

A STUDY ON CUSTOMER EXPECTATION AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS TOURISM INDUSTRY IN TRICHY DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Service quality plays a critical role in the success of a tourism destination management, where it acts as a determinant for visitor satisfaction, royalty and revisit in the tourism market. This service quality is very important to be in competition, it is a key factor in differentiating service products and building a competitive advantage in tourism. Tourism creates jobs for local people. It also increases the income of other business that supply the tourism industry. Tourism is the leader in the production of new jobs. Tourism has developed an important part of the economic foundations of many countries. Growth rate of services sector faster than any other. This research paper discuss about the customers' expectations and perceptions of service provided by travel agents and to discover how the service factors were related to overall satisfaction. Considering the importance of consumer/customer in business organizations, the study aims at to identify the variables of service quality dimensions that lead to satisfaction of customers by investigating the influence of perceived service quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction in the context of travel agents in Trichy. This study embraces the idea of improving customer acquisition, retention and satisfaction through proactively promoting operational excellence and improved customer service strategies. The study adapts the research methodologies comprising of Percentage analysis, Chi-Square test and descriptive data.

Keywords: Service quality, Perception, customer Satisfaction,

Introduction

The concept of Tourism has been derived from the Latin word "TOMOS" & Hebrew word "TORAH". The tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world. There is a growing economy of the 21st century. Tourism management education is now at a point where there is a sufficient base of theory such that the field can easily move well beyond vocational training and expose students to a wide range of ideas, knowledge and theory. Tourism has emerged as the one of the largest foreign exchange earning industry in India. India has been a late starter in tourism understandably, immediately after independence the focus was on key areas like agriculture industry, irrigation, infrastructure and social sectors.

Service quality

Service quality is very important, it is a key factor of differentiating service products and building a competitive advantage in tourism. The quality is defined as "the best", "the finest", "the greatest", "the most expensive", or "most superior", others correctly define quality as "doing the right things right". Service quality can be defined as "the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service". If expectations are greater than performance, the perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs. So that

the perceived quality was dependent on the comparison of expected service with perceived service, and thus the outcome of a comparative evaluation process.

Expectation and perception

The perceived service quality as a global judgment, or attitude relating to the superiority of the service. The concept of service quality and the concepts of perceptions and expectations in this way. Perceived quality is viewed as the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations. Customers' assessment of overall service quality is based on the gap between their expectations and their perceptions of performance levels. Expectations are based on the customers' past buying experiences, the opinion of friends, and marketer and competitor information and promises. The two levels of expectations, namely; desired and adequate. They defined the level of service the customer hopes to receive as "the desired level", while the level of service that the customer finds at least acceptable they called "the adequate service level".

Measuring customer satisfaction

Companies use the following methods to measure how much customer satisfaction they are creating

Complaint and Suggestion System

A customer centered organization makes it easy for customers to make suggestions or complaint such systems not only help companies to act more quickly to resolve problems, they also provide companies with many good ideas for improved products and services.

Customer satisfaction survey

Simply running complaint and suggestion systems may not give the company a full picture of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Studies show that one of every four purchases results in consumer dissatisfaction customers bother to complain-most customers simply switch suppliers.Customer satisfaction measures are meaningful only in a competitive context, thus companies must monitor both their own and their competitor’s customer satisfaction performance. For customer cantered companies, customer satisfaction is both a goal and a major factor in company success.

II.REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.Berry and Parasuraman (1991) in this paper authors offered two levels of expectations, namely; desired and adequate. They defined the level of service thecustomer hopes to receive as "the desired level", while the level of service that the customer finds at least acceptable they called "the adequate service level".

