

Examine The Level Of Satisfaction On The Services Provided To Passengers By The Omnibus Service Providers In Coimbatore District.

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ABSTRACT

Passenger transportation is an important part of the sociological problems of society. Since Independence, passenger road transport in India has been growing fast and has acquired considerable importance as a discrete economic activity with a huge growth potential. The 'Road Transport Corporation Act' passed in 1950 enabled State Governments to form corporations for running passenger transport services. The transport sector is one of the core sectors of the economy, since it supports the infrastructure needs of all development. Passenger transport services are basis of all commercial activities.

KEYWORDS: Omnibus service providers, satisfaction and passengers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Omni bus is a large motor vehicle, a type of **bus**, used for conveying passengers on excursions and on longer distance **express bus scheduled transport** between cities - or even between states. Unlike buses designed for shorter journeys, Omni Buses often have a luggage hold separate from the passenger cabin and are normally equipped with facilities required for longer trips including comfortable seats and sometimes a toilet.

In India bus industry forms an important part of the automobile industry in the country. Over the last few years, the bus industry has grown to a great extent and new types of buses with better facilities have come up with more Omni Buses are being introduced into the market. In the present moment Omni Buses are spacious and comfortable. They are also eco- friendly and the mileage is also pretty good. Nowadays, new types of Omni Buses are being introduced which are

equipped with advanced facilities and services such as air-conditioned, passenger information system, air suspension systems and so on.

1.1. REGULATION OF OMNI BUS SERVICE PROVIDERS:

As per the Tamil Nadu Motor Vehicles Act, 1983, the Government has decided to permit the operation of Omni Buses served urban and semi urban areas by private operators only. The Government has made various restrictions and conditions to regulate the operations of Omni Bus services. As this scheme is operated only by private operators, the activities of such private operators are strictly regulated by the State Government through limitation in area of operation, seating capacity, number of buses held, bus fare norms and the like. In order to regulate the private Omni Bus operators, the State Government has made amendments under the Tamil Nadu Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 as and when necessary.

1.2. PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING OMNI BUS PERMITS:

As provided in Section 82 of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 the permit shall not be transferred from one person to another except with the permission of the Transport Authority which granted the permit and shall not without such permission operate to confer on any person to whom the vehicle covered by the permit is transferred, any right to use the vehicle in the matter authorized by the permit.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Developing countries like India is aware of the fact that factors such as economic development, education, employment and standard of living are the important criteria based on which a country may be adjudged as a 'developed nation'. Transport provides employment opportunities. It helps the businessmen to produce more goods and it increases the demand for goods. An efficient transport system is vital for all areas in India including rural areas for the conveyance of both goods and passengers.

Omni bus services are unavoidable and it renders valuable services to the passengers. Hence, an attempt is made by the researcher to study the Omni bus service sector and also the attitude of the passengers towards this service in Coimbatore District. Omni Buses are operated only by the private companies and agencies. Omni bus services give many facilities to the passengers. Hence, an attempt has also been made by the researcher to study the mode of operation of

omnibus services and attitude of the passengers towards this service, job satisfaction of the crew members and opinion of the operators of omnibus services.

1.4. NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Omni Bus service is typically fast and traverses long distances. Its primary role is to connect commuters from outlying suburban areas to urban employment centers/ areas. To maintain high travel speeds and level of service, Omni Buses have only a few stops to pick-up and drop-off passengers, then proceeds to its final destination.

The continued growth of urban transit will depend on its ability to respond to individual travelers needs through the spread of e-ticketing, interoperability and journey planning information. E-ticketing is a ticket-less concept. It provides total fulfillment for the passenger without the worry of lost or forgotten tickets. E-ticketing provides companies with the opportunity to reduce administrative costs and, at the same time, provide a higher level of service to travelers.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To examine and access the level of satisfaction on the services provided to passengers by the omnibus service providers in Coimbatore district.
2. To analyse the level of agreeability of passengers on the retention strategies adopted by omnibus service providers in Coimbatore district.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study entitled examine and access the level of satisfaction on the services provided to passengers by the omnibus service providers in Coimbatore district. This study focuses the attitude of passengers towards omnibus services and the customer relationship management of crew members. It also identifies the problems faced by the omnibus operators in offering satisfactory services to the passengers.

1.7. HYPOTHESES:

Hypothesis testing begins with an assumption made about the parameter. Hypothesis is a supposition made. It is a quantitative statement about the population. In this study, suitable hypothesis were framed and tested for its significance at 5% level.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research is an art of scientific investigation. The validity of a researcher depends on the systematic method of collecting the data and analyzing them in a sequential order. It deals with the systematic method comprising of declaring the problem, formulating a hypothesis, collecting the facts or data, analyzing the facts and reaching certain conclusions. Either certain conclusions are in the form of solution(s) towards the problems concerned. It also the certain generalizations for some theoretical formulation.

