Case Study: Arrogant Behavior of Aircraft Passengers towards Flight Personnel

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Keywords: Arrogant Behavior, Flight Personnel, Aviation Safety and Security

Abstract: This research is a qualitative research, with aircraft passengers' arrogant behavior towards aviation personnel as the study materials. This research is important to be conducted, since the arrogant behavior of passengers - particularly those with high social status or even officials - could harm the aviation personnel. In aviation, authorized personnel are not allowed to let omissions occurred from pre-flight to post-flight. Any negligence or omissions, although considered as small, has the potential to cause aircraft accident. That is why they are strictly doing the security screening as well as security control. It is for the sake of creating flight safety and security. This study concludes that such arrogant behavior of those with high social status or even officials caused by their low awareness of aviation safety and security. Secondary data sources are collected from the mass media associated with the case. As a qualitative research, the method used to check and establish the validity of the data is triangulation, i.e. triangulation of data sources and triangulation of theory. The researcher did not do the method triangulation, because the data (secondary data) has clearly come from the on-line media that is used to explain the phenomenon to be studied. Researchers conducted Triangulation of data sources through interviewing informants and participant observation. Meanwhile the triangulation of theory was conducted by comparing data with the relevant theoretical perspective to generate conclusions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Law enforcement in a society that is used to break laws or rules is not an easy thing. Though they know that one of the law enforcement objectives is to protect them from various possibilities that will harm them, but, since they are accustomed to disobey the law, people are tend to still break the law. In fact, what becomes surprising is those who violate the law, have a high social standing. Among them are those who have important positions in government, or those whose their social status make them a respected people in society.

The subject of this research is related to the behavior of aircraft passengers, or the passengers’ families in complying to the aviation regulations. All rules related to aviation, cannot be separated from aviation safety and security issues. For that reason, the enforcement of the aviation rules, start from the arrival of passengers at the airport until the passengers board the plane and then the aircraft take-off, should be strictly enforced, without exception. Anyone - regardless of their power and position - when traveling by plane will be equally treated, including VVIP passengers. However, for these special VVIP passengers, a special procedure is enacted.

Basically, the flight safety rules do not give space for the occurrence of aircraft accidents, even for just a slight chance. In the event of a plane crash, there is a possibility of that it is caused by the negligence of aviation personnel towards the flight safety rules or due to factors beyond human capabilities. Aviation rules are strictly enforced, especially since there were several cases where passengers became the cause of aircraft accidents.

During the last five years, there have been several beatings by the aircraft passengers toward the flight personnel, both to the ground personnel and to the aircrew. I was occurred as flight personnel
tried to strictly apply the flight safety rules. Unfortunately passengers do not always accept it as part of the flight safety and security procedures.

The first case occurred on 28 October 2013. The perpetrator was an Ombudsman Commissioner of the Republic of Indonesia, while the victim was one of PT Gapura Angkasa (PT GA) staff, Yana Novia. PT GA is an Airport Services company that takes care of the ground handling. The incident started when the aircraft with destination of Kualanamu Airport, North Sumatra with flight number GA 227 which was originally departed at 07.45 WIB from Sultan Syarif Kasim II Airport, Pekanbaru - Riau, was delayed until 08.20 WIB. When Yana was explaining to the passengers that the flight was delayed because the pilot wanted to ensure the weather conditions on Mount Sinabung, all of a sudden, the Commissioner slapped Yana (Widjaya, 2013).

The second case, which still occurred in the same year, happened to a flight attendant (FA) of Flight SJ 078 which was about to take off from Soekarno-Hatta Airport to the destination of Depati Amir Airport, Bangka. The incident started when the FA, Nur Febriani (NF), admonished a passenger to turn off his cell phone. Instead of heeding NF’s request, the passenger was upset as NF was deemed as having a rude and disrespectful manner. Whereas according to NF, she rebuked politely. Prior to NF, the other FA had also reprimanded the same passenger to turn off his cell phone. When arrived at the airport, NF was hit from the side using a rolled-up newspaper. NF tried to run, then she was chased and pushed and hit again. Later, it was known that the passengers who did it were officials of Bangka Belitung Province. According to the officers of Pangkalan Baru Police Station, the Bangka Belitung officer felt unfairly treated as a passenger. The official said: “I am the passenger, I bought the ticket with money. The passenger should be the king” (Celestinus, 2013).

