



A Study On Problems Faced By The Passengers In Southern Railways With Special Reference To Chennai Railways Division

Dr.J. Arunachalam^{1*}, E. Janarthanan²

^{1*}Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Arignar Anna Government College, Cheyyar.

²Ph. D Research Scholar (part-time), Department of Commerce, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 608 002.

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study is to understand the Passenger satisfaction with the services provided by Southern Railway, with reference to Chennai Railway Division, and identify the significant problems faced by the passengers. The data for the study was randomly selected from 20 passengers in Chennai Division. Both primary and secondary data were utilized for the study. The present study is mainly based on primary data collected from the sample passengers. A structured questionnaire was used for collecting primary data. Since the passengers are widely scattered and the population was unknown, the study was conducted using the non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling method. A descriptive research design was used in this study to analyze the passenger satisfaction with the services provided by Southern Railway, with reference to the Chennai Railway Division. Secondary data for the study were collected from various sources such as research article, government publication, websites, books, journals, magazine, and newspaper reports. The data analysis was conducted using Garrett ranking, the 't' test and ANOVA test. It is concluded that only a very few passengers are highly satisfied with the services provided by Southern Railway, Chennai Railway Division. The major problems identified from the study include a lack of special facilities and a proper claims system for passengers, as well as inadequate amenities for comfortable journey. The existing infrastructure does not meet the growing requirements of passengers, which adversely affect their satisfaction. The government should give due importance to the development and technological advancement of Southern Railway, Chennai Railway Division.

KEYWORDS: Satisfaction, Southern Railway, Problems and Passengers

1. INTRODUCTION

With the quickening pace of modernization, railway travelers today expect much more from the system in terms of amenities than they did in the past. The provision of passenger amenities is, therefore, one of the important objectives of the Indian Railways, both as a business ethic and as a social obligation. Indian Railways has issued a Citizens' Charter on Passenger services in which it pledges to ensure adequate passenger amenities in trains and at railway stations. One of the thrust areas in the 8th plan was to provide basic passenger amenities at all stations on a priority basis. The introduction of economic liberalization in July 1991 posed a major challenge for the Indian Railways. As a result, special emphasis was laid on customer care and user-friendly services. This article deals with the problems faced by the passengers in Southern Railways. The services offered by the Indian Railways need to be improved to satisfy passengers. Since customers prefer to travel by train, there is a very good demand for the rail service. If the Indian Railways properly assess the problems and inconveniences of passengers and deliver the service according to their expectation, it will be the most profitable public sector undertaking in India. Hence, the present study attempts to analyze the problems faced by the passengers of Indian railways.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Felleson., Margareta conducted a transnational comparison of customers' perceived service satisfaction with public transport in eight European cities: Stockholm, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Geneva, Helsinki, Vienna, Berlin, Manchester, and Oslo. The results showed four general factors: system aspects such as traffic supply, reliability, and information; bus and bus stop design that makes customers comfortable and enhance the travel experience; staff skill, knowledge, and attitude toward customer; and safety, not only in the bus and at the bus stop but also protection from traffic accidents. Furthermore, it was concluded that differences in public transport technology and infrastructure may cause variations in individual item loading.

Research conducted by Laith Alrubaiee and Feras Alkaa'ida studied healthcare quality concerning patient perception, satisfaction, and trust. It also aimed to test the impact of socio-demographic variables in determining healthcare quality. The SERVQUAL model was used to measure these aspects, and the results indicate its reliability. The study suggests that Socio-demographic variables play a vital role in determining patient perception of health care quality, satisfaction, and trust. Additionally, the study indicates that private hospitals provide better quality care compared to public hospitals.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indian railways need to substantially improve the quality of service, customer focus, and service profile to meet the challenges of more intense competition in the transport market. In this view, Indian railways are expected to provide services that meet customer requirements. Based on these issues, it is pertinent to focus the study on passengers' perception of railways with the following query: What is the perception of the passengers regarding the services offered by railways in the Chennai Division of Southern Railway.

OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the passengers' perceptions of the services offered by railways.
2. To offer suggestions for improving the conditions of services provided by the railways.

SAMPLING DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical research based on the survey method. It is confined to all four junctions of the Chennai Division of Southern Railway. The study is based on primary data collected through structured questionnaire from 600 passengers in Chennai Division of Southern Railway. The respondents for the study were drawn using the stratified random sampling method. The SPSS package was used for analysis. To determine the influence of various factors related to the sample respondents' perceptions of railways, percentage analysis and chi-square analysis were used to discover any variances in passengers' perceptions among the sample respondents.

DATA COLLECTION

Primary and secondary data are used in the present study. The required primary data were collected using a pre-tested and well-structured questionnaire. The required secondary data were collected from the Annual Reports of Ministry of Railways, the White paper on Indian railways published by Railway Ministry, various journals, and websites.

