



AN EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY OFFERED BY THE TAMIL NADU TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SALEM DISTRICT

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Abstract

Every employee's responsibility is to demonstrate good customer service, but especially critical for those who have day-to-day contact with the public. As the largest department in Tamil Nadu, the quality of customer service of Tamil Nadu Transport Department provide has a tremendous influence on public perceptions of the quality of the customer service. Therefore the main purpose of this study is to understand the quality of customer service delivery offered by the Tamil Nadu Transport Department and to examine the perception of customer service quality in the Tamil Nadu Transport Department. The outcome of the study will be useful for the Tamil Nadu Transport Department to improve customer service quality. Results of the improvement effort also benefit the customer. Data were collected using questionnaire, the most common tool to evaluate the quality of customer service delivery in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District. The sample unit of the study is customers of Tamil Nadu Transport Department in Salem District. The total sample of the study is 150. Primary research data is collected in the form of structured survey results from various respondents in Salem District. Secondary research data is collected in the form of reference literature on the research topic. The collected data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel 2013 for data input and analysis. The statistical tools of Weighted Average, Mean, Standard Deviation and Co-efficient of Variations are used to analysis of data for this study.

Key Words: Customer, Quality, Service, Service Delivery and Service Quality.

Introduction

A good, safe and sustainable transport system is indispensable for the economic growth of the country. The transport department not only endeavors to provide adequate services on the road but also takes care of coordinating, regulating and synchronizing of all modes of transport for ensuring smooth and safe travel. The department is committed to providing high quality service to the citizens. The department aims to realize these objectives through adequate enforcement of statutory and non-statutory regulations coupled with modernization and computerization. The presence of a very large number of vehicles and their sustained growth year after year, has necessitated computerization of the operations of the department. Steps in this regard were first initiated during 1999 to computerize some of the functions in Transport Department by creation of a proper database with a twin objective of providing greater transparency and efficient service. Computerization has been taken up in 3 phases. In the first phase 13 Regional transport offices and 3 unit offices were computerized. In its second phase 32 Regional Transport Offices and 8 Unit Offices and in the third and concluding phase remaining 29 unit offices, one Regional Transport Office, 7 Zonal Deputy Transport Commissioner's offices and office of the State Transport Appellate Tribunal, Chennai were covered. This apart, as and when new Regional Transport Offices and Unit Offices are opened, computerization of their records is taken up as part of the effort. At present all the services related to the general public such as issue of licenses, permits, registration certificates, fitness certificates, tax payment etc., are being implemented through computers using the customized software "Vahan and Sarathi" developed by the National Informatics Center. As of today Tamil Nadu is the only State in India that uses "Vahan and Sarathi" software in all 81 Regional Transport Offices, 60 Unit Offices, 12 Zonal offices, State Transport Authority and State Transport Appellate Tribunal of Transport Department. This has been achieved at a cost of Rs.17.00 crores.

Review of Literature

Colin Bosch (2009) Service organizations which are highly interactive, labour-intensive, reliant on a number of service providers, required to perform at various locations and have high intensity/volume operations, will be susceptible to failure; Metrorail services fall into this category. Zeithamlet *al.* (2006) define services as deeds, processes and performances in the following categories: pure services, value-added services, customer service and derived service. Muhammad Hafiz Rashid (2008) said that excellent quality of customer service is so important for government agencies even though they are not-for-profit. Better service enhances productivity, and treating customer right the first time saves time and money. Creating satisfied customers reduces the likelihood irate citizens take their complaints to higher sources, or to a public forum where negative word-of-mouth can be damaging. Zeithamlet *al.* (1990) concluded that a number of underlying patterns in the responses were extremely consistent in the focusgroup interviews. From this, they were able to define good service quality as meeting or exceeding what customers expect from the service. Sasser, Olsen and Wyckoff (1978 in Parasuraman, Zeithamlet



and Berry, 1985) suggest that three distinct dimensions of service performance are relevant: levels of material, facilities and personnel. They reason that service quality involves more than just outcome, it also includes the manner in which the service is delivered.

Need for the Study

Every employee's responsibility is to demonstrate good customer service, but especially critical for those who have day-to-day contact with the public. As the largest department in Tamil Nadu, the quality of customer service of Tamil Nadu Transport Department provide has a tremendous influence on public perceptions of the quality of the customer service. Therefore the main purpose of this study is to understand the quality of customer service delivery offered by the Tamil Nadu Transport Department and to examine the perception of customer service quality in the Tamil Nadu Transport Department.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore and evaluate the quality of customer service delivery of the Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District.
- To recommend area(s) that requires improvement.

