

Gratification of Passengers Towards Southern Railways - A Special Reference to Tirunelveli Junction

G. Jabez Rajan 1

1 Ph.D. Scholar Reg. No. 18221281011029, and Assistant Professor of Commerce, Pope's College, Savyerapuram, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli – 627 012.

Dr. S.Bulomine Regi 2

2 Assistant Professor of Commerce, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.

ABSTRACT

Railway is one of the best public transport modes on land transportation. Railways, as mass public transport modes, have unique characteristics. It has large capacity, high safety level, and free from traffic jam. Those characteristics make railway a primary public transportation. Indian Railways is the largest railway network operated by the Government of India. Where the railway was first introduced in India in 1853. Indian Railways is the biggest Government institution of India which gives more than 17 Lakh people employment. Indian Railways is the biggest railway system of Asia and the second biggest railway system of the world. The objective of this research is to analyze the purpose of travelling in train, choice of comfortability and factors behind the preference of passengers' towards travelling in train. Primary data were collected from 150 passengers in Tirunelveli Railway Junction with the help of questionnaire using purposive random sampling. The data were analysed using Percentage Analysis, Garrett Ranking and mean ranking. Hence this study made an attempt to identify the preference of passengers towards southern railways.

Keywords: Passengers, Preference, Train, Southern Railways, Land Transport

Introduction

Customer is the most important person for any business enterprise. The business revolves around the customer. A customer is a person or group of people who are the buyers of products and/or services generated within a social system. A customer may be a person or group, such as a household. The concept of a customer may vary significantly by context, although a common definition is an individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. The customer is the one who pays to buy the goods and services produced. As such, customers play a vital role in the economic system of a nation. In the absence of effective customer demand, producers would lack one of the key motivations to produce to sell to customers. So, while operating as a firm, it is essential for the firm to gain the good understanding of its target market. The more the Customer behaviour is learnt, the more the needs and wants of the customers are fulfilled. The customer fulfillment response determines their level of satisfaction which is the key for successful business. The difference between customer's expectation and experience, ie the perception of actual services, leaves a gap which leads to dissatisfaction.

Objectives of the study

➤ To identify the travel Behaviour of the passengers and factor behind The Preference Towards Railway Service about the services offered by the Indian railways with reference to Tirunelveli junction.

Data collection

The study is based on primary data. Primary data were collected from 150 passengers in Tirunelveli Railway Junction with the help of questionnaire.

Scope of the study

The study is mainly focused on the satisfaction level of the passengers from the services being offered by southern railways. Every aspect pertaining to railway service like ticket availability, quality of travel, staff behavior, safety, timing and other are required to be explored in a detailed manner. Hence the selected sample population is being chosen to know the pragmatic analysis particularly the Tirunelveli junction. The research is mainly conducted to obtain the focus of service quality offered by the Indian railways.

Travel behavior of the passengers

As the passengers are the consumers of the services rendered by the railway, their behavior in availing that services is important in marketing strategies and decisions regarding the same. The purpose of using the services and their choice of the service package are the important dimensions of their behavior. An analysis made on them with regards to the respondents is presented here.

Purpose of travel by the Railway Passengers

| S. No | Purpose of Travel | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|-------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Employment | 22 | 15 |
| 2 | Business | 14 | 09 |
| 3 | Personal | 62 | 41 |
| 4 | Tourism | 31 | 21 |
| 5 | Education | 21 | 14 |
| Total | | 150 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals the analysis on the purpose of passengers' travel. The researcher has identified that employment, business, personal reasons, tourism and education are the different purposes of the travel by the passengers studied. It was observed that 15% of the respondents travel by train for employment related purposes and 9% of the respondents for business purposes. It is significant to note that 41% of the respondents travel by train for personal and family affairs. The respondents travel for tourism purposes account for 21% of the total sample size and that for educational purposes account for 14% total sample size. It is clear from the above table that most of the railway passengers available the services for personnel and family affairs that are followed by those who avail the services for tourism purposes.

Choice of service package by the railway passengers

| Sl. No. | Travel in General | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | A/C Coach I Class | 7 | 5 |
| 2 | A/C Coach II class | 13 | 9 |
| 3 | III A/C | 15 | 10 |
| 4 | Reservation Coach | 67 | 45 |
| 5 | Un Reservation Coach | 37 | 25 |
| 6 | Chair Car | 11 | 6 |
| Total | | 150 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

The southern railway rendered different package of services such as A/C Coach I Class, A/C Coach II Class, A/C Coach III Class, Reserved Coach, Un Reserved Coach and Chair Car.

The above table shows that out of the total respondents of 150, 45% of the respondents prefer the reservation coach, 25% of the respondents prefer un reservation coach, 10% of the respondents prefer A/C Coach III Class, 9% of the respondents prefer A/C Coach II Class, 6% of the respondents prefer Chair Car and 5% preferred A/C Coach I Class. Thus, it is observed that a vast majority of the railway passengers (69%) prefer reserved coaches than the unreserved coaches. Among the total number of passengers 45% prefer ordinary reserved coaches and another 10% prefer III class A/C coach. Only 25% of the passengers prefer unreserved coaches.

