Impact of Customer Orientation on Brand Equity with Reference to Sri Lankan Airlines

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Maintaining positive customer orientation is highly significant to build the brand name of a particular product or service in today's highly-competitive market. Customer buying behavior and response towards a product or service are highly associated with the brand. Consequently, brand equity is considered as one of the key approaches to target the potential customer as it reflects the real value that a brand name holds. Srivastava (2015) defined that brand equity is the added value endowed on products and services. It may be reflected in a way as consumers see, think, feel and act towards a particular brand. Sri Lankan Airlines has managed to keep up its brand by focusing on customer orientation in the airline industry. Considerably, the Airline has reduced airfares to attract more customers. Further, Sri Lankan airline has been continuously working on the quality of flight by redesigning the interior, especially the business class cabins with first-class recliner seats for added comfort. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of customer orientation on brand equity with reference to Sri Lankan airlines. Here, the researcher considered brand equity as a dependent variable and customer orientation as an independent variable that has three dimensions as customer relationship management, service quality and price of the service. The sample size of the study is 75 respondents who used Sri Lankan airlines during the period of December 2017 to May 2018. The researcher used a convenience sampling method in order to collect data from 75 passengers. The findings of the study are based on primary data which was collected through a questionnaire. Secondary data were collected through published research papers, journals, reports, websites, and guidelines to support the study. There are no gender biases in the study as 53% of the respondents were male and 47% of the respondents were female. The researcher used multiple linear regression analysis to examine the collected primary data. The outcomes of the study reveal that customer relationship management, service quality, price of the service are significant factors, where p values are less than 0.05. Moreover, findings of the study show that 1-point increases customer relationship management, service quality, price of the service corresponding to 0.038, 0.057, 0.080, increases on brand equity. It also indicates that service quality has a higher impact than customer relationship management and price of the service by comparing the standardized coefficients (beta = 0.732 versus beta = 0.063 and 0.096). Apart from these, respondents are averagely satisfied with the price of the service and customer relationship management. Therefore, it suggests that Sri Lankan airlines should offer reasonable low-price tickets than the competitors' prices and vary the prices according to seasons and situations. It's vital that they build, maintain and improve strong and positive customer relationships in a manner that the customers will recommend the airline to their friends and family.

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