Scope of the Study

The area of the study is quality of customer service delivery in Tamil Nadu Transport Department. It's focused on the dimensions of customer service quality from customer perspectives particularly in the Regional Transport Office of Tamil Nadu with special reference to Salem District. It may helpful to frame new strategies and improve the quality of services of Tamil Nadu Transport Department. The outcome of the study will be useful for the Tamil Nadu Transport Department to improve customer service quality. Results of the improvement effort also benefit the customer. In the long run, this study may be used as a reference for evaluating customer service quality in the Tamil Nadu Transport Department.

Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted at Salem District only and not on other cities of Transport Department of Tamil Nadu as this requires broader evaluations as well as some limitations such as time and funds. The sample used for this study was 150 customers who interacted with the Transport Department of Tamil Nadu at Salem District.

Research Methodology

Data were collected using questionnaire, the most common tool to evaluate the quality of customer service delivery in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District. The sample unit of the study is customers of Tamil Nadu Transport Department in Salem District. The total sample of the study is 150. Primary research data is collected in the form of structured survey results from various respondents in Salem District. Secondary research data is collected in the form of reference literature on the research topic. The collected data were analyzed by using Microsoft Excel 2013 for data input and analysis. The statistical tools of Weighted Average, Mean, Standard Deviation and Co-efficient of Variations are used to analysis of data for this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neither Agree nor Disagree, DA - Disagree, SDA - Strongly Disagree.
NR – Number of Respondents, WS – Weighted Score, WAS - Weighted Average Score

Score Value: SA = 5; A = 4; N = 3; DA = 2; SDA = 1.

Table No.1: Tangibles Statement

TANGIBLES STATEMENT	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		TOTAL SCORE	WAS	RANK
	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE			
All physical assets should always look good.	95	475	23	92	17	51	5	10	10	10	638	42.53	1
Legal entry to all regional transport office should be easy.	44	220	64	256	18	54	9	18	15	15	563	37.53	2



Regional transport office should always have enough toilets.	67	335	27	108	20	60	22	44	14	14	561	37.40	3
Regional transport office should always have enough seating for all.	62	310	33	132	27	81	12	24	16	16	563	37.53	2
Operational equipment's of regional transport should be of new and modern.	37	185	60	240	24	72	17	34	12	12	543	36.20	5
Regional transport office should make provision for handicapped customers.	58	290	31	124	15	45	30	60	16	16	535	35.67	6
Regional transport office employees should always be well dressed.	52	260	43	172	26	78	11	22	17	17	549	36.60	4

Source: Primary Data

Table No.1 shows that the perception of respondents towards all physical assets should always look good occupies the first place (Total WS 638) followed by perception towards legal entry to all regional transport office should be easy, and also regional transport office should always have enough seating for all (Total WS 563). The perception of respondents towards regional transport office should always have enough toilets, regional transport office employees should always be well dressed, operational equipment's of regional transport should be of new and modern, and regional transport office should make provision for handicapped customers occupies the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth place respectively. Therefore it can be concluded that Tangible features of Tamil Nadu Transport Department is good, because most of the respondents agree that all physical assets should always look good, legal entry to all regional transport office should be easy, regional transport office should always have enough toilets, regional transport office should always have enough seating for all, operational equipment's of regional transport should be of new and modern, regional transport office should make provision for handicapped customers, and regional transport office employees should always be well dressed.

Table No.2: Reliability Statement

RELIABILITY STATEMENT	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		TOTAL SCORE	WAS	RANK
	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE			
Regional transport office services should provide their services as advertised.	49	245	60	240	18	54	15	30	8	8	577	38.47	I
Regional transport office should provide alternative services if their computer fails.	42	210	56	224	21	63	14	28	17	17	542	36.13	II
When regional transport office staff promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so.	53	265	47	188	16	35	10	24	24	24	536	35.73	III

Source: Primary Data



Table No.2 shows that the perception of respondents towards regional transport office services should provide their services as advertised occupies the first place (Total WS 577), regional transport office should provide alternative services if their computer fails occupy the second place (Total WS 542), and when regional transport office staff promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so occupies third place (Total WS 536). Therefore it can be concluded that Reliable features of Tamil Nadu Transport Department is good, because most of the respondents agree that regional transport office services should provide their services as advertised, regional transport office should provide alternative services if their computer fails, and When regional transportoffice staff promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so.

