or sound familiar. And I would like to know how you would handle these situations, how you feel, what you would say etcetera.
		CC: Ok.
		I: So, let's get started with the first case. Hmm, a French passenger refuses to speak English and gets angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?

<p><b>ALL competences</b></p>	<p>Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>CC: Hmm, it depends on the situation. I don't think it's reasonable if a passenger gets angry because you don't speak their language. I can understand when you have had a long flight and still have a long way to get to your final destination, or maybe you're late to your own wedding because of delays you get angry when you have questions that can't be answered because of a language barrier. Simply because it just gets too much. I think it is important as a staff member that you are able to identify the frustration of the passenger and make them feel as if you have compassion for their situation rather than just reacting in the same way they react towards you. So, try to identify why the person is angry even if you don't speak the same language. Hand gestures, colleagues, passengers who can translate. Even Google, it's all there.</p>
		<p>I: Do you think that airline staff should be able to speak different languages besides English in order to provide good service?</p>

<b>ALL competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: No, it can definitely help of course. But I don't think it should be necessary. English that's the main language and if passengers don't understand English I think character comes into play at that point. It's not needed to speak the same language for someone to understand that you are willing to help, or that you are sad for somebody, or happy for somebody, trying to listen to somebody. If passengers see that you are trying to make a way for them to understand you, what you are saying or what they are trying to say that is enough. I don't think it's the final service that's important. Of course, it's not totally irrelevant. But trying to provide good service that is what sticks with people the most.
		I: Ok, so the next case is a passenger of color has to pay for their luggage, which is too heavy, and feels they have to pay because "they are black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>Fundamental Competences</b>	Participant is able to adapt to the situation	CC: Hmm, I would try to explain why the passenger has to pay. So, the rules and how much per kilogram a

<b>Interpersonal Competence</b>	Participant is able to reach goals through successful communication	passenger has to pay. I hope that by explaining this the passenger can understand that this has nothing to do with "race" but this is just following the rules.
<b>Communicative Competence</b>	Participant displays knowledge on how to execute language properly	
<b>Linguistic competence</b>	Participant uses language properly	
<b>Relational Competence</b>	Participant tries to establish a relationship to a certain degree	
		I: Hmm, the third case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management,	CC: I have experienced this a lot. I just always try to do my best to reseat the passenger. I think it is important that you have respect for everybody's culture or religion. But I think you have to explain to the passenger that although you

	<p>participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication,</p> <p>participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger</p>	<p>respect the culture or the religion it is not always possible to do the things that their culture or religion requires. You know we deal with full flights, well not know haha, but before Corona.</p>
		<p>I: Do you think that airline staff should have extensive knowledge on different cultures or religions in order to provide good service?</p>
		<p>CC: Yes, I think we should indeed know a lot about certain cultures and religions. Just due to the fact that our environment is full of different cultures. Some cultures find pointing highly offensive. Imagine not knowing this and being on a plane and just pointing your life away haha. I mean, knowledge about cultures and religions can also prevent so much trouble for yourself. Because people of certain cultures can get really mad when they feel like you are disrespecting their culture even if you are not aware of it.</p>

		I: And does everybody at the airline have access to tools where they can learn about different cultures and religions?
		CC: I don't think we have all the tools because we don't get trained on different cultures or religions. It's focused on the service, smile, be polite and the most important thing is safety. So, I think it is kind of our own responsibility to gain knowledge on that part. But I think we have the majority of the tools and experience to gain knowledge on our own. But I often think that we don't want to put this knowledge and tools to use haha. Because sometimes when having an annoying passenger or a disrespectful passenger that does create the feeling that you wouldn't want to do everything possible to help them. You would just send them to another colleague or just leave it alone haha.
		I: Another case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use I order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom

		should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>ALL Competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: Yeah, I would again really make sure that I show understanding for one's religion or culture but also explain that because of safety reasons I am not able or my colleagues are not able to clean the restroom the entire flight. So that the passenger also understand that we as a cabin crew have good reasons not to do something for the passenger.
		I: Ok, and the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And in his religion it's a normal thing. Normal behavior. How you would you handle this situation?
		CC: I would be shocked. I wouldn't expect that someone would actually touch me.
		I: Would it be harder in this case to stay polite because this is a very uncomfortable situation?