2.Edvardson, et al. (1994) defined “quality” as the right quality is achieved when expectations are fulfilled, needs satisfied and demands met those of the customers, staff and owners. They also pointed out that a quality system should cover at least three aspects: customer-perceived quality, the processes in service production, and a systematic approach to conduct the quality project
4.Mensah, (2012), Goldner and Ritchie,(2006) Besides those economic benefits tourism also have some social benefits. It reinforces the preservation of local heritage and tradition. Tourism is the way of exchanging language, culture, religion and politics that can minimize the differences among nations or even different region of a country. Moreover, tourism creates a favorable worldwide image for a destination.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLGY

In this research case, the sampling units were taken in travel agents in Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu, India.The population size is above 300 travel agencies. so the number of 120 samples are taken for my convivence and collects complete information from all customer in the population. The datawas obtained through primary sources to answer the research questions.

3.1chi-squaretest1)Checking the relationship between punctuality and frequency of planned travel

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.560 ^a	12	.482
Likelihood Ratio	12.822	12	.382
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.485	1	.115
N of Valid Cases	120		

Calculation value :11.560
 Tabulated value :12.822
 Degree of freedom :12
 Significant level :.482

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.653 ^a	15	.895
Likelihood Ratio	10.548	15	.784
Linear-by-Linear Association	.096	1	.756
N of Valid Cases	120		

2) checking the relationship between Attitude and frequency of planned travel

Calculation value :11.560
 Tabulated value :12.822
 Degree of freedom :12
 Significant level :.482

3)Checking the relationship between offers and frequency of planned travel

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.475 ^a	12	.335
Likelihood Ratio	16.849	12	.155
Linear-by-Linear Association	.024	1	.878
N of Valid Cases	120		

Calculation value :13.475
 Tabulated value :16.849
 Degree of freedom :12
 Significant level :.335

3.2 Factor analysis	
Factors	Factor Score
Punctuality	.820
Reliability	.800
Food provided	.694
Neatness	.686

IV. Results

From chi-square test

1.The calculated value (11.560) is lesser than the tabulated value (12.822) and hence H₀ is accepted ,so there is a significant association between punctuality and frequency of planned travel

2.The calculated value (13.475) is lesser than the tabulated value (16.849) and hence H₀ is accepted ,so there is a significant association between offers and frequency of planned travel.

3.The calculated value (8.653) is lesser than the tabulated value (10.548) and hence H₀ is accepted ,so there is a significant association between attitude and frequency of planned travel.

V.Discussion

1In travel industry, provision of services like room facilities, food, punctuality plays a major role. It is suggested to treat the travelers as partners in concentrating the above said factors to attract new customers..

2. Drives attitude is more helpful to the industry so they have to provide a specialpsychologicaltraining programme to handle customers and for ensuring safety of thetravelers.

3.Involving in social media to promote the offers provided by them will help the travelagents in creating a goodwill of their services. Also implementing customer relationship management activities by giving discounts, add on packages and special offers for the regular travelers will promote the brand image of the agency which will get new customers without any effort in promotion.

4. Getting feedback from the customers help the travel industry to ensure the service provided and to understand the expectation and perception of customers.

VI. Conclusion

The main finding of the research is to identify the notable gap between customer expectations and perceptions corresponding to the service quality, indicating that the customers' expectations of service quality were not met.This study was actuated by the need for investigation which can result in a better understanding of perceptive service quality in tourist attractions.The Tangibles, or the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and printed and visual materials, play a significant role in Overall Customer Satisfaction derived from the Services. To attract customers, the companies must have up-to-date equipment, visually appealing physical facilities. The Responsiveness

or the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service plays a vital role in Overall Customer Satisfaction. Hence, the services must maintain punctuality, explicitly reveal all the services provided, provide prompt services and have round-the-clock operating hours. Thirdly, Empathy, or trustworthiness, reliability, honesty, caring, individualized attention provided to customers also plays a critical role in determining Overall Customer Satisfaction. The reassuring towards the customer's problems and they should also be courteous, helpful and sensitive to individual customer requirements. Reliability and Assurance, or the ability to deliver the promised services dependably and accurately, thereby being able to gain the trust and confidence of the customer, are significant enough in contributing to the Overall Customer satisfaction.

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