Table No.3: Responsiveness Statement

RESPONSIVENESS STATEMENT	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		TOTAL SCORE	WAS	RANK
	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE			
Regional transport office staff should be expected to inform exactly when services will be done.	71	355	36	144	23	69	10	20	10	10	598	39.87	I
Regional transportoffice staff should be expected to provide prompt service when needed.	58	290	50	200	18	44	9	10	15	11	555	37.00	III
Regional transportoffice staff must always be willing to help customers.	64	320	37	148	27	81	10	20	12	12	581	38.73	II
It is OK if regional transport officestaff are too busy to respond to customer needspromptly.	52	260	45	180	20	60	15	30	18	18	548	36.53	IV

Source: Primary Data

Table No.3 shows that the perception of respondents towards regional transport office staff should be expected to inform exactly when services will be done occupies the first place (Total WS 598) followed by perception towards Regional transport office staff must always be willing to help customers (Total WS 581). The perception of respondents towards regional transportoffice staff should be expected to provide prompt service when needed, and it is OK if regional transportoffice staff are too busy to respond to customer needs promptly occupies the third, and fourth place respectively. Therefore it can be concluded that Responsiveness features of Tamil Nadu Transport Department is good, because most of the respondents agree that regional transportoffice staff should be expected to inform exactly when services will be done, regional transport office staff should be expected to provide prompt service when needed, regional transport office staff must always be willing to help customers, and it is OK if regional transportoffice staff are too busy to respond to customer needs promptly.

Table No.4: Assurance Statement

ASSURANCE STATEMENT	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		TOTAL SCORE	WAS	RANK
	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE			
Regional transport office staff should provide immediate information when services are delayed.	80	400	31	124	15	45	12	24	12	12	605	40.33	I
Regional transportoffice staff should be polite.	47	235	53	212	20	60	14	28	16	16	551	36.73	II
Regional transportoffice staff should be proficient (well trained).	58	290	35	140	27	81	10	20	20	20	551	36.73	II



Regional transportoffice services should have a good Customer Complaints handling system.	50	250	41	164	30	90	11	22	18	18	544	36.27	III
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Source: Primary Data

Table No.4 shows that the perception of respondents towards Regional transport office staff should provide immediate information when services are delayed occupies the first place (Total WS 605) followed by perception towards Regional transportoffice staff should be polite, and also regional transportoffice staff should be proficient (well trained) (Total WS 551). The perception of respondents towards Regional transportoffice services should have a good Customer Complaints handling system occupies the third place. Therefore it can be concluded that Assurance features of Tamil Nadu Transport Department is good, because most of the respondents agree that regional transport office should provide immediate information when services are delayed, regional transportoffice staff should be polite, Regional transportoffice staff should be proficient (well trained), and regional transport office services should have a good Customer Complaints handling system.

Table No.5: Empathy Statement

EMPATHY STATEMENT	SA		A		N		DA		SDA		TOTAL SCORE	WAS	RANK
	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE	NR	SCORE			
Regional transportoffice staff should be expected to give individual customer attention.	57	285	39	156	19	57	18	36	17	17	551	36.73	I
Regional transportoffice staff should be expected to give customer personal attention.	39	195	45	180	24	72	30	60	12	12	519	34.60	II
Regional transportoffice staff should be expected to care about the needs of their customers.	47	235	38	152	20	31	32	24	13	13	455	30.33	III

Source: Primary Data

Table No.5 shows that the perception of respondents towards regional transportoffice staff should be expected to give individual customer attention occupies the first place (Total WS 551) followed by perception towards regional transport office staff should be expected to give customer personal attention. (Total WS 519). The perception of respondents towards regional transport office staff should be expected to care about the needs of their customers occupy the third place. Therefore it can be concluded that Empathy features of Tamil Nadu Transport Department is good, because most of the respondents agree that regional transportoffice staff should be expected to give individual customer attention, Regional transport office staff should be expected to give customer personal attention, and regional transportoffice staff should be expected to care about the needs of their customers.

Table No.6: Overall View of the Perception Scores of Quality of Customer Service Delivery

S.No.	Factors	Mean	StandardDeviation	Co-efficient ofVariation
1	Tangibles	564.57	34.14	6.05
2	Reliability	551.67	22.14	4.01
3	Responsiveness	570.50	23.19	4.06
4	Assurance	562.75	28.36	5.04
5	Empathy	508.33	48.88	9.62

Source: Primary Data

In order to ascertain the significance of the five categories of impact the average, standard deviation and co-efficient of variation have been calculated.



Table No.6 shows the details of the perceptions of the respondents of the various kinds of factors of quality of customer service delivery offered by the Tamil Nadu Transport Department. It is seen from the above table that the perception of the customers towards the

Responsiveness factor occupies the first place (Mean 570.50; Standard Deviation 23.19; Co-efficient of Variation 4.06) followed by Tangibles factor. Assurance, Reliability, and Empathy factors occupy the third, fourth, and fifth place respectively. This indicates that the empathy factor is the lowest impact of quality of customer service delivery, so the Tamil Nadu Transport Department should be given the more importance to try to understand the customer's expectations and develop new services from the customer's point of view.

Conclusion

There are many "positive" service quality indications, the overall standard and delivery of service quality has meet commuter expectations in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District.

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