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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT SRILANKAN AIRLINE

By

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Abstract

Back Ground information

SriLankan Airlines is the national carrier of Sri Lanka. The increase in passenger complaints regarding the quality of service prompted the researcher to initiate the study of the quality of service provision and the customer satisfaction of SriLankan Airlines. With the development of market driven competitiveness of the travel industry, the passengers have greater choice of airlines to select from. If the SriLankan Airlines do not take the passenger complaints seriously, there are fewer chances of the airline ability to study up to the competition. There is a dearth of information within the SriLankan air travel industry, to enable to make strategic decision regarding changes that the company this requires.

The sample of the study consisted of 300 passengers from Middle East, Far East, Indian Sub Continent and Europe sectors, different traffic such as Business, Leisure, Student, and Official etc.

A questionnaire was developed and administered to the sample of the study. The data was gathered form 01 October to 15 November 2002

The purpose of the Study and its scope

- To evaluate whether SriLankan airline passengers were satisfied with the existing service.
- To evaluate whether SriLankan airline maintain a standard in quality of service from customer's perspective.

The scope of the study was to test customer satisfaction and service quality at SriLankan airline.

Hypothesis Developed

- a) "Customers perceive the services provided by SriLankan airline as high quality"
- b) "Customers are highly satisfied with service provided by SriLankan airline"
- c) "There is a positive relationship with service quality and passenger satisfaction"

Methodology

The research is a descriptive type research survey and administered a simple questionnaire to test the hypothesis. The Questionnaire measured the following areas. such as customer satisfaction and service quality.

To measure the service quality the researcher used a 5-point scale ranging from far below expectation to- far above expectation. Also to measure the customer satisfaction used a 5-point scale ranging Highly agreed to not agree at all.

Major outcome of the Study

- The study has helped to identify the type of traffic and its movement in the different sectors such as the Job traffic mainly travel to Middle East, Official traffic to Far East, Indian sub Continent and Europe, Leisure traffic to Far East and Indian Sub continent and the student traffic to Far East and Indian Sub Continent.
- There is no noted passenger loyalty for SriLankan airline.
- Quality at Ground Handling seemed the poorest of the three areas studied.
- The hypothesis assumptions were wrong. The study proves that there in no high quality service or customer satisfaction at Srilankan airline.
- Different market segments have different views of the service at ticket office, Ground handling and on board service.
- It is noted that the Middle Eastern category of passengers are poorly served in terms of ticketing facilities and ground-handling service. Further, even in the on-board service provision, this sector does not fair well.

Recommendations:

- There is a need for overall improvement of services in the ticketing, ground-handling and on-board services.
- Since the middle-eastern sector traffic mostly travelling for job requirements requires an enhanced service quality
- SriLankan Airline should note that quality of service as the deciding factor to stay as a the market leader in the highly competitiveness trade and as such, serious consideration be given to service component to realise its vision.

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