



A Study on Passenger Satisfaction in Train Travel With Special Reference to Kumbakonam Station in Tamilnadu

KEYWORDS

Passenger satisfaction, Railways, Transportation, Service quality.

Dr. M. K. Durgamani

Asst. Prof. Department of Commerce and Mgmt. Studies SASTRA University, SRC Kumbakonam.

Dr. R. Renuka

Asst. Prof. Department of Commerce and Mgmt. Studies SASTRA University, SRC Kumbakonam.

Dr. M. Ganesan

Asst. Prof. Department of Commerce and Mgmt. Studies SASTRA University, SRC Kumbakonam.

ABSTRACT

The Indian Railways has been continuously remaining as a great integrating force for more than 150 years. It is the backbone of the economic life of the country and helps in accelerating the development of the industry and agriculture. Railways being the more energy efficient mode of transport are ideally suited for movement of bulk commodities and for long distance travel. Indian Railways today enjoys state monopoly on the entire rail transport system of the country. In fact, Indian Railways is the third largest utility and commercial employer in the world & has more than 1.6 million employees under its umbrella. It also manages long distance and suburban railway travel, MRTS and runs about 16,000 trains daily. Hence, the present study has been undertaken by the researcher with the objective of identifying the problems between the passenger and railway administration and providing suggestions to reduce the problems and enhance the relationship between passenger area railway administrations.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Railways has been continuously remaining as a great integrating force for more than 150 years. It is the backbone of the economic life of the country and helps in accelerating the development of the industry and agriculture. Railways being the more energy efficient mode of transport, are ideally suited for movement of bulk commodities and for long distance travel. First introduced in the year 16.4.1853, rail transport in India was nationalized and formed into a single unit as Indian Railways in 1951. Today, Indian railway system is the third largest rail network in the world, under single management. Almost all the rail operations managed by the state-owned Railway companies fall under the jurisdiction of federal 'Ministry of Railways'. Thus, Indian Railways is a department of the Indian Government that comes under the purview of the Ministry of Railways.

While the Ministry of Railways is under Ages of the Cabinet Rank Railway Minister, the Indian Railways Department, on the other hand, is controlled by the Railway Board. Rail transport is one of the most common modes of long-distance travel and caters to transportation requirements of a major part of the Indian populace. The rail network in the country stretches for a total length of 63,140 km and transports over 5 billion passengers and over 850 million tones of freight annually.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

At present, the railways have certain social obligations and they are expected to achieve many things commercial and non-commercial, some of which are not always consistent with one another.

The Indian Railways are today expected to:

1. Make sizeable contribution to the resources of the country's plans by providing a certain portion of the finance for their development;
2. Assist certain line of trade and certain economic objectives pursued by the government through adopting appropriate differential rating system (cheap movement of foodgrains, coal and other essential raw materials)

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3. Provide uneconomic lines as links to civilization and to maintain cheap commuter services in large cities to avoid congestions in residential area;
4. Ensure safety, regularity and reliability of service as per schedule; and
5. To obey government directions.

In order to discharge these functions quite successfully and effectively, constant and close consultation between the passenger and the railway administration is essential. Hence, the present study has been undertaken by the researcher with the objective of identifying the problems between the passenger and railway administration and providing suggestions to reduce the problems and enhance the relationship between passenger area railway administrations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To review the facilities provided to the passengers right from ticket booking to the on-board travel experience in the trains.
2. To assess if facilities provided in trains were adequate and effectively maintained or not, from the point of Passenger Satisfaction in Station Maintenance Practices.
3. To know the priority areas so that these can be strengthened to optimize passenger satisfaction.
4. To assess the overall travel experience of the passengers in the Indian Railways and their perception of the organization.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and purchasing of ticket.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between age and choice of train.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between monthly income and purpose of trip.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methods of data collection and sample size

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 50 passengers in Thiruchirappalli division, Kumbakonam Railway Junction with the help of interview schedule, and secondary data were collected from

various books, articles and websites. This study is based on judgment sampling method. This study covers the period from March to June, 2012.

Statistical Techniques used

To arrive at certain conclusions regarding the hypothesis advanced in the present investigation, the following statistical tools for the analysis of data were employed. Percentage analysis and chi-square test.