1.9.PILOT STUDY AND PRE-TESTING:

Reliability refers to consistency, stability and precision of test scores. The reliability tests are important when the derivative variables are intended to be used for subsequent predictive analysis. If the scales shows poor reliability then individuals within the scales must be re-examined and modified or completely changed as needed.

Cronbach's Alpha is an index of reliability. It is associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the underlying construct. The construct is the hypothetical variables. The variable is being measured. Normally when alpha is greater than 0.7 (70%), then the result is considered to be an acceptable one with regard to the present study the alpha is 0.92(92%) which reveals that the collected data are reliable and can proceed for further analysis.

1.10. SAMPLING DESIGN:

The universe in this case is defined as the entire population making use of omnibus services in Coimbatore District. By using stratified random sampling method, the passengers are selected in all the Coimbatore District blocks. The Coimbatore District blocks were divided into 5 zones like, namely central, east, west, north, south. The number of

passengers in omnibus varies every day. The respondents include all sections of people who use omnibus service for official purpose, personal purpose or other purposes. Hence, a definite, statistically, sound sample was not feasible. The sample passengers are mobile population and remain busy in boarding their omnibus, listening to announcements, enquiring to collect required information. Out of 950 samples collected, owing to non-response, inconsistency and other reasons, 20 questionnaire have been excluded. Thus, the total sample size is 930. This 930 samples consist of 186 from each of the five zones of Coimbatore District blocks.

The data collected were statistically analyzed in order to ensure that the objectives of the study are achieved.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Syed Hasan Ali¹ (2012) has expressed the need of providing quality buses. It is suggested that a good bus with all the safety features and modern luxurious amenities will not be able to deliver the required comfort and delight to the passengers if the crew members do not handle the passengers with the correct spirit of providing quality service. It is also suggested that the crew should be polite, courteous and willing to provide services to the passengers with a smile.

Veerdhaval Ghorpade² (2012) has ascertained the different problems in urban transport with special reference to Pune city. It is found that traffic discipline and compliance with traffic rules are lacking among individuals. It is suggested that public need to be educated about traffic rules and regulations through exhibitions, lectures and film show and people must be fined in case of breaking of rules.

Agarwal and Pramod Bhargava³ (2013) have highlighted the viability and the value added by the State Road Transport Undertakings (SRTU) in India to the different segments of the society such as employees, government and stakeholders and selected ten SRTUs for the inter-comparison of value added in different SRTUs. It is suggested that in most of the SRTUs, the value added towards the employees by way of salaries and wages is the most important and considerable. It is concluded that the first rank is assigned to Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation in value addition.

Dipti B. Geete *et.al* (2013)⁴ have evaluated both the physical and psychosocial association between musculoskeletal pain and work-related factors. It is found that the occurrence of Low Back Pain (LBP) in bus drivers was high (70 per cent). This study shows the prevalence of musculoskeletal pain among 80 per cent of the bus drivers. It is also found that ergonomic factors like uncomfortable seat and steering wheel position, vibration, bad road condition and psychosocial factors such as inadequate rest period, tiredness, less time for family, time pressure may be responsible for musculoskeletal pain. It is suggested that participating in exercise can result in lower incidence of musculoskeletal pain. It is concluded that the working environment like faulty work-station design, prolonged sitting, inadequate rest, continuous exposure to vibration along with psychosocial risk factors lead to multiple musculoskeletal pain in bus drivers.

Gowrisankar⁵ (2013) has studied the maintenance of buses, safety in public transport and training to drivers and conductors for Road Safety Management in Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation at Villupuram. It is suggested that the buses are cleaned regularly and daily maintenance is done to avoid break down and accidents. The drivers should be trained on patience, responsibility, self -confidence, knowledge of traffic signs, rules and regulations. It is also suggested that District level Road Safety Committee may be formed to investigate accidents and suggest the ways to avoid accidents.

Hemant Arjun Anbhule⁶ (2013) has observed that stress is an unavoidable part of every human being and especially of every bus driver. It is found that the supervisors' support and the coworkers' help are the major areas which may either increase or decrease the stress. It is suggested that bus drivers have to maintain good relation with coworkers and with supervisors to maintain the satisfaction level regarding the job. It is concluded that most of the time peaceful interaction becomes the coping technique to face the stress.

