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A Qualitative Assessment of Airline Passenger Satisfaction

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A Qualitative Assessment of Airline Passenger Satisfaction

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Abstract

Each year, airline passengers respond to the Airline Passenger Survey providing feedback of their experiences with major domestic (U.S.) airlines. The Airline Passenger Survey analyzes responses to a varied set of questions. This specific study is limited to the single open-ended question within the survey. This question is optional, but allows an opportunity to share any issues, concerns, and/or complaints regarding their own air travel experiences. There is no limitation on the number of words submitted. Through the application of a thematic coding scheme, results show what the highest concerns of airline passengers have been the last two years.

Background

The Airline Passenger Survey (APS) was originally created in 2009 by Dr. Brent D. Bowen, at the behest of Airline Passenger Bill of Rights proponent and Congressman, Lee Terry. The survey was intended to gauge passengers' perceptions of airline quality and opinions regarding rights of travelers. This study specifically analyzes the open-ended question which states:

"Have you experienced any travel issues, concerns, or complaints? Please briefly describe them below:"

Methodology

Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail." As such, thematic analysis was determined to be most appropriate for this study in order to analyze and identify common themes among the participant's responses. The thematic analysis process resulted in the discovery of twelve main themes.



Thematic map, depicting three main themes

Results

Extracted Themes

- Customer Service- 94 Responses
- Flight Problems- 58 Responses
- Baggage- 32 Responses
- Reserv., Ticket., and Board.- 30 Responses
- Fares- 21 Responses
- Oversales- 10 Responses
- Refunds- 14 Responses
- Animals- 13 Responses
- Disability- 6 Responses
- Advertising- 6 Responses
- Discrimination- 1 Response
- Other- 231 Responses

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