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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON THE SERVICES RENDERED BY MONTENEGRO SHIPPING LINES

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to assess customer satisfaction on the services rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines. More specifically to know the profile of the respondents, customer satisfaction on the services rendered by Montenegro Lines in terms of Front Line, Housekeeping and Food and Beverage services, and to know the difference in responses when respondents were grouped according to profile variables. Descriptive method was utilized in the study. Findings revealed that customers are satisfied on the services rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines. The level of customer satisfaction rendered by Montenegro Lines do not differed when grouped based on their profile. The study recommended that the management may conduct Values Enhancement Seminar for the employees. Additional trainings should be conducted to improve the employees' skills and competence. They must improve room amenities and services. The management may present options/choices in terms of food. Future researches may conduct similar study using other variables.

KEYWORDS: Customer Satisfaction, Service-Oriented, Montenegro Lines

INTRODUCTION

Customer Satisfaction can be defined as an expectation of a customer regarding a product (Mckinney et al, 2002). Perceived performance or expectation is defined as a customer's belief related to a performance of a product. Customer Satisfaction is a business philosophy which tends to the creation of value for customers, anticipating and managing their expectations, and demonstrating ability and responsibility to satisfy their needs. Qualities of service and customer satisfaction are critical factors for success of any business. The cost of attracting new customers is higher than the cost of retaining the existing ones, in order to be successful managers must concentrate on retaining existing customers

implementing effective policies of customer satisfaction and loyalty. This is especially true in the hospitality industry (Domonici et al., 2010). Customer satisfaction increases customer loyalty, influences repurchase intentions and leads to positive word-of-mouth. Given the vital role of customer satisfaction, it is not surprising that a variety of research has been devoted to investigating the determinants of satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). According to (Giese and Cote, 2002) customer satisfaction has been a popular topic in marketing practice and academic research since initial study of customer effort, expectations and satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction is top priority of Montenegro Shipping Lines, Inc. a domestic shipping company established on September 16, 1978 by Vicente Leyco Montenegro, Sr. who was the pioneer service provider of commercial and public transportation by sea via the route Batangas City - Abra de Ilog and back.

As a Cruise Line Operation in Hotel services students, the researchers choose to assess customer satisfaction at Montenegro Shipping Lines. The level of customer satisfaction is an indication profitability and stability. This is our way of knowing our prospects and opportunities after graduation. This is also one way of helping them to improve the services of Montenegro Lines as future professionals in the hospitality industry.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to assess the customer satisfaction on the services rendered by Montenegro Lines. More specifically to know the profile of the respondents and the customer satisfaction on the services rendered by Montenegro Lines in terms of Front Line, Housekeeping and Food and Beverage services, and to know the difference in responses when respondents were grouped according to profile variables.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research utilized the Descriptive Method of research, as opposed to an experimental or normative method develops knowledge by describing observed situations, events and objects. The descriptive method is used in most branches of science, as well as in the social sciences. (Robinson, 2010). Participants of the study are the 280 customers of Montenegro Shipping Lines. A total of 118 respondents were involved in the study using 7 percent margin of error. The respondents were randomly selected.

The researchers utilized a researcher-made questionnaire patterned from books and other materials related to the study. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part 1 tackles about the profile of the respondent and part 2 is about the satisfaction of the customer in

terms of the Front Line, Food and Beverages, and Housekeeping Services in Montenegro Shipping Lines.

The researchers went to the library to read books, magazines and unpublished theses as their course information in making the questionnaire as well as for the text enrichment study. The researchers were able to construct the final draft. After several revisions the finalized questionnaire was reproduced. The researchers asked permission first to the management of Montenegro Lines to conduct a survey. After permission was granted, the questionnaire was distributed to the following respondents in the said shipping line. After two weeks, the researchers collected the answered questionnaire and the data gathered were tabulated and interpreted.

All data were tallied, interpreted and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, weighted mean and analysis of variance (ANOVA). These data were computed using PASW version 18 using 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents' age ranges from 18-25 and 26-35. As to age distribution, mostly belong to 26 to 35 years old with 27.10 percent, male and majority are college undergraduate. According to the result of the age distribution mostly were male and it is in the majority of college undergraduate, researchers found out that in a ship vessel mostly were the males who are travelling but still there also females. Although that people having the same age and also they have differences in terms of their needs and wants still they want to meet their expectations in terms of the services or products.

Results of the reasons why the people travel in this line is because of comfortability while on board which makes their stay satisfied. Other reasons for travelling in this shipping line are visiting relatives and friends (40.68), rest and relaxation (27.97) and business reasons (25.42). Satisfaction can be determined by subjective (e. g. customer needs, emotions) and objective factors (e. g. product and service features). Applying to the hospitality industry, there have been numerous studies that examine attributes that travellers may find important regarding customer satisfaction. Majority of the passengers availing services of Montenegro Lines are from Region IV-B. People from places of the region avail the Batangas – Mindoro route of the Shipping Company. Montenegro Lines never fails to give customers' satisfaction as manifested in their customer loyalty. Customer loyalty relates to a relationship between a company and a customer.