The third case, occurred on 5 July 2017 at Sam Ratulangi Airport, Manado. A female passenger of flight ID6275 destination Jakarta, slapped Aviation Security (AVSEC) officer. The incident began when she and one other woman, were passing a Walkthrough Metal Detector (WTMD) check at the Security Check Point (SCP) 2. At the time, she passed the detector, the alarm went off, means that there is a metal element in her body. The AVSEC officer - in accordance with the procedure - asked the woman to take off her watch for X-rays re-examination. It was not known how the AVSEC officer asked her to take her watch off, the woman suddenly came into anger and hit the AVSEC personnel with the initials AM (21). Another AVSEC member, EW, who tried to mediate the incident, was slapped as well by the woman on her left cheek. It was later discovered that the woman is the wife of a high-rank police officer (Buol, 2017).

The fourth case is similar to the third case. An AVSEC officer at Terminal 2F Soekarno Hatta Airport, Tangerang, named Nur Fauzi (NF), was hit not by passengers, but instead by a passenger family on July 30, 2017. NF was hit by a Navy member with initials MH, due to misunderstanding. MH accompanied his parents and brother-in-law who were about to depart to Jayapura using Sriwijaya Air. NF prohibited MH from entering the check in area, because he did not have a ticket, and recommended MH to ask the Officer In Charge’s (OIC) to get the permission. After reported to the OIC, he requested permission to enter the terminal by showing the Military Member Identity Card to NF. When he arrived at the check-in counter, it was too late. MH blamed NF as the cause of his parents and brother-in-law late check-in. Previously, in 2016, the hitting incident was also experienced by an AVSEC officer with initial E by a high level Indonesian Army at Soetta Airport (Panduwina, 2017). It was alleged that the general was offended by the way the AVSEC officer requested him to remove his belt to be checked by the AVSEC officers.

Those cases are interesting to be analyzed, to answer the question of why passengers or passengers’ family, including those with highly respectable social status, hit the aviation personnel when the aviation personnel were only doing their job to prevent the possibility of an accident to occurred.

2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pursuant to Law Number 1 Year 2009 on Aviation, Aviation personnel is described as a licensed or certified personnel which was assigned duties and responsibilities in the aviation sector (UU No. 1 Th 2009). In article 1 of Government Regulation No. 3 of 2001 on Aviation Security and Safety, an aviation personnel is described as the aircraft personnel and aviation security and safety personnel whose duties are directly affecting the security and safety of aircraft (PP No. 3 Th. 2001). Then in article 390 of the same act, the flight personnel in performing their duties are required to have certificates of competence or licenses in accordance with the requirements as
has been set forth for their field of work (UU No. 1 Th 2009). Article 222 - which is more specific to the personnel of the airport – explains that any airport personnel who directly related to the operation and/or maintenance of the airport facilities shall be licensed or certified after they have passed several trainings organized by an institution accredited by the Minister, and meet the requirements: administrative, physically and mentally healthy. Furthermore, section 223 explains that the licensed airport personnel must perform the work in accordance with the provisions in their field of work and maintain the capability possessed. If they violate the provisions, their license could be deactivated, or even revoked (UU No. 1 Th 2009). One example of airport personnel is airport security or Aviation Security (AVSEC). Annex 17 Chapter 2 explains about the purpose of AVSEC that is, “each contracting state shall have its primary objective the safety of passenger, crew, ground personnel and the general public in all matters related to safeguarding against unlawful interference with civil aviation” (ICAO, Annex 17 Security, 2011). Thus, each ICAO member country is obliged to protect the security of passengers, flight crews, ground officers and even the general public in all matters relating to the security towards unlawful acts on civil aviation. As such, security screening and security control by AVSEC officers towards the passengers are part of their duty to recognize or detect and prevent the suppression of the carried of prohibited items that can be used to counteract law (Permenhub 127 Th 2015).

Likewise cabin crew or steward/stewardess. The right name for the cabin crew is the flight attendant which means the ones who attend or serve in a flight. Flight attendant’s duties are set out in CASR part 63, ranging from helping passengers to find their seats, storing passenger luggage in the above compartments or under the seats of each passenger, inspecting all safety equipment including safety inside the cabin before passengers are boarding up to evacuate all passengers in case of an incident or accident. It is also including directing passengers in accordance with safety procedures as well as being responsible for passenger’s comfort during flight. In essence, the FA’s job is to assist the pilot in an airline operation.