<b>ALL competences</b>	Participant displays ability to adapt to the situation, participant displays empathy, role taking, cognitive complexity, interaction management, participant display ability to accomplish tasks or goals through successful communication, participant uses language properly and displays knowledge of proper use of language, participant is able to establish a relationship with the passenger	CC: Yeah, I honestly think it's normal for me to say now oh yeah, I would handle this a certain manner. But it is really hard to tell what you would actually do in situations like these because they take you by surprise. So, I would now say that I would try to tell the passenger that he is overstepping a boundary. And although it's his culture I would want to explain that in my culture this is not acceptable. So, we have to be respectful of each other's culture.
		I: Ok, I want to thank you for your time.
		CC: No problem. Hope this is enough information.
		I: Yes, definitely. Thank you. Have a nice day. Bye.
		CC: Bye bye.

Interview 24

I = Interviewer, TA = Ticket Agent

Core Category	Categories	Participant 24
		I: Hi, how are you? Thanks for joining me on Skype.

		TA: No problem.
		I: So, I would like to ask some questions. I just want to know in situations what you would do to handle these situations, how you would feel, say and why.
		TA: Ok...
		I: Ok, so let's start with the first case. A French passenger refuses to speak English. This passenger gets upset or angry because you don't speak French. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	TA: Hmm, if the passenger wants to get angry about such a thing I'm not helping the passenger anymore. Because I'm not wrong and only want to help the passenger. So, if the passenger does not give me a chance to help then that's his problem.
		I: Ok, the next case hmm, a passenger of color is angry because he has to pay for his too heavy

		luggage. He thinks he has to pay for his luggage because he is "black". How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	TA: If that is what he thinks he should keep thinking that. I'm just here to follow the rules and he has to follow the rules. So, the passenger should pay or not fly simple. I'm not going back and forth with a passenger because he thinks something.
		I: Hmm, the next case is an Orthodox Jewish passenger demands to be reseated because there is a woman seated next to him on a flight. Because of religious reasons he is not allowed to sit next to a woman. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill,	TA: Hmm, so, hmm, I would explain to him that I can check but if it's not possible there is nothing I can do about it. That is the risk of flying and

	there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	the passenger has to accept this. Maybe somebody wants to switch on board with him. But I hate it when passengers demands all kinds of things but they don't understand that they have to consider these things before flying. We have men and women on board.
		I: Hmm, ok, the next case is a passenger demands the restroom to be cleaned after every use in order to make it possible for the passenger to use the restroom. Because of religious reasons the restroom should be clean at all times. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use	TA: Haha, people are crazy. I would tell this passenger that this is not possible.

	of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Would you give an explanation on why this is not possible? Or offer options for a possible solution?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill, there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	TA: Hmm, yeah, what can you say? No sir I am not hired to clean toilets. Haha. Sometimes it's best to just say no and not give explanation because you will hurt somebody's feelings.
		I: Ok, hmm, the last case is a passenger hits you on the buttocks. And this is normal in their culture. How would you handle this situation?
<b>NO Competences</b>	Participant is not able to adapt to the situation, is not able to display any social competence skill,	TA: Haha, well I don't think that somebody would hit me on the buttocks. I would give him the business.

	there is not successful communication to achieve the task or goal, there is no display of proper use of language, there is no display of knowledge on proper use of language, there is no establishment of a certain degree of relationship	
		I: Haha, perhaps if you would see that he hits a colleague on the buttocks. How would you handle that situation?
<b>Social Competence</b>	Participant displays role taking, Cognitive complexity, interaction management	TA: Hmm, this depends whether or not my colleague needs my help to say something about it. But if not, I would definitely say something. Such behavior is just unacceptable. He would have a big problem with me. And if he doesn't apologize, he would be kicked off the flight. No questions asked.
		I: Ok, that were all the cases. Thank you for your answers.
		TA: Yes! No problem.
		I: Bye bye.
		TA: Bye! Stay safe!