Mukti Advani and Purnima Parida⁷ (2013) have analysed the traffic fatalities among road users in Delhi. It is observed that the road users such as pedestrians, bicyclists and motorised two-wheeler riders are accounted for 84 percent of deaths in Delhi and bus passengers meet with 5 per cent of traffic fatalities. It is suggested that the road infrastructure facilities such as flyovers, subways, signalized junctions and foot-over-bridges should be developed in order to facilitate the faster movement of vehicles in Delhi.

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ON SERVICE OFFERED BY OMNIBUS SERVICE PROVIDERS

To estimate and compare the mean satisfaction scores on services offered by Omnibus service provider, weighted average analysis is performed using five rating scale and assigning score 1 for highly dissatisfied; 2 for dissatisfied, 3 for neutral, 4 for satisfied and 5 for highly satisfied and the results are presented in the following tables.

Null Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the mean satisfaction scores on the services offered by Omnibus service providers among the respondents.

ANOVA TABLE

SOURCE	DF	S S	M S	F _{cal val}	F _{tab val}
Between groups	14	818.1406	58.438	68.60**	2.10
Within groups	13935	11870.22	0.851		

** - Significant at 1 % level

Since the F is significant the null hypothesis of no difference in the mean satisfaction scores on the services offered by Omnibus service providers among the respondents. is rejected and there is significant difference in the mean satisfaction scores among respondents. The mean satisfaction scores on the service offered by omnibus service providers among the respondent is furnished below:

TABLE 1**LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ON THE SERVICE OFFERED BY OMNIBUS SERVICE PROVIDERS**

S.No	Statements	Mean agreeability score	Rank
1	Friendly behavior of the employees	3.96	1
2	Image and reputation of the service provider	3.58	3
3	Satisfying the needs of the passengers	3.51	4
4	Convenient locations	3.30	9
5	Providing all kinds of relevant services	3.21	12
6	Solving the problems of the passengers	3.13	14
7	Providing information on timing	3.40	6
8	Remedial procedures	3.86	2
9	Promptness in departures and arrivals	3.47	5
10	Familiarity with the passengers	3.31	7
11	Knowledgeable employees	3.26	10
12	Safety and security	3.31	8
13	Individual attention	3.22	11
14	Pleasant and safe journey	3.20	13
15	Provision of luggage facility	3.12	15

Source: Primary data

The above table showed that among 15 satisfaction scores on the services offered by omnibus service providers, the mean satisfaction score ranged from 3.12 to 3.96 and the statement 'Friendly behavior of the employees' secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by 'Remedial procedures' secured next higher mean score and stood at second, 'Image and reputation of the service provider' secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally 'Provision of luggage facility' secured least score and stood at last.

STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO RETAIN THEIR PASSENGERS BY OMNIBUS SERVICE PROVIDERS

To estimate and compare the mean agreeability scores on factors influence to choose Omnibus service, weighted average analysis is performed using five rating scale and assigning score 1 for strongly disagree; 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree and the results are presented in the following tables.

Null Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in the mean agreeability scores on strategies adopted to retain their passengers among the respondents.

ANOVA TABLE

SOURCE	DF	S S	M S	F_{cal val}	F_{tab val}
Between groups	13	981.6406	75.5108	92.86**	2.10
Within groups	13006	10575.22	.813		

** - Significant at 1 % level

Since the F is significant the null hypothesis of no difference in the mean agreeability scores on strategies adopted to retain their passengers among the respondents. It is rejected and

there is significant difference in the mean agreeability scores among respondents. The mean agreeability scores on strategies adopted to retain their passengers among the respondent is furnished below:

TABLE 2
**STRATEGIES ADOPTED TO RETAIN THEIR PASSENGERS BY OMNIBUS
SERVICE PROVIDERS**

S.No	Statements	Mean agreeability score	Rank
1	Maintaining good relationship with the passengers	4.48	1
2	24 hours online service	3.66	3
3	Availability of staff at the time o complaints	3.40	5
4	Paying instant attention to the complaints	3.32	11
5	Friendly solutions to the problems	3.26	14
6	Healthy ambience of the office	3.33	10
7	Attractive ambience in the bus	3.39	7
8	Responsible drivers and assisting staff	3.32	12
9	Attractive packages during	3.37	8

	festive occasions		
10	Hassle – free reservations and cancellations	3.32	13
11	Prompt information about departures and arrivals	4.04	2

12	Onboard entertainment during the journey	3.65	4
13	Competitive fares	3.40	6
14	Every passenger is valued	3.34	9

Source: Primary data

The above table showed that among 14 agreeability scores on strategies adopted to retain their passengers, the mean score ranged from 3.26 to 4.48 and the statement ‘Maintaining good relationship with the passengers’ secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by ‘Prompt information about departures and arrivals’ secured next higher mean score and stood at second, ‘24 hours online service’ secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally ‘Friendly solutions to the problems’ secured least score and stood at last.