Table 1
Individual Differences of Respondents

S. No	Variable	Classification	Fre-quency	Percent-age
1	Gender	Male	28	56
		Female	22	44
2	Age group	Up to 20	8	16
		21 to 30	20	40
		31 to 40	6	12
		41 to 50	5	10
		Above 51 years	11	20
3	Educational Qualification	HSC	11	22
		Degree	10	20
		PG degree	21	40
		Professional	9	18
4	Marital Status	Single	24	48
		Married	26	52
5	Occupational Status	Agricultural	8	16
		Business	4	8
		Professional	2	4
		Private employee	12	24
		Government employee	9	18
Student	15	30		
6	Monthly Income	No Income	15	30
		Up to 5000	8	16
		5001 to 10000	9	18
		10001 to 15000	12	24
		e. Above 15001	6	12

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 shows the individual differences like Gender , Age , Educational Qualification , Marital status, Occupation and Monthly Income of the respondents, these factors are directly affect the satisfaction level of the passengers during their travel. So the researcher analyzes the individual differences of the respondents. It is understood that the Gender Classification of the respondents were 56 per cent Male and 44 per cent Female. Classification according to their Age group of respondents reveals that 40 per cent of respondents 21 – 30 and 16 per cent Up to 20. Educational Qualification of the

Table – 3
Opinion about Information and Reservation

Information and reservation	H.S	S	N	D.S	H.D.S	Total
Behavior of the staff member Ticket Counter	1	20	6	19	4	50
Behavior of the staff member in reservation counter	9	22	2	17	0	50
Response to phone enquiry	1	14	4	21	10	50
Emergency quota releasing	0	4	8	10	28	50
E-Booking facilities	4	29	10	7	0	50
Concession too specified categories of passengers (eg. Senior citizens, students pass holders etc.)	12	32	6	0	0	50
Festival services	17	19	2	10	2	50
Summer specials	8	23	2	10	7	50
Tatkal services	12	18	18	2	0	50

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that Consumer opinion about the Enquiries with the employees of the Kumbakonam Railway Station and Reservation procedure followed the Railway Administration. It is Interesting to note that 38 per cent of the Respondents are Highly dissatisfied with the behavior of the Employees

respondents are also analyzed by the researcher it was found that 40 per cent of the respondents are Post Graduate and 22 per cent of the respondents are qualified only HSC level. Out of the 50 respondents 26 are Married and 24 Unmarried. Respondents Occupational status reveals that 30 per cent of the respondents of the study area were Students, 24 per cent are Private Employees and 18 per cent are Government Employees. Finally monthly income of the respondents are analyzed in the above table shows that 30 per cent of the respondents have no income because they are depending with their parents (Students) and 24 per cent are earned 10,001 – 15,000 per Month.

Table - 2
General opinion about the Train Journey by the Respondents

S. No	Variable	Classification	Fre-quency	Percent-age
1	Factors influencing train journey	a. Save time & Money	14	28
		b. Safety travel	6	12
		c. Convenient	8	16
		d. Concessions	4	8
		e. Sleeping comfort	18	36
2	Frequency of travel	a. Daily	8	16
		b. weekly	5	10
		c. fortnightly	4	8
		d. monthly	12	24
		e. occasionally	21	42
3	Purchasing ticket	a. E-Booking	8	16
		b. Reservation counter	13	26
		c. Booking counter	26	52
		d. Booking agencies	3	6

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 shows that the opinion of the respondents for Factors influencing train journey, Frequency of Train journey and Purchase place of the Ticket to their travel. 36 per cent of the respondents use the train for comfort journey. It is understood that the Comfort Journey is play vital role to motivate the passengers to select train journey. Following that 28 per cent of the respondents select the train journey for Save Time and Money. 42 per cent of the respondents are using train to travel occasionally and 16 per cent of the respondents in the study area are using the train daily. 52 per cent of the respondents are purchase their ticket in station booking counter and only 6 per cent of the passengers are purchase their ticket in private booking agencies.

in the Station and only 8 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with the employees behavior. With regard to Phone Enquiry, E booking Facilities , Concessions to passengers, Festival Services, Tatkal Services majority of the respondents are Satisfied and very low percent respondents are Dissatisfied with Kumbakonam Station.