Similar with AVSEC, FA should also pass a certified special training/school as been regulated in Article 58 of the Flight Law, that any aircraft personnel who directly related to the operation of the aircraft shall have a valid license or certificate of competence acquired through education and / or training held by an accredited institution and must be recurrent or updated every year, to measure the level of competence for flight service tasks (UU No. 1 Th 2009). In article 59 it is explained that a flight attendant is obliged to perform their work in accordance with the provisions in their work field and maintain the capability they are possessed, otherwise they will be subject to sanctions, from warning, license freeze to revocation of license (UU No. 1 Th 2009).

Thus, what is done by aviation personnel are related to their profession. However, many people, especially passengers of an airplane, are likely to demeaning the profession, equalizing it with a servant in public places or security forces in shopping centers. Therefore, anyone, especially those with high social status, even among the perpetrators there is an Ombudsman Commissioner, where the agency serves to oversee the implementation of public services held by the State Organizer and the Government, both Central and Regional, including State-Owned Enterprises as well as Private or private entities given the task of holding certain public services (Ombudsman RI) is actually doing the act of hitting aviation personnel that should not be done by an Ombudsman Commissioner.

From the observations that researchers did, there are people who tend to demeaning the flight personnel. From their appearance and manner, it can be assumed that they have an important position. This could be the cause of such violence towards the aviation personnel. People in this category do not want to be treated the same as other passengers, especially related to the inspection. However, it cannot be generalized that all those who occupy important positions or those with high social status behave that way. When researchers asked this to the Executive General Manager of Halim Perdana Kusuma Airport Jakarta, Col (Pilot) A. Rasyid Jauhari, he explained that it cannot be generalized. He gave an example, Minister of Transportation was still obey the regulations, while he is at the airport to travel. In fact, sometimes the Minister mingle with the other passengers. However, there was a Minister when he was left by GA-204 flight from Jakarta to Jogjakarta on Wednesday, 24 February 2016, showed his arrogant attitude. The minister missed the flight because of his own fault, but he did not admit it, moreover he blamed the airline. When he finally arrived in Jogja, he explained various things about the performance of an airline company as dilapidated and far from satisfying and suffered huge loss, in front of the UGM forum as he didn’t want to be blamed for his lateness (Putera, 2016). The
Minister also explained an example about the protection given by the state, that are not given to other company (Rosyadi, 2016). He did not stop there, as he said that he will also ask his colleague, Minister of State Owned Enterprises, to fire the Director of the airline company (Rappler.com, 2016). Amid various comments on the Minister's stance, the Special Staff of the Minister explained that the criticism was made because the service of the government-owned airline was considered disappointing. Then through his social media account the Minister wrote, "I only protested because the service was not good, why are you people protested on me?". Apparently the Minister's tendency to defend himself was responded by a fellow minister who wrote: "How come there are still officials who asked to be over-served, it is not that era anymore. If you were late then it is simply you will be left #Garudaku" (Asril, 2016). In this case, the minister did not hit the flight personnel, but he showed his arrogant attitude.

Flight Psychologist Colonel (Ret.) Dr. Widura Imam Sutopo, when interviewed about the behavior of passengers, or people who jump over, strikes or slaps aviation personnel, said that from the psychological perspective there are two possibilities causing violation at the airport or on the plane. First, when those who do it are officials or family or individuals who are in the "upper" social strata, they tend to show a certain attitude to be differentiated with the individual community in general. They demand special treatments given their social status to obtain certain privileges. If it is not due to that reason, it is possibly caused by the second reason, frustration. As an example, a delayed flight that may lead to an aggressive attitude, so that someone could carry out attacks, both verbally and physically. However, it is obvious that the behavior of asking for preferential treatment indicates that there is still a behavioral orientation towards feudal attitudes in certain levels of society in Indonesia. This usually occurs in individuals who are oriented to power and social degrees. Widura reminded that all actions taken by aviation personnel are for safety and security purposes, because all flight operating systems at the airport are one of the flight operation sub systems that must be monitored and maintained in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures.