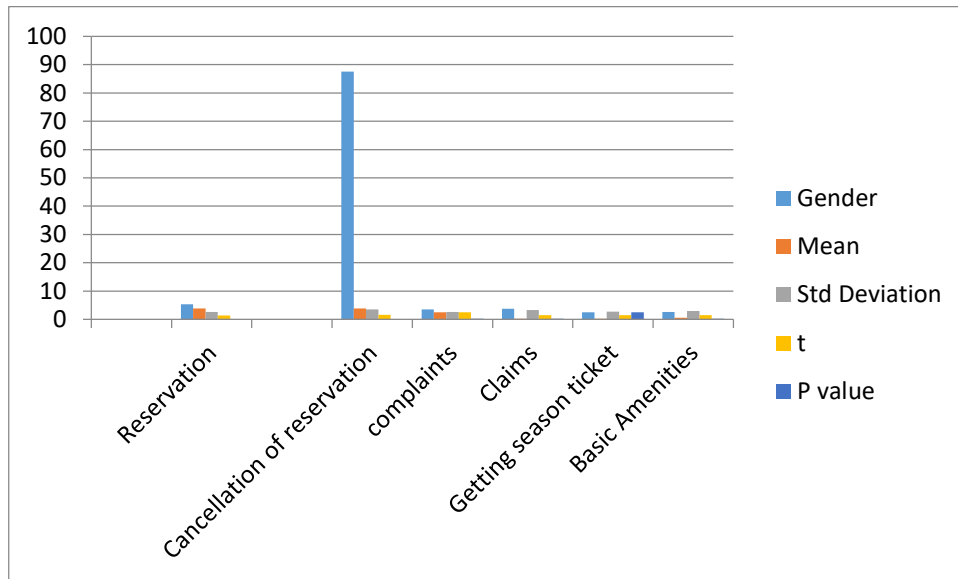
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly focuses on the satisfaction level of the passengers with the services offered by Southern Railways. Every aspect related to railway service, such as ticket availability, quality of travel, staff behavior, safety, timing, etc. is studied at different levels of the research. The sample population is chosen from Chennai Railway Division. The research is primarily conducted to evaluate the quality of the service provided by the Southern Railways.

ANALYSIS

To achieve the objectives of the study, an analysis is conducted to understand the passengers' perception of the services provided by railways. The statistical tools used are percentage analysis and average score analysis. The socio-economic profiles of the respondents are shown below:

Services	Gender	Mean	Std Deviation	t-test	P value
Reservation	5.325	3.8547	2.587	1.436	0.125
Cancellation of reservation	87.52	3.854	3.58	1.586	0.125
Complaints	3.525	2.568	2.589	2.567	0.236
Claims	3.758	0.285	3.254	1.526	0.256
Getting season ticket	2.568	0.278	2.695	1.525	2.528
Basic Amenities	2.59	0.548	2.972	1.536	0.256

Sources: Primary data 2024

A significant difference was found among different gender groups of passengers regarding satisfaction with the services provided by Southern Railway. It is noteworthy that the p-value for satisfaction towards services provided by Southern Railway, including reservation, cancellation of reservation, complaints, claims, obtaining a season ticket and Tatkal reservation among different age groups of passengers are less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance.

The ANOVA test reveals a statistically significant relationship between the age group of the passengers and their satisfaction towards services provided by Southern Railway, namely reservation, cancellation of reservation, complaints, claims, obtaining a season ticket and Tatkal reservation. This indicates that the sample passengers significantly differ in their satisfaction towards these services when classified based on their age group. Therefore, it is inferred that satisfaction towards services provided by Southern Railway, including reservation, cancellation of reservation, complaints, claims, obtaining a season ticket and Tatkal reservation is varies among different age group of the passengers in the study area. It is suggested that Southern Railway concentrate on these services specifically.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

It is found that there is a significant difference in satisfaction towards services provided by Southern Railway, specifically regarding complaints, among different gender group of passengers. It is observed that the sample passengers differ significantly in satisfaction towards services such as reservation, cancellation of reservation, complaints, claims, obtaining a season ticket and Tatkal reservation when classified based on their age group. Additionally, it is identified that the sample passengers differ significantly in the satisfaction towards services provided by Southern Railway when classified based on their educational qualification. The study also highlights a significant difference in satisfaction towards services, specifically claims and containing a season ticket, among passengers of different marital statuses.

SUGESSTION

Additional passenger and premium trains could be operated during holidays and festive occasions to satisfy the growing needs of passengers. The food served to the passengers needs to be inspected, and catering facilities could be offered on all short-distance passenger trains. Indian Railways should establish a responsive and effective grievance redressal mechanism at various levels to ensure timely resolution of complaints and grievances as far as possible.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to identify various dimensions that determine passengers' overall perceived service quality and to highlight the prominent dimensions in the passengers' overall service quality. The study underscores the existing level of passengers' perception and service quality of Indian Railways. The findings of this study will assist the concerned authorities in deciding on improvements to passengers' perception and service quality, contributing to the overall development of Indian Railways. It is earnestly hoped that the concerned authorities will consider the suggestions recommended herein to enhance the efficiency of knowledge and railway services in India.

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