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Evaluation of passenger satisfaction towards railway service in Madurai Junction

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ABSTRACT

Indian Railway station provides service to large section of people having different travel characteristics. The perception of service quality of infrastructure at railway station is relative and varies with the preferences of the passengers which lead to variation in their assessment of expectation and perception of various service attributes. Decision on improvement of the services for passenger satisfaction depends on how effectively the passenger responses are measured and analyzed. The findings provide special empirical insights on the gaps in the services provided by Railways in Madurai junction. The five dimensions used to measure Service Quality are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. This gives useful insights to boost passenger satisfaction towards Railway service measurement.

Keywords: Passenger satisfaction, Service Quality, Indian Railways.

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a key to the future development of public transport. Commuter management highlight and explain the link between what government and public transport utility company does and the customer reactions to that. It relates to how passengers respond to the quality of service that the operator gives them. Though there are competitions from various modes of transport, the railway has its own unique features and provides more services to the passengers. In order to compete with other modes of transport, it is inevitable for railways to accelerate the growth of passengers origination. This can be done by providing more quality services to them. Further, the opinion of the passengers towards the services provided by the Indian Railways will be quite different as they vary in socio-economic characteristics.

CONCEPTUALBACKGROUND

Shahid Ali [4] et.al., (2016), identified various dimensions that are used to determine the passengers overall perceived service quality and in determining the prominent dimensions in passengers overall perceived service quality. The study highlights the existing level of passenger's perception and service quality of Indian Railways.

Dr. J. Anuradha [2]., (2014), mentioned that Public transportation systems provide the most efficient means for moving large number of people, especially in density populated rural and urban centres in a vast country like India. For this reason, providing services characterized by high levels of quality is very important in order to customize the users of the services and attract new users Indian Railways has identified model stations for the provision of upgraded passenger amenities.

Problem statement

The railway passenger services face long term competitive threats from airlines, luxury buses,

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personalized transport and improved public transport. In order to compete with other modes of transport, it is inevitable for railways to accelerate the growth of passengers' origination. This can be done by providing more quality services to them. Further, the opinion of the passengers towards the services provided by the Indian Railways will be quite different as they vary in socio-economic characteristics. It is essential for the Railway Authorities to know about the opinion of the passengers regarding the services offered to them in order to make future policies and provisions. Based upon the opinion of the passengers, their satisfaction level is decided. The Indian Railways can perform well only when the passengers are satisfied with the services they obtain. Few problems faced by passengers are listed below.

- Problems related to platform.
- Problems related to reservation and booking counters.
- Problems related to enquiry.
- Problems related to safety concern of passengers belongings.
- Problems related to waiting and retiring room.

Objective of the study

- To identify Current issues faced by Indian railways.

- To study the problems faced by the passengers in utilizing the amenities at the station/Junction.
- To analyze the gap between Passenger Expectation and Perception of Service Quality.
- To offer suggestions to improve the satisfaction of passengers.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Dimensions of Servqual model has been used for framing questionnaire, to analyse rail passenger's level of expectation and perception towards the service provided by Indian railways 5 Dimensions of servqual are "RATER"

- Responsiveness- willingness to help customer
- Assurance- knowledge of employee
- Tangible – physical facilities
- Empathy – individual attention firm provides to the customer
- Reliability – ability to perform the promised service

On the basis the total respondents of the study have been 500 but few of the respondents to fill the item of schedule were partially completed. Hence they were eliminated from the study. The result will show different in perceptions between passengers, employees, management.

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Table 1

| FACTORS | CATEGORIES | Frequency | % |
|------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| Age | Below30 | 73 | 24.3 |
| | 30-39 | 87 | 2 |
| | 40-49 | 61 | 20.33 |
| | 50-59 | 53 | 17.66 |
| | 60< | 26 | 8.66 |
| Gender | Male | 173 | 57.66 |
| | Female | 127 | 42.33 |
| Occupation | Student | 68 | 22.66 |
| | Professional | 43 | 14.33 |
| | Business | 26 | 8.66 |
| | Salaried | 106 | 35.33 |
| | others | 57 | 19 |
| | Daily | 128 | 42.66 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|-------|
| Frequency of travel | Weekly | 82 | 27.33 |
| | Occasionally | 58 | 19.33 |
| | rarely | 32 | 10.63 |
| | study | 83 | 27.66 |
| Purpose of journey | employment | 131 | 43.66 |
| | household | 63 | 21 |
| | touring | 23 | 7.66 |
| Travelling Class | Second ordinary | 116 | 38.66 |
| | Second express | 35 | 11.66 |
| | Sleeper class | 52 | 17.33 |
| | A/C class | 34 | 11.34 |
| | Unreserved | 67 | 22.33 |
| | 0-10 min | 19 | 6.33 |
| | 10-20min | 121 | 40.33 |
| | 20-30 | 96 | 32 |
| Dwell Time | 30< | 64 | 21.33 |
| | Low fare | 67 | 22.33 |
| | Comfort | 83 | 27.66 |
| Why Rail service from other mode | Speed | 54 | 18 |
| | Safety | 96 | 32 |

This section represents the profile of the respondents on the basis of socio economic factors .While considering age factor below 30,30-39 age people are travelling more , while considering occupation student , salaried people are using the

rail service in large numbers. The correlation between different variables like age, gender, occupation, frequency of travel, purpose of journey, travelling claa and dwell time of the respondents were considered for the analysis.