Factor behind the preference towards railway service

The preference of a product or service is determined by many factors among which some may be highly influencing in nature. The attributes of the product or service, its price, superiority of the alternatives, market conditions and consumer’s attitude and beliefs are some of the factors influencing the preference of the consumers. The preference towards passenger service of the railways as a product is also influenced by similar factors.

| Sl. No. | Factors | Weighted average | Rank |
|---------|---|------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Availability of advance reservation | 4.52 | I |
| 2 | Seating comfort ability | 4.08 | II |
| 3 | Quick arrival at destination (speed travel) | 3.886667 | VII |
| 4 | Less scope for accident | 3.98 | V |
| 5 | Low fare rates | 4 | IV |
| 6 | Availability of concessions | 3.64 | X |
| 7 | Comfortable for sick people | 3.66 | IX |
| 8 | Safety & security arrangement for passengers | 3.54 | XII |
| 9 | Season ticket facilities | 3.94 | VI |
| 10 | User friendly website/ Easy to online booking | 4 | IV |
| 11 | Canteen, medical facilities etc. | 3.18 | XVI |
| 12 | Electricity facility (lights, fans, charger pin) | 3.7 | VIII |
| 13 | Different range of services | 3.5 | XIII |
| 14 | Neatness & hygiene maintenance | 2.84 | XVII |
| 15 | Emergency exit | 3.22 | XV |
| 16 | Announcements and information services | 3.58 | XI |
| 17 | Separate coach for differently talented people, women | 3.94 | VI |
| 18 | Retiring rooms & waiting halls | 2.74 | XVIII |
| 19 | No other choice to travel | 3.38 | XIV |
| 20 | Wide connectivity and Distance coverage | 4.02 | III |

Source: Primary data

The researcher has identified twenty factors influencing the consumer’s preference towards passenger services of the railways in the study area which are presented in the above table. In order to find out their relative importance in influencing their preference, the responses of the sample group of the railway passengers in Likert’s five for point scale with regards to the twenty factors identified by the researcher were analyzed with the help of weighted means

score analysis. After calculating the factors, they were ranked on the basis of the mean score. The result of the above analysis is as follows:

According to the analysis made, “Availability of advance reservation” is ranked first with the weighted mean of which is score 4.52 followed by “Seating comfortability” with a weighted mean score of 4.08. Then “wide connectivity and longer distance coverage” has been ranked third with a weighted mean score of 4.02 which is followed by “user friendly website/ Easy to online booking’ with a weighted mean score of 4. Then ‘Less scope for accident’ has been ranked fifth with a weighted mean score of 3.98 which is followed by ‘separate coach for differently talented people and women’s with a weighted mean score of 3.89 which is followed by ‘Electricity facility’ with a weighted mean score of 3.7. Then ‘Comfortability for sick people’ has been ranked ninth with a weighted mean score of 3.66 which is followed by ‘Availability of concessions’ with a weighted mean score of 3.64. Then ‘Announcements and information services has been ranked eleventh with a weighted mean score of 3.58 followed by ‘Safety & Security arrangement for passengers’ with a weighted mean score of 3.54. Then ‘Announcements and information services’ has been ranked thirteenth with a weighted mean score of which is 3.5 followed by ‘No other choice to travel’ with a weighted mean score of 3.38. Then ‘Emergency exit’ has been ranked fifteenth with a weighted mean score of 3.22 followed by ‘Canteen, medical facilities with a weighted means score of 3.18. Then ‘Neatness & Hygiene maintenance’ has been ranked seventeenth with a weighted score 2.84 followed by ‘Retiring rooms & waiting halls’ with a weighted score 2.74.

The other factors such as neatness and hygienic maintenance and retiring rooms and waiting halls, emergency exit and lack of other choice to travel are the other ones with which are followed by the above factors with least scores. Thus the ranking analysis on the means scores of the twenty factors identified shows that availability of reservation system, seating comfortability, wider connectivity and longer distance coverage, user friendly website and online booking facility and lesser scope or accidents compared to other mode of transport and the most important factors influencing the preference of the passengers towards the railway passenger services in the study area.

Conclusion

Transport plays a vital role in human life. Without transport, no one can move from one place to another place for any activity and hereby no development can be achieved in individual life and the economy of the nation. The service quality of the southern railway Tirunelveli passengers perspective is tried to analyze the factory with its attributes for understanding satisfaction of passengers on service quality from this study the researcher contribute many service factor which are best suitable for railway to consider in future for satisfying the passengers in Tirunelveli. Since the quality of service is questionable railway try to improve core areas and deliver quality of services to the passengers this attempt from the part of railways will definitely retain the passengers in enjoying its services in future with reference to Tirunelveli junction.

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