"An Analysis of Perceptions of Commuters of GSRTC"

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Abstract: As the core of the study is Performance Evaluation of GSRTC with a perceptional focus on turnaround, an analysis is presented about the perceptions of commuters on various service quality parameters offered by Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC). A methodological focus on Retrenchment, Reorganization, Repositioning and Reconstruction is also ventilating from the view point of operational in detail. The paper is presented Perceptional Analysis of Commuters of GSRTC.

Keywords: GSRTC, Commuters, Friedman's Mean Ranks Test Statistics

I. INTRODUCTION

Service quality is of paramount concern to service marketers because the perceived service quality often reflects customers' levels of satisfaction and intention to re-patronize the services. If service quality perceptions are standardized, firms may choose to control costs by standardizing operations and marketing strategies. The present study reflects perceptions of customers on service quality parameters of Road Transport Undertakings (RTUs') principally Gujarat State Transport Corporation (GSRTC). An attempt has been made in the present study to evaluate the perceptions of 2520 commuters as well as the perceptions of 1302 operational force on the service quality parameters offered by the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation. Significant insights indicate that most of the respondents are regular users of Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC). Service reliability, ease of using the service and safety assurance is the most important key factors in determining the service quality of the passenger road transport.

II. METHODOLOGY

The primary data have been collected for 2520 respondents and classifying in selected demographic variables.

Table – 1 A Perceptional Analysis of Commuters

Demographic Variables		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	2006	79.60
	Female	514	20.40
	Total	**2520**	**100.00**
Age (in years)	In between 18-20	271	10.80
	In between 21-35	747	29.60
	In between 36-50	797	31.60
	In between 51-65	705	28.00
	Total	**2520**	**100.0**
	Employees	561	22.30
	Business people	666	26.40
	Agriculturists	432	17.10

Occupation	Students	532	21.10
	Professionals	125	5.00
	Pensioners	188	7.50
	Others	16	0.60
	Total	**2520**	**100.00**
Monthly Income level (in Rs.)	Below Rs.5000	757	30.00
	Rs.5001-Rs.10000	701	27.80
	Rs.10001-15000	477	18.90
	Rs.15001-20000	585	23.20
	Total	**2520**	**100.00**

The collected information have been defined for demographic profile of commuters as educational level, domicile level, inevitability needed based, sectoral preference based and avail of bus passes.

Table - 2: Demographic Profile of Commuters

Demographic Variables		*No. of Respondents*	*Percentage*	
Educational Level	Literate / Primary School	210	8.30	
	High School	788	31.30	
	Graduation - Non-Technical	926	36.70	
	Graduation - Technical	466	18.50	
	Post- Graduation	130	5.20	
	Total	**2520**	**100.00**	
Domicile	Urban	1301	51.60	
	Semi Urban	757	30.00	
	Rural	462	18.30	
	Total	**2520**	**100.00**	
Do you think that the services of GSRTC are inevitability needed under public service?	Yes	2066	82.00	
	No	454	18.00	
Total			**2520**	**100**
Sectoral Preference	Public Sector	1302	63	
	Public Private Participation (PPP)	764	17	
Total			**2066**	**100**
Do you hold a bus pass?	Yes	840	33.33	
	No	1680	66.67	
Total			**2520**	**100**

Source: Survey

III.   DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF COMMUTERS

Table - 3 presents the demographic profile of sample of commuters. As it is evident from the table, out of the total, 79.60 percent are male and 31.60 percent of the sample represents the age group of 36 to 50 years and 29.60 percent belongs to the age group of 21 to 35 years.