Customer Satisfaction on the Services Rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines in terms of Front Line Service

The over-all assessment of the respondents' on front line service rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines was 3.51 and rated Very Good. Among the items mentioned, waiting time in line at "check – in", reservation in order when arrive, crew's hospitality (friendliness, courtesy, responsiveness) and assistance of staff/crew were rated Very Good. According to the result of the survey of the respondents, in terms of Front Line Service, the respondents were satisfied because they rated the service Very Good, so that it says here that the Montenegro Lines meets the customer satisfaction. They meet the customers' needs and wants in terms of product or service. And f/or that they have a customer satisfaction which resulted of customer loyalty.

However, punctuality and efficiency of crew services on board and courtesy at front desk were assessed as Good only. As the result in this service especially to the crew members they rated as Good. At least in their service, the guests or the travellers were satisfied about them. From there, they have good attitudes towards the guests. They were courteous to the travellers in order to them that the traveller has satisfied as of their service. Understanding the needs of the customer is critical. A business relationship, just like any other relationship, relies on both people getting their needs met. No matter what type of business you are in, all customers want the same thing. They want to feel welcomed and appreciated by you and your staff. They don't want to get the impression that they are just being used by you for money. Small interactions like "Thank you" and a nice smile can go a long way toward customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction on the Services Rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines in terms of Housekeeping Service

From the result in the customer satisfaction in housekeeping service, the arrangement of the facilities and equipment ranked first. According to this the Montenegro Shipping Lines have their good facilities and equipment as part of the achieving customer satisfaction. They assure that all the facilities and equipment were properly arranged which made the travelers satisfied. Ranked 2 was guest requests were promptly responded. It says here that crew members were responsive when it comes to the guest request. They give what all the guests want and also their requests. The respondents rated the Housekeeping Service as Good. Result from the table has shown that all the services there were all good providing that they met the customers' satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction on the Services Rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines in terms of Food and Beverage Services

Good rating which explains that travellers are not very much pleased with the food served. The rest of the items in the table are all graded the same. However, customer satisfaction is still met as reflected in the customer loyalty. The management should therefore give more focus on the duties of food and beverage serving and related workers which are the following: Prepare and clean assigned work areas; Replenish and stock service stations, cabinets, and tables; Serve food and drinks to customers from behind a counter; Greet customers, escort them to their seats, and hand them menus; Answer customers' questions about menu items and specials. Clean tables and dining areas and set tables for new customers.

Items on courtesy of the service waiters, affordability of food and beverage, and even effectiveness of the servers/waiters are interpreted good. The Shipping Line therefore should improve services in the said areas to obtain customer satisfaction.

Table 1 Difference of Responses on the Customer Satisfaction on the Services Rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines When Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Front Line Service			Housekeeping Service			Food and Beverage Services		
	F _c	p-value	I	F _c	p-value	I	F _c	p-value	I
Employment Status	.412	.840	NS	.317	.902	NS	.479	.791	NS
Age	.867	.506	NS	.764	.578	NS	1.087	.371	NS
Gender	4.965	.028	S	2.441	.121	NS	2.299	.132	NS
Educational Attainment	.267	.951	NS	.325	.922	NS	.356	.905	NS
First Timer	6.666	.011	S	18.293	.000	S	11.629	.001	S
Place of Origin	.565	.757	NS	.540	.777	NS	.505	.803	NS

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05; S = Significant; NS= Not Significant

Based from the result, it was found out that there is a significant difference on the services rendered by Montenegro Shipping Lines in terms of front line service when grouped according to gender and whether they are first time or not because the obtained p-value were less than 0.05 level of significance. This means that their experience on front line service given to them varies on their gender classification and the frequency of their visit.

According to the result on this table it was found out that the front line service was very responsible to the passengers while on board. They assure that they will give their best

service to the travellers both to those who travelled the first time and even to those who had travelled before. Satisfaction level is a result of the difference between expected and perceived performance. There is a significant difference on the services rendered by Montenegro Lines because as of the services rendered there was a difference between all the services in terms of front line, housekeeping, and food and beverage.

In terms of housekeeping and food and beverages services shows significant difference when grouped according to their frequency of visit. This implies that their level of satisfaction differs. When it comes in the housekeeping services and in food and beverage services, from the respondents' results into this service, it was differ from the level of satisfaction of the guest. That's why it found out that it is not the same when they were travelled from day to day, the customer satisfaction was also differ from the other day whenever they travel. This means that not all crew members gives their full of service to the other travellers. That's why it was found out that service of the crew was not the same from day to day. That was in terms of the housekeeping from food and beverages. The crew members have their differences in their services.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the respondents are employed, belong to age bracket of 18 to 25 years old. Most of them are under graduate. Majority are loyal customers and they already knew of the Montenegro. The main reason why they travel is to visit their relatives and friends. They also recommend this shipping line to their friends and relatives and the majority of the respondents are from Region IV – B. The customers are satisfied on the services rendered by Montenegro Lines. The level of customer satisfaction rendered by Montenegro Lines do not differed when grouped based on their profile.

The management may conduct Values Enhancement Seminar for the employees. Additional trainings should be conducted to improve the employees' skills and competence. They must improve room amenities and services. The management may present options/choices in terms of food. Future researches may conduct similar study using other variables.

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