Gap analysis on passenger expectation and perception

Table 2

| GAP ON TANGIBLE | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|-------|---------------|
| STATEMENT | EXPECTATION | PERCEPTION | GAP | %SATISFACTION |
| Cleanliness in station | 3.868 | 3.444 | 0.424 | 89.03 |
| platform condition | 3.788 | 3.708 | 0.08 | 97.88 |
| toilet facilities | 3.612 | 3.456 | 0.156 | 95.68 |
| drinking water facilities | 3.892 | 3.864 | 0.028 | 99.28 |
| stairs/fob | 3.56 | 3.552 | 0.008 | 99.77 |
| Escalators | 3.708 | 3.252 | 0.456 | 87.70 |
| parking facilities | 3.828 | 3.744 | 0.084 | 97.80 |
| wifi facilities | 3.63 | 3.544 | 0.086 | 97.63 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| mobile charging facilities | 3.516 | 3.152 | 0.364 | 89.64 |
| recreation facilities | 3.636 | 3.06 | 0.576 | 84.15 |
| am facilities | 3.468 | 3.256 | 0.212 | 93.88 |
| avl of auto/taxi/bus | 4.268 | 4.008 | 0.26 | 93.90 |

The above table shows that, a huge gap on the tangibility dimensions, particularly in mobile charging facilities, recreation facilities, escalators

and in station cleanliness. Indian railways should make necessary actions to avoid these problems.

Table 3

| GAP ON RESPONSIVENESS | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| STATEMENT | EXPECTATION | PERCEPTION | GAP | %SATISFACTION |
| Service by railway doctors | 3.564 | 2.976 | 0.588 | 83.50 |
| responsiveness of railway police | 3.64 | 3.244 | 0.396 | 89.12 |
| handling of complaints | 3.488 | 3.476 | 0.012 | 99.65 |
| response to complain | 3.92 | 3.764 | 0.156 | 96.02 |
| avl of staff | 3.676 | 3.648 | 0.028 | 99.23 |
| prompt service | 3.744 | 3.664 | 0.08 | 97.86 |
| frequency of trains as scheduled | | | | |
| punctuality of train | 3.316 | 1.896 | 2.12 | 57.17 |
| display of reservation chart | 3.644 | 3.476 | 0.168 | 95.38 |
| clarity of announcement | 3.828 | 3.736 | 0.092 | 97.59 |
| digital display system | 3.992 | 2.704 | 1.288 | 67.73 |

The above table shows that, a huge gap on the Reliability dimensions, particularly in punctuality of train and in maintaining the frequency of train as per schedule. Indian railways should make necessary actions to avoid these problems.

The above table shows that, a huge gap on the Responsiveness dimensions, particularly in service by railway doctors and railway police during emergency situation.

Table 4

| GAP ON ASSURANCE | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| STATEMENT | EXPECTATION | PERCEPTION | GAP | %SATISFACTION |
| staff at ticket office | 4.232 | 3.628 | 0.604 | 85.72 |
| safety of passenger | 3.9 | 3.608 | 0.292 | 92.51 |
| staff having knowledge in answering questions | 3.544 | 3.472 | 0.072 | 97.96 |
| security at railway parking | 4.02 | 3.51 | 0.51 | 87.31 |
| performance of service as promised | 4.104 | 3.812 | 0.292 | 92.88 |
| providing you with information about any changes | 3.34 | 2.592 | 0.748 | 75.4 |

Table 5

| GAP ON RELIABILITY | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| STATEMENT | EXPECTATION | PERCEPTION | GAP | %SATISFACTION |
| announcement system | 3.68 | 3.28 | 0.4 | 89.13 |
| maintain the | 3.656 | 2.628 | 1.028 | 72.13 |

Table 6

| GAP ON EMPATHY | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|
| STATEMENT | EXPECTATION | PERCEPTION | GAP | %SATISFACTION |
| individual attention to passengers | 3.26 | 2.192 | 1.068 | 67.23 |
| convenient business hours | 3.384 | 3.116 | 0.268 | 92.08 |
| easy to plan | 3.588 | 3.48 | 0.108 | 96.98 |
| support from staff | 3.368 | 1.384 | 1.984 | 41.09 |
| understand the need of passengers | 3.572 | 3.232 | 0.34 | 90.48 |
| facilities for physically challenged persons | 3.548 | 3.116 | 0.432 | 87.82 |
| avl of carriers | 3.724 | 3.56 | 0.164 | 95.59 |

The above table shows that, a huge gap on the Assurance dimensions, particularly in providing information about train delays. Indian railways should make necessary actions to avoid these problems.

The above table shows that, a huge gap on the Empathy dimensions, particularly in individual attention to passengers and in support from staff for passenger queries Indian railways should make necessary actions to avoid these problems.

CONCLUSION

Improving the quality of service is one of the ways to improve the competitiveness of Railway Passenger Business. In all the stations the above questionnaire can be used for collecting the feedback from passengers. The results point

towards the need for South Central Railway to formulate management policies such as training of staff so as Staff has to be more responsive to customer's needs. Hence the human touch is more required as we can see in Airlines services which we are missing in Indian Railway Passenger Services. If this aspect is improved there will be definitely improvement in the satisfaction levels of the Passengers. The Service Quality and service process are interesting subjects to be analyzed and discuss not only in business but also in transportation area, as the results can give benefit for the management. We will be able to know the inside process to set effective and efficient improvement in service which leads ultimately to passengers satisfaction

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