If Yes		Freq.	%
Concession Bus Pass	CAT / Family / Couple	872	34.60
	Physically Challenged Pass	193	7.70
	Monthly Season Pass	435	17.30
	Student Exclusive Bus Pass	651	25.80
	NGOs' Bus Pass	56	2.20
	Freedom Fighters' Bus Pass	0	0
	MLA's/MLCs their Spouses and MPs'	7	0.30
	Monthly General Bus Ticket (M.G.B.T)	306	12.10
	Total	**2520**	**100.0**
Non-Concession Bus Pass	Deluxe Pass	206	8.20
	Family Card	188	7.50
	Inter City Bus Pass	599	23.80
	Daily Pass	1153	45.80
	Gujarat Darshan Pass	374	14.80
	Total	**2520**	**100.0**
How long have you been relied on GSRTC buses? (Tenure of usage of services)	Less than 1 year	89	3.53
	1 to 2 years	136	5.40
	2 to 3 years	713	28.29
	3 to 4 years	779	30.92
	More than 4 years	803	31.86
	Total	**2520**	**100.0**

Besides, majority of respondents are well educated and urban domicile. More than 60 percent of respondents had either graduation or post graduation while the other 31.30 percent possess high school education. 21.10 percent of the sample represents students and 26.40 percent of respondents are business people. Less than 1 percent of the sample commuters are housewives. More than 57 percent of commuters had monthly income of less than Rs. 10,000. Out of total, 82 percent of the commuters opined that the services of GSRTC are inevitable under the aegis of public service and the rest of 18 percent felt that there is no dire need for provision of services by GSRTC under the spectrum of public sector. Out of the 82 percent of the sample (2066), 63 percent of the respondents are in favor of public utility services and the remaining 37 percent (764) look forward the services under the Public and Private Participation (PPP).

One-third of the sample commuters had Concessional Annual Travel (CAT) Card who is primarily employees. Next to the employees, students are the holders of monthly bus-pass (25.8 percent). Besides the concessional bus pass facility, 45.8 percent of the commuters had non-concessional bus pass i.e., daily bus passes and the others. Deluxe Pass, Family Card, Intercity Bus Pass, Daily Pass prominent among others. As far as tenure of usage of service is concerned, majority holds bus pass (31.86 percent) for more than 4 years and only 3.53 percent make use of the services of GSRTC for the last one year.

In summary, the sample represents predominantly male, well educated, young and middle aged. The commuters do not belong to high income group but only one-third depend on concessional bus fares. The majority of the commuters had bus pass and they are the users for more than 4 years, predominantly, either students or business people. Most of them had urban domicile and they had non-technical graduation qualification. They prefer the services of GSRTC under the ambit of public utility service.

Table - 4: Reasons for Preferring To Travel by GSRTC - Level of Agreement

S. No	Reasons for Preferring to Travel	Level of Agreement					Total	Friedman's Mean Ranks
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
1	Low fares	133 (5.3) (15.1)	530 (21.00) (23.1)	853 (33.8) (25.1)	871 (34.6) (16.5)	133 (5.3) (17.8)	2520 (100.0) (20.0)	**2.82**
2	No other go	25 (1.0) (2.8)	620 (24.6) (27.0)	710 (28.2) (20.9)	1118 (44.4) (21.2)	47 (1.9) (6.3)	2520 (100.0) (20.0)	**2.91**

No.		Not at all Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Very Highly Satisfied	Total	Friedman's Mean Ranks
3	Prompt, timely service and comfort	530 (21.0) (60.1)	328 (13.0) (14.3)	330 (13.1) (9.7)	874 (34.7) (16.5)	458 (18.2) (61.2)	2520 (100.0) (20.0)	**3.04**
4	Safety, reliability	75 (3.0) (8.5)	578 (22.9) (25.2)	615 (24.4) (18.1)	1161 (46.1) (22.0)	91 (3.6) (12.2)	2520 (100.0) (20.0)	**2.98**
5	Patronage	119 (4.7) (13.5)	238 (9.4) (10.4)	887 (35.2) (26.1)	1257 (49.9) (23.8)	19 (0.8) (2.5)	2520 (100.0) (20.0)	**3.25**
	To tal	**882 (7.0) (100.0)**	**2294 (18.2) (100.0)**	**3395 (26.9) (100.0)**	**5281 (41.9) (100.0)**	**748 (5.9) (100.0)**	**12600 (100.0) (100.0)**	
	Friedman's Chi Square = 142.757; Degrees of freedom = 4; Asymptotic significance = 0.0001							

Source: Compiled and Computed from Primary Data.

