

Evaluation of the Existing Customer Relationship Management Practices in the Accommodation Sector of Kerala

Beena M¹ and Dr. Rajesh T²

¹Assistant Professor (Commerce), GPM Govt. College Manjeshwar, Kasaragod, Kerala ²Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Government College, Ambalapuzha, Alappuzha, Kerala,
E-mail: ¹beenasatheesh83@gmail.com, ²rajeshvjd@rediffmail.com

Abstract- Accommodation plays an important role in tourism and hospitality industry. CRM Practices in the accommodation sector is influenced by seven variables namely *Swagat (Welcome)*, *Soochana (Information)*, *Suvidha (Facilitation)*, *Suraksha (Safety)*, *Sahyog (Cooperation)*, *Samrachan (Infrastructural development)* and *Safai (Cleanliness)*. Customer needs identification is a main factor in relationship management. Employees play a significant role in maintaining a sound CRM practices with customers. The present study is an attempt to evaluate the existing CRM Practices on the basis of category and designation of employees in the KTDC and Private accommodation sector in Kerala.

Key words: Customer Relationship Management, CRM Practices, Accommodation Sector

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a form of travelling to and staying places outside their usual environment and using of the services that support the travel, such as transportation, accommodation, food service, tour operators, attractions and convention and meeting services. Marketing of tourism products plays an important role in tourism industry. Tourism marketing strategy helps in building a brand, capturing new customers and maintaining the existing customers. The customer relationship is a severe challenge for the tourism industry. Understanding the expectations and perceptions of tourists are very essential in the tourism industry. So, when the customers enjoy the services offered, the employees of the accommodation sector must provide the best service possible so customers' will feel pleased by using the services.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Among the various service sectors in the tourism sector, the role played by the Accommodation sector (Hotels) is pivotal. In this competitive economy, customer preferences, satisfaction, loyalty etc. are crucial factors for maintaining a sound relationship with customer. Hence, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is an imperative idea and it has a superior role in the accommodation sector (Hotel industry). Customer Relationship Management is to create trustworthy customers; it is not about crafting cheerful customers but making delighted customers. CRM focuses on how to be served better because it is costly to create new customers than maintaining reliable customers. It will facilitate the customers to articulate their requirements, demands, experience, interests, outlooks and perception towards a service or a product so that this vital information can be used as a tool to measure the customer satisfaction and understand the customer needs. Hence the area of study is significant.

OBJECTIVES

Objective: To evaluate the existing CRM Practices in the accommodation sector of Kerala on the basis of Category and Designation of the employees.

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis: The existing CRM Practices in the accommodation sector of Kerala on the basis of Category and Designation of the employees are the same.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is analytical in nature and it evaluates the existing CRM Practices by employees of KTDC and Private accommodation sector in Kerala. Both primary and secondary sources were used to

collect primary and secondary data respectively. The data for the present study has been collected from the 58 KTDC and 221 Private sector employees, who are in charge of Customer Relationship Management at the accommodation sector in Kerala. Secondary data were collected from various publications of Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, articles, published and unpublished thesis and related websites.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CRM Practices in the accommodation sector is influenced by seven variables namely Swagat (Welcome), Sookhana (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Cooperation), Samrachan (Infrastructural development) and Safai (Cleanliness). Here an attempt is made to evaluate the existing CRM practices in the accommodation sector of Kerala on the basis of Category and Designation of the employees using Manova.

This part of the analysis is based on the Likert Scale based questions included in this study. In order to arrive at a concrete conclusion about the opinion of the employees, the mean value assigned by the employees is divided into three sections. The effect of the mean value less than 2.90 tends to be low, the effect is moderate when mean value is between 2.90 to 3.469 and the effect is high when the mean value is more than 3.469.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics - CRM Practices

CRM Practices	Category	Designation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Swagat (Welcome)	KTDC	Top	3.116**	.6846	31
		Middle	3.119**	.6978	27
		Total	3.117**	.6847	58
	Private	Top	2.794*	.6682	105
		Middle	2.748*	.5969	116
		Total	2.770*	.6307	221
	Total	Top	2.868*	.6830	136
		Middle	2.818*	.6315	143
		Total	2.842*	.6564	279
Sookhana (Information)	KTDC	Top	2.875*	.4489	31
		Middle	2.833*	.3949	27
		Total	2.856*	.4215	58
	Private	Top	2.902*	.4220	105
		Middle	2.839*	.4384	116
		Total	2.869*	.4309	221
	Total	Top	2.896*	.4267	136
		Middle	2.838*	.4292	143
		Total	2.866*	.4282	279
Suvidha (Facilitation)	KTDC	Top	2.960**	.4371	31
		Middle	2.926**	.4680	27
		Total	2.944**	.4481	58
	Private	Top	3.000**	.5027	105
		Middle	2.878*	.4211	116
		Total	2.936**	.4646	221
	Total	Top	2.991**	.4873	136
		Middle	2.887*	.4290	143
		Total	2.938**	.4604	279

Cont...