Arrogant behavior, such as hitting officers in the above cases, or like the Minister who missed his flight, is very likely to occur due to a culture shock. Cultural shock is the "shock" that occurred when a person is in a "new world" he has never seen, felt or experienced, which then changes their attitudes, behaviors and values of those who experience it, from their previous state. Many people have a good attitude and manner before they occupied an important position. However, they may change when they occupy an important position. Sometimes the attitudes and behaviors shown after occupying a higher position do not reflect the attitudes and behaviors that an official should show.

According to Kalervo Oberg (anthropologist), culture shock defined as: "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life (Davidson, 2005). It can be argued that people who experience culture shock face the anxiety of losing the symbols that embedded in their selves. Thus they create distance in social relationships from what they have done before. Cultural shock is most likely to occur in people who are upgraded (in terms of position, rank, property or facility they have), which he had never felt before. Such person then become arrogant because they were not supported by the foundation of a good mental attitude.

Cultural shock often occurs to many Indonesians, who just occupied important positions. They tend to ask to be treated or served differently from ordinary people. That's what happens in the above cases. One angry passengers said to the flight attendant: "I am a passenger, I buy tickets with money, and thus should be treated as a king". This is an example of someone who experienced a culture shock, because he is a local official. From what he previously said, there are hidden meanings and messages that can be interpreted, for example, you are just a flight attendant (equating the FA as a servant, as explained earlier), so you don’t have to control me. It can also be interpreted as follow: I've bought the ticket with an expensive price, why can’t I activate my mobile phone? Another interpretation could be I'm an official, so you have to serve me. In the above cases, they consider what the aviation personnel did as an exaggeration.

People who experienced cultural shock have difficulties in adapting to new cultures for various reasons. For example, because of their limited context understanding in the external environment or because they are unable to adapt to a new culture. The worst thing is if it happens because of unrealistic expectations of his new position. They tend to show excessive self-existence, in order to gain recognition from others, but unwittingly, they...
instead show ignorance, incomprehension and even their actions did embarrassing their selves.

Researchers' observations show passengers with ordinary social status, tend to be obedient to the rules, do not perform arrogant acts, as there is no reason to show arrogance to aviation personnel. In some cases, passengers with this ordinary social status, could also be very mad with the flight personnel, due to delayed flight and they are not well-informed or being abandoned. In general, anyone will be provoked emotionally if they feel that they are treated unfairly as they should be.

Violence such as hitting tends to be done due to uncontrolled emotions. Uncontrolled emotion itself can occur because there are factors that can not be accepted by the beater. The most common is when the batter's self-esteem is demeaned or abused by the beaten person, as Robert K. Cooper explains, "Without the guidance of emotions, reasoning has neither principal nor power" (Hillis, 2013). Thus, beatings are likely to happen because passengers or passenger families can not control their emotions, and therefore they take an action they should not do, because they lose their reason. In these cases, it is highly irrational for passengers to be unable to control their emotions, which leads them to lose their reason, simply because the flight personnel announce the flight delay due to weather conditions, ask the passengers to not activate their cell phone or ask the passengers to take their watch off when passing through a metal detector, or because the aviation personnel prohibits people from entering areas that are only allowed for passengers.

In the cases mentioned above, it seems that no airline personnel intends to degrade or harass the passenger or passenger family self-esteem. What they do, throughout the observation, is limited to perform the duties as prescribed in the applicable SOPs. There are no things or actions that could provoke excessive emotion of the passengers. Yet as what Priest Jane suggests about the customer's behavior definition, where customer behavior is defined as the mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires (Priest, et.al. 2013) it is possible when the mental, emotional and physical condition of the passengers when they are at the airport, or when they are on board the aircraft, those people with high social status feel that they are not being treated according to their needs, wants and wishes, they feel that they are being treated unreasonably and are not in accordance with their position or social status by the flight personnel.

That's what makes them offended.

This kind of behavior is influenced by the behavior of ambi tenar (feodal spirit) as described by psychologist Kasandra Putranto. According to Kasandra, the phenomenon of a person shows the behavior as what was happened to the women who hit the AVSEC, is arising because the person does not have good emotional and social capacity. Concurring with Kasandra, Noor Rochman Hadjam, a psychologist from the University of Gadjah Mada, responded to the incident at Sam Ratulangi Airport, Manado, assessed that such incidents had become a plague, because of his high social status, he felt that he should receive special treatment. It is then spread to his family members who also asked for the same privileged treatment. This phenomenon indicates the remnants of feudalism in Indonesian society is still exist, as the colonizing mentality will make someone to feel dominant every time he has a higher social status (bbc.com, 2010).