Note:

1. Figures in side brackets indicate percentage to Row Total.
2. Figures in lower brackets indicate percentage to Column Total.

IV.   REASONS FOR PREFERRING TO TRAVEL BY GSRTC - LEVEL OF AGREEMENT

In a developing economy like India, road passenger transport deserves a high priority as it forms the backbone of the passenger mobility system and is the principal carrier across the country. The commuters across the four regions opined that the major reasons for traveling in GSRTC buses are: (i) promptness and punctuality of the service, (ii) comfort, (iii) safety and (iv) cheapest mode of transport for their mobility.

Table - 4 presents the reasons for preferring to travel in GSRTC bus and the levels of agreement. Out of total, 18.2 percent respondents highly satisfied with the prompt and timely service provided by the GSRTC. According to 5.3 percent of the respondents the provision of services at lower fares is one of the choices with compare to private operators. Safety, reliability and patronage are the salient services as per the opinion of 4.4 percent of the passengers. However, there is no other go except to accept the services of GSRTC as per the perception of 1.9 percent of respondents.

The mean values of Friedman's Mean Rank Test also state the perception levels of respondents. Table 4 reveals that majority of the passengers prefer to travel in GSRTC bus because of the factor 'Patronage'. They are enticed by the behavior of the crew members (3.25) followed by the second dimension 'Prompt, timely service and comfort'. "Safety and reliability of the service", "Safest and cheapest mode of transport" are the third and fourth facets for travel in GSRTC bus. One of the interesting features is that "No Other Go" is not a primary reason for traveling in GSRTC buses. In other words, these commuters prefer to travel in GSRTC bus by choice.

Thus, the analysis reveals that prompt, timely service, comfort and low fares are the major reasons to travel in GSRTC bus and also passengers expect patronage from the crew members. It is also understood that, the *fore cited* parameters will help to increase the Occupancy Ratio (OR) of GSRTC and have a direct impact on the process of turnaround.

Table- 5: Parameters of Safety, Reliability and Economy - Level of Satisfaction

No.	Parameters of Safety, Reliability and Economy	Level of Agreement					Total	Friedman's Mean Ranks
		Not at all Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Very Highly Satisfied		
1	Balance of speed	243 (9.6) (111)	530 (21.0) (14.8)	661 (26.2) (15.0)	871 (34.6) (10.5)	215 (8.5) (12.8)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.37
2	Facilities in bus shelter	539 (21.4) (24.7)	241 (9.6) (6.7)	314 (12.5) (7.1)	1305 (51.8) (15.7)	121 (4.8) (7.2)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.47
3	Low Fare	270 (10.7) (12.4)	228 (9.0) (6.4)	599 (23.8) (13.6)	1170 (46.4) (14.0)	253 (10.0) (15.1)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.84

4	Inside hygienist of the bus	145 (5.8) (6.6)	240 (9.5) (6.7)	938 (37.2) (21.4)	877 (34.8) (10.5)	320 (12.7) (19.1)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.82
5	Passenger friendly behavior	403 (16.0) (18.4)	379 (15.0) (10.6)	352 (14.0) (8.0)	1232 (48.9) (14.8)	154 (6.1) (9.2)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.43
6	Reliability of service	390 (15.5) (17.8)	750 (29.8) (21.0)	531 (21.1) (12.1)	594 (23.6) (7.1)	255 (10.1) (15.2)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	3.81
7	Safety of Journey	147 (5.8) (6.7)	579 (23.0) (16.2)	461 (18.3) (10.5)	1161 (46.1) (13.9)	172 (6.8) (10.2)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.66
8	Time of Schedule	49 (1.9) (2.2)	627 (24.9) (17.5)	537 (21.3) (12.2)	1118 (44.4) (13.4)	189 (7.5) (11.3)	2520 (100.0) (12.5)	4.61
	Total	2186 (10.8) (100.0)	3574 (17.7). (100.0)	4393 (21.8) (100.0)	8328 (41.3) (100.0)	1679 (8.3) (100.0)	20160 (100.0) (100.0)	
Friedman's Chi Square = 388.319; Degrees of freedom = 7; Asymptotic significance = 0.0001								

Source: Compiled and Computed from Primary Data.

