

SA customers rate local commercial airlines

The South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi) is a national economic indicator of customer satisfaction with the quality of products and services available to household consumers in South Africa. The latest results were released on 11 June 2013, revealing that SA domestic travellers rate their satisfaction with the SA commercial airline industry as a score of 68 out of 100. Of the ten industries measured by SAcsi so far this year, this was the lowest score.



Beyond the industry score, the results show a clear split in domestic travellers' levels of satisfaction with national carrier SAA, and SA's low-cost carriers, Kulula and Mango.

Kulula, Mango, and SAA were included in SAcsi's web-based and telephonic customer satisfaction survey based on their market share. Low-cost carriers lead the industry with Kulula and Mango scoring 5.7% and 5.1% above the industry average respectively. SAA scored 6.6% below industry average.

Room for improvement

"The past decade has been a turbulent one for the local commercial airlines industry, characterised by SAA's government bailout and plans for further improvement, as well as the bankruptcy of four low-cost carriers (Nationwide Airlines, Interlink airline, 1time and Velvet Sky)," says Professor Adré Schreuder, founder and chair of SAcsi. "Despite this, the airline companies do seem to be generally satisfying their customers. The score of 68 out of 100 is our lowest industry score so far, but it is still an acceptable satisfaction score. The point is that this score can be improved and this is where the SAcsi aims to provide helpful strategic information to industry players," says Schreuder.

SAA's satisfaction score is influenced strongly by the fact that its passengers report a perception of receiving a low value given the price paid. In the case of Kulula and Mango, customers report satisfaction with the total experience across all SAcsi model components (expectations, quality, value, satisfaction, complaints, and loyalty).

SAcsi holds a licence with the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), and now forms part of a growing number of ACSI-licensed partner countries worldwide, which allows South Africa to compare its industries' customer satisfaction with

this global community.

Relative to the international ACSI scores, South Africa's commercial airlines ranked sixth among the seven countries measured by the ACSI - Indonesia being the international benchmark with a score of 78 out of 100. South Africa's score was only just above the USA (67) and was beaten by South Korea (76), Singapore (73), Turkey (73), and the UK (69).

Research methodology

Each company was measured through telephonic and web-survey methods at a statistically reliable sample of at least 270 respondents per company. For the domestic commercial airlines industry the total sample was 1644 randomly selected respondents who used the airlines for domestic flights. This sample provided a 2% error margin on a 90% confidence interval.

Customer satisfaction is measured using an advanced statistical model that has been rigorously evaluated, in line with the American Customer Satisfaction Index methodology.

The SAcsi index gives companies detailed information to assist them in improving customer satisfaction. Each month, customer satisfaction results are released for specific industries.

For further information, or to access summaries of the industry level reports, go to www.sacsi.co.za.

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