

A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS TO CHOOSE ANY AIRLINE COMPANY

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Abstract: *In this paper an attempt has been made to look into the various factors affecting customer decision to choose a particular airline company whether it is a public airline or private airline company. This study pertains to a general view on all airlines companies whether they belong to public or private. Customer satisfaction has been measured based on some factors chosen particularly for this study.*

Keywords: *Aviation sector, Airports Council International, Empathy, Tangibles, Assurance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the country during the last decade. India is currently considered to be the third largest domestic civil aviation market in the world. India has become the third largest domestic aviation market in the world and it is expected to overtake United Kingdom in near future i.e. by 2024 to become third largest air passenger market. India has been projected to be second fastest growing country in world for passenger traffic by Airports Council International in its traffic forecasts between 2017-40. As the competition has grown immensely the airline companies started to adopt lucrative strategies to attract customers. In cut throat competition the success of airlines dependent on passenger service provided at all levels –before, after and during the journey to make a passenger satisfied.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to understand the customer perception and satisfaction on services provided by available airline companies many researchers have undertaken the study. Some of the studies have been mentioned here

Dr. Makarand Upadhyaya, has focused on customer complaint and its resolution quickly by the authorities. In Airlines industry customer complaints plays a vital role in customer satisfaction. He focused on complaints like, controlled complaint are those which are under control such as fare related problems, flight delays, misbehavior by staff, etc. and uncontrolled are those such as weather problems, technical fault, etc. So for solving these problems trained staff is required who can effectively minimize or handle these problems.

Dipa Mitra, in her study she has given importance on healthy relationship between customer and the Airline service provider. The Airlines Industry today should aim at not only at delivery of the service to the passengers, but they should also focus on satisfying the passengers with their services. They need to know the customer preferences and should bring changes accordingly. Then the customer will be satisfied. Some of the private players are very much concerned about their passengers as well as some of them are implementing low price strategy to attract the passengers.

R. Archana and Dr. M.V. Subha have studied the factors which influence passenger satisfaction. They have identified that Cuisines provided, seat comfort, safety these factors have an important role in customer satisfaction. They have also found that customer satisfaction depends on personal entertainment, which is an important factor in flying decisions of passenger. According to their study online seat booking, call centre facilities and reservation/cancellation is highest influencing factor in flying decisions of the passengers.

According to Mohammad. J. Tarokh and Mahmoud Majidi Customer relationship management has a vital role in satisfaction of Airlines services. The marketers should understand the customer needs and wants to satisfy those needs. For that building a good relation is very important with the customers. They have talked about Airline E-CRM which provides an understanding of customer behavior and enables airlines to measure results of marketing changes. E-CRM supports fully digital information exchange between airlines and customers, reduced cost of a customer contact. It also helps to dynamically adapt to customer behavior.

3. OBJECTIVES

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the factors influencing selection of airline operator.
2. To identify the socio-economic profile of the air travelers.
3. To analyze the brand loyalty of passengers towards airlines.
4. To evaluate the Service Quality and Passenger Satisfaction on airlines; and
5. To offer suitable suggestions for the improvement of aviation sector.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The secondary data collected from different sources have been interpreted meaningfully. The data have been analyzed and various inferences and conclusions have been drawn.

FACTORS UNDERTAKEN FOR THE STUDY

TANGIBLES

- In -flight modern looking and clean facilities like (Cuisines Provided, child care / Bassinets, Seat Comfort, Cleanliness of cabin, Cleanliness of toilets, Newspapers / Airline magazines, Provision of Pillow / Blankets etc)
- Making physical features very appealing
- Employees Appearance, Attitude and Uniform
- Variety and choices provides in-flight entertainment ,Internet and meals facilities

RELIABILITY

- When they promise to do something by a certain time and they does so (On-time departure and arrival)
- If at all faced critical problem, sincerity shown by them to resolve it
- Performing the right service at right time
- Providing services as promised especially in terms of time
- Error free service

RESPONSIVENESS

- Managing the delayed time effectively
- Performing efficient check-in/baggage handling service by the employees
- Making employees always willing to help passengers
- Making employees be ready to respond to passenger request(Reservation, Complaints etc.)

ASSURANCE

- The employees behaviorinstills confidence in customers

- Provision of safe journey by airline companies
- Making Employees consistently courteous with customers
- Removing language barriers by employees particularly in providing information (Foreign language level, other information)

EMPATHY

- Employees show empathy to delayed passenger and give guidance
- The Airline has operating hours convenient to all its customers
- The Airline has employees who give you personal attention
- The Airline has customer best interests at heart
- The employees of the Airline understand customer specific needs

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In a study of this magnitude though meticulous care is taken in each and every aspect of study. Certain limitations are likely to be there in the study.

1. As the data is secondary data variation may arise
2. As student i do not posses much practical experience in conducting research in much objective way
3. Other factors also have considerable influence on my study

6. CONCLUSION

Passenger satisfaction can be defined as a judgment made on the basis of a specific service encounter. Satisfaction and loyalty are not surrogates for each other. It is possible for customers to be loyal without being highly satisfied and to be highly satisfied and yet not loyal. Firms are needed to gain a better understanding of the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intention in the online environment and to allocate the online marketing efforts between satisfaction initiatives and behavioral intention program. Though the companies like air India and jet airways facing financial issues the customer base of those airlines companies not effected much .

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