Note:

      Figures in side brackets indicate percentage to Row Total.
      Figures in lower brackets indicate percentage to Column Total.

The safety of passengers with regard to using public transport affects public mobility. The quality of service and the levels of customer satisfaction go hand in hand. The customer perceptions with regard to the quality of services rendered by GSRTC are largely determined by reliability of services, responsiveness of management, operational staff and employees, trust and empathy and the infrastructural facilities of the Road Transport Undertaking. Regardless of the tiring efforts of the operational and managerial staff to meet the expectations of passengers, still GSRTC is on the edge of expiry. Therefore, the study considers the satisfaction levels of passengers in respect to safety, reliability and economy perspective. Table 5 presents the parameters viz., balance of speed, facilities in bus shelters, low fare, inside hygienist of the bus, passenger friendly behavior, reliability of service, safety of journey and time of schedule and the derived results thereof.

As evident from the table, 12.70 percent of the respondents highly satisfied with the inside hygienist of the bus and an approximate number (10.10 percent) of respondents felt happy in relate to the reliability of service and fares charged by the Corporation. It is also observed from the table, 51.8 percent of commuters satisfied with the facilities provided in the bus shelter and terminus followed by passenger friendly behavior (48.9 percent).

It is also evident from the table, 46.10 percent of commuters highly contended with the fare policy combined with the safe journey parameter. Time schedule is the other factor according to the 44.40 percent of commuters who prefer to take services from the Corporation.

The attributes are ranked between 1 and 8 as per Friedman's Mean Rank Test and values are ranged between 3.81 and 4.84. The first preferred choice of commuters is economic service (4.84). Inside ambience is another influencing factor (4.81) which persuades the commuters to avail the service. The third (4.66) and fourth (4.61) interlinked aspects are safety of journey with timing schedule. The behavior of crew members (4.66) and the facilities at bus terminus / shelter (4.47) are ranked the fifth and sixth positions respectively. Balance of speed (4.37) and reliability of service (3.81) are the seventh and eighth persuading factors to allure the passenger who is a central concern of the Corporation's business.

The Chi-square value of 388.319 with degrees of freedom 7 is high, and it can be conclude that the respondents do not have equal levels of satisfaction for all the parameters relating to the safety, reliability and economy.

Thus, it is evident from the analysis that the commuters prefer to travel in GSRTC bus because it provides safe, secure and comfortable journey. Apart from being honored with the "Road Safety Award" by the UK-based Chartered Institute of Transport, the Corporation offers stable mobility solutions viz., SAFAR (Safety Always For All Roads) sensibly transports people with greater care and safety. Hence, this safety parameter proves strongly the adage of 'Safety First Speed Next'.

Table - 6: Parameters of Time and Comfort - Level of Agreement

S. No.	Time and Comfort Parameters	Level of Agreement					Total	Friedman's Mean Ranks
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
1	Balance of punctuality	282 (11.2) (39.9)	258 (10.2) (22.6)	645 (25.6) (37.5)	823 (32.7) (31.2)	512 (20.3) (37.9)	2520 (100.0) (33.3)	2.03
2	Comfort in bus	240 (9.5) (33.9)	325 (12.9) (28.4)	640 (25.4) (37.3)	769 (30.5) (29.1)	546 (21.7) (40.4)	2520 (100.0) (33.3)	2.07
3	Travel duration	185 (7.3) (26.2)	560 (22.2) (49.0)	433 (17.2) (25.2)	1049 (41.6) (39.7)	293 (11.6) (21.7)	2520 (100.0) (33.3)	1.9
	Total	707 (9.4) (100.0)	1143 (15.1) (100.0)	1718 (22.7) (100.0)	2641 (34.9) (100.0)	1351 (17.9) (100.0)	7560 (100.0) (100.0)	
Friedman's Chi Square = 49.869; Degrees of freedom = 2; Asymptotic Significance = 0.000								