CRM Practices	Category	Designation	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Suraksha (Safety)	KTDC	Top	2.968**	.3738	31
		Middle	3.016**	.4218	27
		Total	2.990**	.3941	58
	Private	Top	3.073**	.4123	105
		Middle	2.989**	.3811	116
		Total	3.029**	.3976	221
	Total	Top	3.049**	.4049	136
		Middle	2.994**	.3877	143
		Total	3.021**	.3964	279
Sahyog (Co-operation)	KTDC	Top	3.432**	.6615	31
		Middle	3.222**	.7366	27
		Total	3.334**	.6993	58
	Private	Top	3.333**	.7188	105
		Middle	3.340**	.6974	116
		Total	3.337**	.7061	221
	Total	Top	3.356**	.7050	136
		Middle	3.317**	.7038	143
		Total	3.336**	.7034	279
Samrachan(Infrastructural development)	KTDC	Top	3.111**	.8711	31
		Middle	3.053**	.9859	27
		Total	3.084**	.9185	58
	Private	Top	3.052**	.9542	105
		Middle	3.068**	.8985	116
		Total	3.060**	.9233	221
	Total	Top	3.065**	.9331	136
		Middle	3.065**	.9120	143
		Total	3.065**	.9207	279
Safai (Cleanliness)	KTDC	Top	3.387**	.8304	31
		Middle	3.321**	.9585	27
		Total	3.356**	.8849	58
	Private	Top	3.283**	.8624	105
		Middle	3.349**	.8882	116
		Total	3.317**	.8747	221
	Total	Top	3.306**	.8533	136
		Middle	3.344**	.8984	143
		Total	3.326**	.8753	279

(Source: Primary data;*-Low, **-Moderate, ***-High)

Both top and middle-level employees of KTDC (3.11 ± 0.68 & 3.11 ± 0.69) and top and middle-level employees of Private (2.79 ± 0.66 & 2.74 ± 0.59) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Swagat (Welcome)' is moderate and low in the accommodation sector.

All employees, i.e., top and middle-level employees of KTDC (2.87 ± 0.44 & 2.83 ± 0.39) and top and middle-level employees of Private (2.90 ± 0.42 & 2.83 ± 0.43) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Soochana (Information)' is low in the accommodation sector.

Top and middle-level employees of KTDC (2.96 ± 0.43 & 2.92 ± 0.46) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Suvidha (Facilitation)' is moderate. Top and middle-level employees of Private (3.00 ± 0.50 & 2.87 ± 0.42) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Suvidha (Facilitation)' is moderate and low in the accommodation sector.

All employees, i.e., top and middle-level employees of KTDC (2.96 ± 0.37 & 3.01 ± 0.42) and top and middle-level employees of Private (3.07 ± 0.41 & 2.98 ± 0.38) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Suraksha (Safety)' is moderate in the accommodation sector.

All employees, i.e., top and middle-level employees of KTDC (3.43 ± 0.66 & 3.22 ± 0.73) and top and middle-level employees of Private (3.33 ± 0.71 & 3.34 ± 0.69) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Sahyog (Co-operation)' is moderate in the accommodation sector.

All employees, i.e., top and middle-level employees of KTDC (3.11 ± 0.87 & 3.05 ± 0.98) and top and middle-level employees of Private (3.05 ± 0.95 & 3.06 ± 0.89) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Samrachan (Infrastructural development)' is moderate in the accommodation sector.

All employees, i.e., top and middle-level employees of KTDC (3.38 ± 0.83 & 3.32 ± 0.95) and top and middle-level employees of Private (3.28 ± 0.86 & 3.34 ± 0.88) opined that the influence of CRM practice 'Safai (Cleanliness)' is moderate in the accommodation sector.

Table 1.1
Multivariate Tests - CRM Practices

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Category	Pillai's Trace	.052	2.093 ^b	7.000	269.000	.045
	Wilks' Lambda	.948	2.093 ^b	7.000	269.000	.045*
	Hotelling's Trace	.054	2.093 ^b	7.000	269.000	.045
	Roy's Largest Root	.054	2.093 ^b	7.000	269.000	.045
Designation	Pillai's Trace	.016	.628 ^b	7.000	269.000	.733
	Wilks' Lambda	.984	.628 ^b	7.000	269.000	.733
	Hotelling's Trace	.016	.628 ^b	7.000	269.000	.733
	Roy's Largest Root	.016	.628 ^b	7.000	269.000	.733
Category * Designation	Pillai's Trace	.029	1.155 ^b	7.000	269.000	.329
	Wilks' Lambda	.971	1.155 ^b	7.000	269.000	.329
	Hotelling's Trace	.030	1.155 ^b	7.000	269.000	.329
	Roy's Largest Root	.030	1.155 ^b	7.000	269.000	.329
a. Design: Intercept + Category + Designation + Category * Designation						
b. Exact statistic						

(Source: Primary data)

According to Wilks' Lambda, based on the Category of employees, a significant difference was found in the CRM practices at the accommodation sector of Kerala, as the p-value is 0.045 ($p < 5\%$). Thus the null hypothesis formulated is rejected. But based on the Designation of employees, no significant difference was found in the CRM practices at the accommodation sector of Kerala, as the p-value is 0.733 ($p > 5\%$). Thus the null hypothesis formulated is accepted. Similarly, the interaction effect of Category

with Designation of employees was noted and found no significant difference in the CRM practices at the accommodation sector of Kerala, as the p-value is 0.329 ($p > 5\%$).