SATISFACTION ON THE SERVICES OFFERED BY OMNIBUS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Discriminant analysis is a statistical technique. It allows to study the difference from two or more groups with respect to several variables. Simultaneously and provide a means of classifying any object/individual into the group with which it is most closely associated and to infer the relative importance of each variable used to discriminate from different groups. A linear combination of predictor variables, weighted in such a way that it will best discriminate among groups with the least error is called a linear discriminant function and is given by:

$D = L_1.X_1 + L_2.X_2 + \dots + L_K.X_K$, where X_i 's are predictor variables, L_i 's represents the discriminant coefficients, and D is the value of the discriminant function of a particular individuals/element such that if this value is greater than a certain critical value $D^*=(D1 \text{ bar} + D2 \text{ BAR})/2$, the individual would be classified in group I ; otherwise the individual would be classified in Group III.

In the present study there are two groups namely those respondents with Lower overall mean satisfaction score (Group I $n1=320$), Medium overall mean satisfaction score (Group II $n2= 288$) and respondents with Higher overall mean satisfaction scores on the services offered by omnibus service providers (Group III $n3=322$). Group II has been excluded for the analysis. Fourteen Predictor variables considered for the analysis includes the following:

X1-Gender , X2-Age, X2-Gender, , X3-Education, X4-Occupation, X5- Prefer omni bus travel, X6- How often travel, X7- Purpose of travel, X8- Travel alone ,X9- Purpose & place of travel, X10- Features prefer, X11- Come to know about omnibus, X12- Channels choose to book, X13- How long take to reserve and X14- Portion of the bus prefer.

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORE

Explanatory Variables	Respondents with	
	Lower overall mean satisfaction score (n1=320)	Higher overall mean satisfaction score (n3=322)
Gender-X1	1.51	1.57
Age-X2	2.15	2.58
Education-X3	2.53	2.24
Occupation-X4	2.64	2.58

Prefer omni bus travel-X5	1.24	1.27
How often travel-X6	2.80	2.80
Purpose of travel-X7	2.36	2.26
Travel alone-X8	1.40	1.45
Purpose & place of travel-X9	3.56	3.55
Features prefer-X10	2.46	2.20
Come to know about omnibus-X11	3.48	3.18
Channels choose to book-X12	1.88	1.79
How long take to reserve-X13	2.71	2.44
Portion of the bus prefer-X14	2.54	2.40

Source: Primary data

TABLE 4

TESTS OF EQUALITY OF GROUP MEANS

Univariate ANOVAs

Explanatory Variables.	Wilk's Lambda	F (DF=1, 640)	Sig
Gender-X1	1.00	2.24	0.13
Age-X2	0.96	27.61**	0.00
Education-X3	0.99	8.86**	0.00
Occupation-X4	1.00	0.38	0.54

Prefer omni bus travel-X5	1.00	0.79	0.38
How often travel-X6	1.00	0.00	0.96
Purpose of travel-X7	1.00	1.65	0.20
Travel alone-X8	1.00	1.93	0.17
Purpose & place of travel-X9	1.00	0.00	0.96
Features prefer-X10	0.99	7.49**	0.01
Come to know about omni bus-X11	0.99	3.55	0.06
Channels choose to book-X12	1.00	1.65	0.20
How long take to reserve-X13	0.98	10.35**	0.00
Portion of the bus prefer-X14	0.99	3.30	0.07

** - Significant at 1 % level

Source: Primary data

The independent variables X2, X3, X10 and X13 differ significantly in the mean scores between the two groups.

STEP WISE CONNANICAL DISRIMINENT FUNCTION FITTED:

$$D = 0.257 - 0.624 X1 - 0.722 X2 + 0.417 X3 + 0.322 X10 + 0.349 X13$$

Test Functions

Eigen value: .069

Percentage of variation explained: 100

Wilks Lambda = .936

Chi-square = 36.352** DF = 3 p = .000

Canonical Correlation: .254

CLASSIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL

Using the Discriminant function fitted and the observed predictor variables of the respondents, the respondents are classified and the correct % of classification is presented below.

**PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT CLASSIFICATION BY USING DISCRIMINANT
FUNCTION ON THE DATA**

Respondents with	Lower overall mean agreeability score on perception	Higher overall mean agreeability score on perception	Total
Lower overall mean agreeability score on perception	201	119	320
Higher overall mean agreeability score on perception	136	186	322

From the above table it is observed that out of 320 respondents with Lower overall mean agreeability score on influencing factors, 201 (62.8 %) were correctly classified; out of 322 respondents with Higher overall mean agreeability score on influencing factors, 186 (57.8 %) were correctly classified. Hence the percentage of correct classification is $(387/642) \times 100\%$ or 60.3 % of original grouped cases correctly classified. The percent of correct classification of respondents using the observed observation clearly indicates adequacy of the model in discriminating from the two groups.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PREDICTOR VARIABLE

The relative importance of each predictor variables in discriminating from the two groups is obtained and the results are presented below.

TABLE: 5

THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF VARIABLES IN DISCRIMINATING FROM THE GROUPS

Explanatory Variables	Importance value of the variable (Ij)*	Relative Importance (Rj) %	Rank
Gender-X1	0.0374	6.0	5
Age-X2	0.3177	51.2	1
Education-X3	0.1168	18.8	2
Features prefer-X10	0.0577	9.3	4
How long take to reserve-X13	0.0907	14.6	3
Total	0.6203	100.0	

*-mod mean difference between groups * disc coefficient

Source: Primary data

It is seen from the above table that three variables namely Age-X2, Education-X3 and How long take to reserve-X13 are substantially important variable in discriminating between the two groups namely respondents with lower overall mean agreeability score on mean satisfaction scores and respondents with higher overall mean satisfaction scores on the services offered by omnibus service providers

In order to study the relation between set of independent variable namely Participation in Source-X1, Education-X2, Occupation-X3, Perception-X4, Influencing factors-X5 , Retention strategy-X6, Relationship with omnibus service provider-X7 with the dependent variable Y-

Level of satisfaction on the services-Y, inter-correlation matrix was worked out and furnished below:

TABLE 5.1

INTER-CORRELATION MATRIX

	Source	Educ	Occup	Percepti	Influenc	Retain	Relation	Satisfac
Source-X1	1.00							
Educ-X2	-0.02	1.00						
Occup-X3	0.01	0.09	1.00					
Percepti-X4	0.33	-0.08	-0.01	1.00				
Influenc-X5	0.16	-0.05	0.06	0.65	1.00			
Retain-X6	0.14	-0.09	0.02	0.59	0.56	1.00		
Relation-X7	0.18	-0.10	0.02	0.54	0.49	0.71	1.00	
Satisfac-Y	0.09	-0.09	-0.05	0.58*	0.53*	0.69*	0.62*	1.00

** -Significant at 5 % level

Source: Primary data

It is seen from the above table that the inter-correlation from the independent variables namely X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, X6, and X7. It is also seen that the explanatory variables namely, X4, X5, X6, and X7 are significantly and positively correlated with the dependent variable Y.

SUGGESTIONS:

The following are the important suggestions of the present study:

- Efforts may be taken by the operators to go for electronic display of filled up seats in their booking offices to show the realities and integrity in seating allotment to the passengers.

- Elaborate seating and toilet arrangement may be made available to the passengers, in their booking offices.
- Cell phone numbers of drivers may be displayed inside the buses and also on the printed tickets to enable any urgent communication between passengers and drivers.
- Last minute boarding by the passengers should be avoided. So that the operators are not under any undue pressure.
- The basic attitude of passengers always demanding window seat must be changed, so that seating allotment problem could well be kept under control.
- It is high time on the part of omnibus operators to offer morning service and noon service to Chennai to offer flexibility in departure timings for the passengers.
- Most of the passengers are satisfied with the normal speed of the omnibuses.
- The same should be maintained by the operators.
- A small demo of precautionary measures during omnibus travels may be made available to the passengers.
- Crew members of the omnibuses may be imparted some moral values found in the religious breachings, time and again, to refine their work culture.

CONCLUSION:

In the current scenario omnibus service is quite invaluable to all classes of people. Most of the engineering graduates are placed in Chennai based concerns and hence naturally the dependents of them regularly go to Chennai. Moreover as Chennai is the head quarter of Tamil Nadu State business and official travelers are in plenty. In this context railways alone could not meet all their travelling requirements. Thereby this situation warrants a committed transportation service from the omnibus sector. In the study area of Coimbatore District, the mode of performance of omnibuses is highly commendable and in fact fulfilling all the requirements of passengers. Only very few aspects need to be tuned in the light of expectations of the commuters.

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