V. PARAMETERS OF TIME AND COMFORT

The parameters of time and comfort are empirically examined with the attributes of balance of punctuality, duration of travel and comfort in the bus and the results are presented in Table-6 Comfortable seating and easy access (40.4 percent) is the major reason which entices commuters to travel in GSRTC buses. Punctuality (37.9 percent) is another dominant factor which forces the commuter to get into the bus. Travel duration (21.7 percent) is the other influencing force which satisfies the parameter of time level agreement.

Table - 6 also reveals that the values of Friedman's Mean Rank Test are ranged between 1.90 and 2.07. Comfort (2.07) in the bus is the first preferred choice of commuters followed by balance of punctuality (2.03). Travel duration (1.90) is the third influencing factor which attracts commuters to get in.

Delivering quality of service with a view to retain is the main objective of any service organization. The motto of GSRTC is 'The Passenger is the Master and the Passengers comfort above all else'. To accomplish this objective the organization should continuously reorient its policies and improved its value offerings. In this direction, GSRTC continuously device new schemes and policies allure commuters and paves the way for their retention.

The values of Friedman's Mean Rank Test are ranged between 1.90 and 2.07. The first preferred choice of commuters to travel with GSRTC is comfort in the bus (2.07) followed by punctuality (2.03) and travel duration (1.90) which are ranked second and third respectively.

Table - 7: Commuters Expectations - Level of Intensity

No	Commuters Expectations	Level of Intensity					Total	Friedman's Mean Rank
		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High		
1	Comfort in the bus	38 (1.5) (1.2)	415 (16.5) (6.1)	793 (31.5) (6.5)	976 (38.7) (6.3)	298 (11.8) (5.8)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.38
2	Convenient timings	38 (1.5) (1.2)	415 (16.5) (6.1)	752 (29.8) (6.2)	1018 (40.4) (6.6)	297 (11.8) (5.7)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.46
3	Courtesy	125 (5.0) (3.9)	625 (24.8) (9.2)	680 (27.0) (5.6)	771 (30.6) (5.0)	319 (12.7) (6.2)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	8.78
4	Crew Behavior	200 (7.9) (6.2)	449 (17.8) (6.6)	757 (30.0) (6.2)	812 (32.2) (5.3)	302 (12.0) (5.8)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	8.76