Table 1.2
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects - CRM Practices

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Category	Swagat (Welcome)	5.478	1	5.478	13.199	.001*
	Soochana (Information)	.012	1	.012	.065	.799
	Suvidha (Facilitation)	.001	1	.001	.003	.957
	Suraksha (Safety)	.071	1	.071	.452	.502
	Sahyog (Co-operation)	.004	1	.004	.008	.929
	Samrachan (Infrastructural development)	.022	1	.022	.026	.872
	Safai (Cleanliness)	.067	1	.067	.086	.769
Designation	Swagat (Welcome)	.022	1	.022	.052	.819
	Soochana (Information)	.126	1	.126	.680	.410
	Suvidha (Facilitation)	.277	1	.277	1.309	.254
	Suraksha (Safety)	.015	1	.015	.097	.756
	Sahyog (Co-operation)	.475	1	.475	.953	.330
	Samrachan (Infrastructural development)	.020	1	.020	.023	.879
	Safai (Cleanliness)	2.736E-006	1	2.736E-006	.001	.999
Category * Designation	Swagat (Welcome)	.027	1	.027	.065	.800
	Soochana (Information)	.005	1	.005	.027	.869
	Suvidha (Facilitation)	.089	1	.089	.419	.518
	Suraksha (Safety)	.201	1	.201	1.282	.259
	Sahyog (Co-operation)	.535	1	.535	1.075	.301
	Samrachan (Infrastructural development)	.062	1	.062	.073	.788
	Safai (Cleanliness)	.201	1	.201	.260	.610

(Source: Primary data)

According to the Anova test, based on the Category of employees, a significant difference was found in the dependent variable Swagat (Welcome) at the accommodation sector of Kerala, as the p-value is 0.001 ($p < 5\%$). Thus the null hypothesis formulated is rejected, which favour the opinion of KTDC employees. But all other dependents variables are not significant, as the p-value is greater than 5%. Similarly, based on the Designation of the employees and interaction effect of the Category with Designation of employees, no significant difference was found among the components of CRM practices at the accommodation sector of Kerala, as the p-value is greater than 5%. Thus the null hypothesis formulated is accepted.

CONCLUSION

CRM Practices based on the opinion of Category and Designation of the employees at the KTDC and Private accommodation sector in Kerala are moderate in Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Co-operation), Samrachan (Infrastructural development) and Safai (Cleanliness), moderate and low in Swagat

(Welcome) and low in the case of Soochana (Information). The interaction effect of Category with Designation of employees has no significant difference in the CRM practices at the accommodation sector of Kerala. On the basis of category of employees, there is a significant difference in the CRM Practice Swagat (Welcome). Maintaining a cordial relation with customers /tourists is an important factor for the success of this industry. So efforts should be taken for the boosting of the current CRM practices such as Swagat (Welcome), Soochana (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Co-operation), Samrachan (Infrastructural development) and Safai (Cleanliness).

REFERENCES

1. Antoneta, Njeri., Kariru & Charles. (2014). Customers' Perceptions and Expectations of Service Quality in Hotels in the Tourism circuit, Kenya. *Journal of Research in Hospitality, Tourism and Culture*, 2.1: 1-12.
2. Bucak, Turgay. (2011). The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: A Research on Hotel Businesses. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 2.1.
3. Mahnam, Aali Reza. (2014). Effectiveness of Customer Relationship Management in Star Category Hotels in Karnataka, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Mysore, Mysore.
4. Rousan, Al., Ramzi, M. & Mohamed, Badaruddin. (2010). Customer Loyalty and the Impacts of Service Quality: The Case of Five Star Hotels in Jordan. *International Journal of Human and Social Sciences*, 886-892.
5. Shaji B P. (2011). Management of Tourism Products in Kerala, Institute of Management in Kerala, Ph.D. Thesis, Kerala University, Kerala.
6. Shanmugasundaram, S. (2008). Customer Relationship Management: Modern Trends and Perspectives, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi.
7. Singh, Kumar Yogesh. (2006). Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Statistics, New Age International (P) Limited, New Delhi.
8. Sudheer S V. (1991). Tourism in Kerala: Problems and Prospects, Ph.D. Thesis, Kerala University, Kerala.
9. Sundaram Shanmuga. S.(2008). Customer Relationship Management: Modern Trends and Perspectives, PHI Learning Private Limited, New Delhi.
10. Yadav, Anil Kumar. (2013). A Study of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Practices in Banking Sector, Ph.D. Thesis, Shri Jagdishprasad Jhabarmal Tibrewala University, Rajasthan.