Table – 4
Opinion about availability of Coach Facilities

Coach facilities	H.S	S	N	D.S	H.D.S	Total
a. Cleanliness of coach	0	9	5	27	9	50
b. Availability of water	30	15	5	0	0	50
c. Working of fans	13	12	4	15	0	50
d. Lighting facilities	20	16	4	10	0	50
e. Cleanliness of toilets	0	0	9	23	0	50
f. Traveling with luggage	18	23	9	0	0	50
g. Comfort in traveling	25	20	5	0	0	50

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that facilities available in the coach. 27 respondents were highly dissatisfied with the cleanliness of the Coach. With regard to the availability of water in coach, 30 respondents were highly satisfied and 15 respondents satisfied and also no one is dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with Working of Fans and Lighting facilities. It is also understood from the above table cleanliness of the toilet is very poor in the coach because 23 respondents were dissatisfied and 18 highly dissatisfied with cleanliness of the Toilet in the coach. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the comfort in travelling and no one dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied, it is understood that people will prefer Train journey.

Table 5
Relationship between Educational Qualification and Purchasing Of Ticket

Educational Qualification	Purchasing of Ticket				
	E - Booking	Booking counter	Reservation counter	Company source	Total
Up to school level	1 (2)	3 (6)	7 (14)	-	11 (22)
ITI/Diploma	1 (2)	4 (8)	4 (8)	1 (2)	10 (20)
Degree	3 (6)	4 (8)	12 (24)	1 (2)	20 (40)
Professional	3 (6)	2 (4)	3 (6)	1 (2)	9 (18)
Total	8 (16)	13 (26)	26 (52)	3 (6)	50 (100)

Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

(4-1) (4-1) = 9

Calculated value = 6.26

Table value = 12.59

Calculated value is lower than the table value hence, the hypothesis was accepted

Table – 6
Relationship between Age and Choice of Train

Age	Choice of train					
	Save time and money	Safe	Convenient arrived	Convenient	Sleeping comfort	Total
Up to 20 years	8(16)	-	5(10)	2(4)	-	8(16)
21-30	2(4)	1(2)	5(10)	2(4)	10(20)	20(40)
31-40	2(4)	2(4)	1(2)	1(2)	-	6(12)
41-50	1(2)	1(2)	1(2)	-	2(4)	5(10)
Above 50	1(2)	2(4)	1(2)	1(2)	6(12)	11(22)
Total	14(28)	6(12)	8(16)	4(8)	18(36)	50(100)

Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

(5-1) (5-1) = 8

Calculated value = 35.62

Table value = 15.51

The calculated value is higher than the table value. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected

Table - 7
Relationship between Monthly Income and Purpose of Trip

Monthly income	Purpose of trip						
	Official	Personal	Tourism	Vacation	Business/ professional	Educational purpose	Total
No income	-	3(6)	-	2(4)	-	10(20)	15(30)
Below 5,000	4(8)	2(4)	1(2)	1(2)	-	-	8(16)
5,001-10,000	2(4)	3(6)	1(2)	2(4)	1(2)	-	9(18)
10,001-15,000	2(4)	1(2)	1(2)	4(8)	4(8)	-	12(24)
Above 15,000	-	1(2)	1(2)	3(6)	1(2)	-	6(12)
Total	8(16)	10(20)	4(8)	12(24)	6(12)	10(20)	50(100)

Degrees of freedom = (r-1) (c-1)

(5-1) (6-1) = 20

Table value = 31.41

Calculated value = 48.72

The calculated value is higher than the table value. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected

SUGGESTIONS

This study has identified the actual determinants of customer satisfaction with quality of service provided on railway platforms. In this respect, this paper suggests certain policy implications for Indian Railways. The proposed model of customer satisfaction may be used as a basis to plan efforts towards increasing customer satisfaction. Availability of good quality and quantity of refreshments at affordable prices is the key factor impacting customer perception of service quality. It may be due to the fact that while waiting on the platform, refreshments may help the passengers mitigate some of their miseries. By improving these food-related aspects, railway administration may increase satisfaction among passengers. In addition, other factors that passengers consider important at railway platform are behavior of staff, porters, parking staff, and quality of the information system. This implies that railway staff must be trained in such a way that their "soft" skills are enhanced. Appropriate action plans may be taken to enhance basic facilities and improve security on platforms.

CONCLUSION

The contribution of this study is the identification of factors that determine passenger satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the Kumbakonam Junction Administration.

Determinants identified are availability and quality of refreshments, effectiveness of information systems, and behavior of railway staff, basic amenities provided on platforms, and safety and security. Refreshments and behavioral factors are considered most important by passengers. These factors determine passenger satisfaction on railway platforms and may be different from determinants of satisfaction with Indian Railways as a whole. The study thus provides a direction for railway administration whereby areas for improving services may be identified and user (passenger) satisfaction, specifically on railway platforms, may be enhanced by the Kumbakonam Junction.

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