5	Discipline	163 (6.5) (5.0)	570 (22.6) (8.4)	419 (16.6) (3.4)	1076 (42.7) (7.0)	292 (11.6) (5.6)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.18
6	Ease of travel	38 (1.5) (1.2)	415 (16.5) (6.1)	793 (31.5) (6.5)	976 (38.7) (6.3)	298 (11.8) (5.8)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.38
7	Economy & Reliability	269 (10.7) (8.3)	281 (11.2) (4.1)	731 (29.0) (6.0)	930 (36.9) (6.0)	309 (12.3) (6.0)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.22
8	Facilities at bus centre	38 (1.5) (1.2)	415 (16.5) (6.1)	752 (29.8) (6.2)	1018 (40.4) (6.6)	297 (11.8) (5.7)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.46
9	Fare Reliability	314 (12.5) (9.7)	116 (4.6) (1.7)	1108 (44.0) (9.1)	689 (27.3) (4.5)	293 (11.6) (5.7)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	8.52
10	Frequency	40 (1.6) (1.2)	532 (21.1) (7.8)	622 (24.7) (5.1)	1018 (40.4) (6.6)	308 (12.2) (6.0)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	9.33
11	Helping nature	799 (31.7) (24.6)	280 (11.1) (4.1)	303 (12.0) (2.5)	782 (31.0) (5.1)	356 (14.1) (6.9)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
12	Honesty	172 (6.8) (5.3)	196 (7.8) (2.9)	723 (28.7) (5.9)	1178 (46.7) (7.7)	251 (10.0) (4.9)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
13	Punctuality	122 (4.8) (3.8)	493 (19.6) (7.2)	547 (21.7) (4.5)	1079 (42.8) (7.0)	279 (11.1) (5.4)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
14	Seat Availability	314 (12.5) (9.7)	116 (4.6) (1.7)	1108 (44.0) (9.1)	689 (27.3) (4.5)	293 (11.6) (5.7)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
15	Speed	166 (6.6) (5.1)	627 (24.9) (9.2)	692 (27.5) (5.7)	725 (28.8) (4.7)	310 (12.3) (6.0)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
16	Support services	139 (5.5) (4.3)	605 (24.0) (8.9)	717 (28.5) (5.9)	739 (29.3) (4.8)	320 (12.7) (6.2)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
17	Travel & Time	269 (10.7) (8.3)	275 (10.9) (4.0)	720 (28.6) (5.9)	908 (36.0) (5.9)	348 (13.8) (6.7)	2520 (100.0) (5.9)	
	Total	3244 (7.6) (100.0)	6825 (15.9) (100.0)	12217 (28.5) (100.0)	15384 (35.9) (100.0)	5170 (12.1) (100.0)	42840 (100.0) (100.0)	

Service quality is a function of perceptions, expectations and performance. It is a process of judging the quality of service with the output quality. Service Quality distinct technical quality (what is delivered) and functional quality (how it is delivered). The present study considers the perceptions as well as expectations of commuters relating to the service quality offered by GSRTC. Technical quality and functional quality parameters are considered to evaluate the expectations and perceptions of commuters and the difference in between these two is presented in Table -7 Comfort in the bus, convenient timings, ease of travel, economy and reliability, facilities at bus center, fare and reliability, frequency of service, seat availability, support services, travel and time are considered as technical quality inventory while courtesy, crew behavior, discipline, helping nature, honesty, punctuality and speedy services constitute functional quality inventory.

It can be seen from the table the reliability co-efficient of 0.7458 reveals that there is an internal consistency in the data collected and hence the further analysis can be carried out. It is evident from the table, among the technical quality parameters, travel and time management (13.8 percent) and supporting services of the Corporation (12.7 percent) are ranked the first and second respectively. However, 11.8 percent of the commuters have high expectations in relate to comfort in the bus, convenient timings, ease of travel, facilities in the bus center and shelters, fair and reliability of services during the service encounter.

Among the functional quality variables, 14.10 percent of respondents expect operational staff assistance and 12.70 percent commuters look forward service delivery with courtesy.Friedman's Test ranks the technical and functional quality variables which have significant influence on the service perceptions of the commuters and on the services offered by the operational staff.

The first rated attribute is honesty (9.66) of the operational staff. The convenient timings of the bus service (9.46) along with the facilities provided at bus terminus / centre (9.46) are the second preferred alternative. Comfort in the bus (9.38) and ease of travel (9.38) are the third selective attribute. Frequency of travel (9.33) and time management (9.33) are rated the fourth and maintenance of balance of punctuality (9.26) and economy (9.22) parameters are ranked the fifth and sixth respectively. The discipline, behavior and courteousness of crew members are ranked the seventh, eighth and ninth respectively. The support services offered by GSRTC, seat availability, convenience and low fares are dormant features to attract commuters and rated tenth, eleventh and twelfth.

The above analysis reveals that the technical quality variables such as convenient timings, facilities in the terminus/bus centre, comfort in the bus, honesty of operational staff and ease of travel are the dominant influential factors on the part of the commuters during the state of rendering the services. To reach the expectations of commuters, at first the Corporation has to understand the realities and devise its strategies towards improving the customer satisfaction levels which is ultimate for any public utility road transport service.

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