Such arrogant behavior tends to appear to the people who have the power, to show their power and self-existence as a person who has more power than others, that makes them less appreciative towards other people and treat others unreasonably.

The intentions to show power and self-existence can also occur because of the influence of mental model. Mental model, could be discovered when someone perform an action, and such action was influenced by the person's perception of what he saw. If the perception is negative about what he sees, then his actions will also be negative, and vice versa. Peter M. Senge, in his book Fifth Discipline explains, the mental models are conceptual frameworks consisting of generalizations and assumptions from which we understand the world and take action in it. We may not even know that these mental models exist or are affecting us (Senge, 1990) It is even possible that the person does not know that the mental model has influenced him in making a decision.

Another definition of mental model is beliefs, ideas, images, and verbal descriptions that we consciously or unconsciously form from our experiences and which (when formed) guide our thoughts and actions within narrow channels. These representations of perceived reality explain cause and effect to us, and lead us to expect certain results, give meaning to events, and predispose us to behave in certain (Businessdictionary.com, 2010).

Mental models often become obstacles in learning, because it limits the way people think and act so that there is no rejuvenation or innovation in making decisions. That is, if one's mental model is
wrong in understanding a problem, then the decision made will also be wrong. Basically the mental model is:

1. Attitudes, behaviors and habits of a person who is reluctant to accept change, or tend to retain their old habits which considered as permanent and could not be changed.
2. Attitudes, behaviors and habits of a person which presuming that the actions he is doing is right and might be done, because others do it too.
3. Attitudes, behaviors, habits and actions of someone who does something based on the things that are considered to be beneficial to him, even if it is normatively unacceptable and cannot be justified.

Mental models are almost identical to culture shocks, as both are the attitudes and behaviors of people who always think that they are right and thus don’t have a willingness to change the way they think and act, even if the ideas they are conveyed are irrelevant and have been left behind. They will stick to what they consider to be true, though there are other more advanced alternatives.

The appearance of arrogant behavior from people who have higher social status, is not apart from the habit of society that sometimes treat people with higher social status, such as officials or public figure, in a much different way. These people then deemed such special treatment as their rights and privileges that belong to them. When they should obey the strict rules, they ask to be privileged. Instead of acting and behaving against the aviation law or doing violation, they supposed top reserve decency and propriety of being an official or public figure. They are, of course, expected to be an example for the ordinary people, not arrogant, not doing any violence, especially hitting airline personnel who only carry their tasks to implement flight regulations. In the aviation world, aircraft passengers are not allowed to do their own arbitrary actions, not with standing that they are officials.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research, which examines the phenomenon of aircraft passenger’s arrogant behavior towards flight personnel. The method that commonly used in qualitative research to examine and establish the data validity is triangulation. In this research the initial data (secondary data) comes from the several news in online media to explain the phenomenon that will be studied. Since the data is clear, the researchers does not perform method triangulation, but still performs triangulation of data sources and theory triangulation. Triangulation of data sources was done by interviewing informants and participant observation, while the theory triangulation was done by comparing data with the relevant theoretical perspective to generate conclusions. Because the researcher is a lecturer in Airport Management, it really helps in formulating the expert judgment of the studied problem (Rahardjo, 2010).

4 CONCLUSION

Air transport mode is a mode of transportation that gives no tolerance to aviation personnel for possible occurrence of omissions from pre-flight to post-flight. Any slightest negligence has the potential to cause an aircraft incident or accident. That is why they are strictly implementing the aviation safety rules and regulations. From these cases, it can be concluded that many aircraft passengers, even if they have high social status or an official, do not understand well the intention and purpose of security screening or security control. Although they understand it, but because of their social status, they tend to impose their own will. It could highly possible that this is due to passenger’s low awareness of aviation safety and security.

Aviation safety and security, are not only the responsibility of airlines and airport operators, instead it is also the responsibility of passengers. If passengers are not obedient to the flight security and safety regulations, e.g. do not want to be inspected and behave arrogantly against the flight personnel, it is possible that there could be infiltration or the carrying of prohibited items which can threaten the aviation safety and security.

It should be understood that the behavior of those who impose their own will and need, which then disregarding the flight safety and security procedures, could lead to a fatal accident. For that reason, anyone, regardless of their position or social status, shall comply and adhere to the rules of aviation safety and security.

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