



A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS SERVICES PROVIDED AT INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING & TOURISM CORPORATION LIMITED, BANGALORE REGION

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Abstract:

Customer satisfaction refers to the extent to which customers are happy with the products and services provided by a business. Customer satisfaction levels can be measured using survey techniques and questionnaires. There are numerous elements that contribute to high levels of consumer satisfaction, including customer-focused products and services that deliver high levels of value for money. This paper attempts to analyse the customer satisfaction levels with respect to the services provided at IRCTC Ltd. Bangalore region with a special focus on the quality and freshness of food, pricing of tickets, user friendly experience of the website and e- ticketing services etc.

Key words: Customer satisfaction, IRCTC services, level of satisfaction

Introduction:

Customer satisfaction is a metric used to quantify a customer's level of satisfaction with a product, service, or experience. It assesses a customer's opinion of a company or a brand. Customer happiness is critical for a business since satisfied customers are more likely to be loyal, place repeat orders, and use a wide range of services. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. has been set up by the Ministry of Railways with the basic purpose of hiving off the entire catering and tourism activity of the railways to the new Corporation so as to professionalize and upgrade these services with public-private participation. Rail based Tourism in India will be the specific vehicle for achieving high growth in coordination with state agencies, tour operators, travel agents and the hospitality industry. A dynamic marketing strategy in association with public and private agencies, tour operators, transporters, hoteliers and local tour promoters are on the anvil. Indian Railways span global volumes in the hospitality and catering sectors with services provided to 13 million passengers every day.

Main objectives of the Study:

- To gain a better understanding of the customer's behaviour.
- To gain a better understanding of the aspects that influences a customer's user experience.
- To determine the customer's degree of satisfaction.

Scope and Significance of the Study:

The study will attempt to provide some insight into the existing products and services provided by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC Ltd) to customers, as well as the gap between customer expectations and current performance. The study will also provide an overview of customer perceptions of IRCTC Ltd. The study's scope is limited to the Bangalore region (Karnataka) and is primarily focused on customer satisfaction.



Methodology:

Primary data: The data was acquired through the use of a structured questionnaire and a random sampling procedure was used with a total of 75 respondents. Respondents are IRCTC Ltd. customers who have been contacted through online (E-mails, SMS, telephone etc).

Secondary data: Secondary data was gathered using specifications from readily available material, publications and company's annual reports and official website

Limitations of The Study:

- Owing to the current Lockdown Situation which had a major hit on the Travel and Tourism and Hospitality Industry throughout the world due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the study's major constraint is the low number of current users for IRCTC Ltd.
- The study's duration is quite short, resulting in insufficient in-depth access due to time constraints.
- The sampling method, sample size, and conclusion are insufficient to draw more accurate conclusions.

Major Findings of the Study:

- Out of the total respondents, it is clear that, 4 percentage of responders feel that the freshness & taste of the food served by IRCTC is poor, 28 percentage of responders feel that it is satisfactory, 45.3 percentage of responders feel that it is good, 16 percentage of responders feel that it is very good and only 6.7 percentage of responders or respondents feel that it is excellent.
- Out of the total respondents, it is clear that, none of the respondents feel that the price of the food served by IRCTC is under priced, 26.7 percentage of the respondents feel that the price of the food served by IRCTC is overpriced, 73.3 percentage of responders of the respondents feel that the price of the food served by IRCTC is rightly priced.
- The perception of the respondents regarding the mode of booking tickets of preferred, 1 percentage of the respondents use i-ticket to book their tickets, 9.3 percentage of the respondents use travel agents to book the tickets, 13.3 percentage of the respondents book the tickets in-person and 76 percentage of the respondents use e-ticket.

- The perception of the respondents regarding the pricing made by IRCTC, out of the total respondents, it is clear that, around 13 percentage of the respondents feel that the price of the tickets fixed by IRCTC is under-priced, 60 percentage of the respondents feel that the price of the tickets fixed by IRCTC is rightly priced, around 27 percentage of the respondents feel that the price of the tickets fixed by IRCTC is overpriced.
- The perception of the respondents regarding the refunding mechanism by IRCTC, out of the total respondents, it is clear that, around 04 percentage of the respondents feel that the refunding mechanism is poor, 18.7 percentage of the respondents feel that the refunding mechanism is satisfactory, 40 percentage of the respondents feel that the refunding mechanism is good, 13.3 percentage of the respondents feel that the refunding mechanism is very good and 20 percent of the respondents feel that the refunding mechanism is excellent.
- In User friendliness of IRCTC Website criteria, 08 responders felt very good and 55 responders felt good and 12 responders felt average.
- Likewise, in Ambience & Hygiene (at station) criteria, a major share of 38 and 35 respondents felt good and average respectively, only very few felt it was very poor.
- In the Ambience & Hygiene (inside train) criteria, a major share of 34 and 25 respondents felt very good and good respectively, 13 responders felt average and only 03 responders felt very poor.
- In the Comfort of traveling criteria, a major share of 31 respondents felt just good. But a similar share of 24 and 20 respondents felt average and good respectively.
- The final criteria is Staff behaviour, a major share of 33 and 40 respondents felt very good and good respectively, only 02 responders felt very poor.

Suggestions

- To attract more customers, the organisation should focus on enhancing the quality of food it provides over time.



- To increase customer satisfaction, management should provide more intensive training to its employees on soft skills and customer handling approaches.
- Management should focus on improving ambience as well as hygiene at stations along with inside the trains. It will definitely enhance the customer satisfaction level.
- To provide greater customer satisfaction, management should focus on improving user-friendly mobile applications which are more convenient to know the train arrival and departure timings, ticket booking status, seat allotment, train current location etc.
- To serve its customers better, from time to time they must collect their valuable feedback, suggestions, and complaints.
- During the season, increase the capacity of seats or coaches to avoid rush.
- Based on current requirements, the company must upgrade its service quality procedures, such as Fast ticketing services, Working on a website, Update relevant information, Improved staff behaviour, Enhance customer care support.

Conclusion:

Today's marketing is mostly customer-focused, with a greater emphasis on consumer pleasure and perception. Service sectors, in particular, place a greater emphasis on the client. According to this report, the majority of customers are satisfied with the services provided by IRCTC. To keep current clients as well as win new ones, the company should constantly improve the quality and availability of its products. These actions will result in Customer satisfaction contributing to the company's long-term success.

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