



A STUDY ON PASSENGERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS "FARE FREE BUS" IN MADURAI CITY

K.R.VISHAL

II M.COM (C.A), PG DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WITH COMPUTER APPLICATIONS, MANNARTHIRUMALAINAICKER COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), MADURAI-625004, TAMILNADU, INDIA.

MS.U.BHARATHI

ASSITANT PROFESSOR, PG DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WITH COMPUTER APPLICATIONS, MANNARTHIRUMALAINAICKER COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), MADURAI-625004, TAMILNADU, INDIA.

ABSTRACT:

This study examines passengers' perception towards the "Fare-Free Bus" in Madurai City, focusing on its impact on public transport users. The "Fare-Free Bus" program, aimed at reducing transportation costs for commuters, was introduced as part of a broader effort to enhance urban mobility and improve the quality of life for residents. Key factors such as service quality, punctuality, cleanliness, comfort, and accessibility are evaluated to determine how these elements influence overall passengers' perception. Additionally, the study explores the socio-economic background of users and their perceptions of the fare-free policy, with a specific focus on its benefits and limitations. This study focuses on understanding how the service impacts commuter satisfaction and examines the role of various factors such as service quality, frequency, cleanliness, comfort, and accessibility, along with an analysis of demographic variables such as age, gender, and socio-economic status. Findings indicate that the fare-free initiative has generally been well-received by commuters, particularly in terms of cost savings and increased accessibility for lower-income groups. However, there were mixed responses regarding the reliability, punctuality, and overall comfort of the service.

KEYWORDS:

ECONOMIC - STATUS, SERVICE QUALITY, PUNCTUALITY, PUBLIC TRANSPORT, COMFORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Public transportation is a crucial component of urban infrastructure, providing essential mobility for residents and contributing to the overall economic and social development of a city. In India, where urbanization is rapidly increasing, the demand for efficient, affordable, and accessible public transport systems is growing. To address this need, several cities have introduced innovative policies, one of the most notable being the "Fare-Free Bus" initiative. This program aims to alleviate the financial burden on commuters by providing free bus services, making it especially beneficial for low-income groups who rely heavily on public transportation. Madurai, a prominent city in Tamil Nadu, has implemented this initiative as part of its efforts to improve urban mobility and enhance the quality of life for its residents. The "Fare-Free Bus" service is expected to encourage more people to use public transport, reduce traffic congestion, and promote sustainable travel options. However, the success of such a program depends not only on its affordability but also on the satisfaction of the users. Passengers' satisfaction plays a key role in determining the effectiveness of public services, particularly in the transportation sector, where issues like service quality, punctuality, cleanliness, and accessibility directly influence the user experience. This research seeks to assess the level

of satisfaction among users of the "Fare-Free Bus" service in Madurai, focusing on various factors that contribute to their overall perception of the service.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the introduction of the fare-free service, there is a need to assess whether the initiative truly meets the expectations and needs of its users. The challenges faced by commuters, such as overcrowding, delays, and the quality of service, may affect their overall satisfaction with the service and identify the factors that influence this satisfaction, and assess whether the initiative has succeeded in its objective of providing reliable, accessible, and quality transportation to its passengers. The findings will help identify areas of improvement for the service and provide insights into the potential for expanding such initiatives to other cities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- S.Kiruthika, Dr.G.Ravi (2022), The study aimed to analysis the performance of women free bus operations and the complications faced by women passengers. This study was secondary data which is collected from various journals and articles.The study concluded that safety and ease of travel can encourage greater numbers of

women to take self-employment as well as wage employment that requires them to commute or travel.

The study concluded that the safety and ease of travel can encourage greater numbers of women.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of passengers perception towards the "Fare-Free Bus" service in Madurai City.
- To identify the key factors influencing passengers' perception with the "Fare-Free Bus" service.
- To evaluate the socio-economic profile of the passengers and its relationship to their satisfaction levels.
- To examine the impact of the "Fare-Free Bus" initiative on reducing financial burden and improving mobility for lower-income groups.
- To identify the challenges and limitations faced by commuters in using the "Fare-Free Bus" service.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

DATA COLLECTION:

1.4.1 PRIMARY DATA:

Primary data for this study are collected through interview schedule

1.4.2 SECONDARY DATA:

Secondary data refers to information that has already been collected, analyzed, and published by other researchers, organizations, or government agencies. Government reports, transportation department publications, websites, newspapers etc.

1.4.3 SAMPLING METHOD:

The stratified random sampling method will be used to select the sample of commuters who use the fare-free bus service. Stratified random sampling ensures that different sub-groups or strata within the population are well-represented, enhancing the accuracy of the findings.

1.4.4 SAMPLE SIZE:

Responses to this study were collected from 100 passengers

1.4.5 STATISTICAL TOOLS:

Percentage analysis, charts, Rank correlation are used in this study for data analysis.

1.5 DATA ANALYSIS:

TABLE 1 FREQUENCY OF FREE FARE BUS USAGE

Usage frequency	No.of respondents	Percentage
Daily	58	58
Weekly	23	23
Monthly	9	9

Occasionally	10	10
Total	100	100

INTERPRETATION:

The above table shows that 58% of the respondents used fare free busses daily, 23% of the respondents use fare free busses weekly and around 10% used it occasionally for their travel.

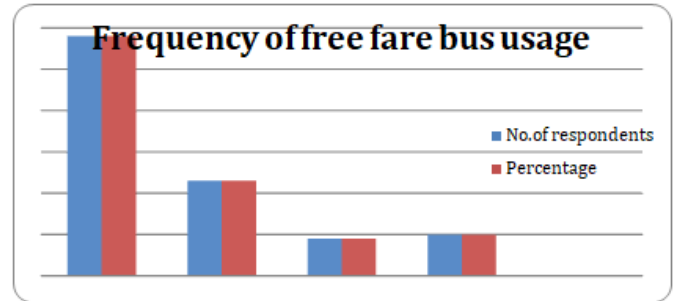


TABLE 2 PRIMARY REASON FOR USING THE FARE-FREE BUS

Reasons	No.of respondents	Rank	Rank (satisfaction)	d	d ²
Cost savings	54	1	2	1	1
Time convenience	28	2	1	1	1
Availability of routes	13	3	3	0	0
others	5	4	4	0	0
Total	100				

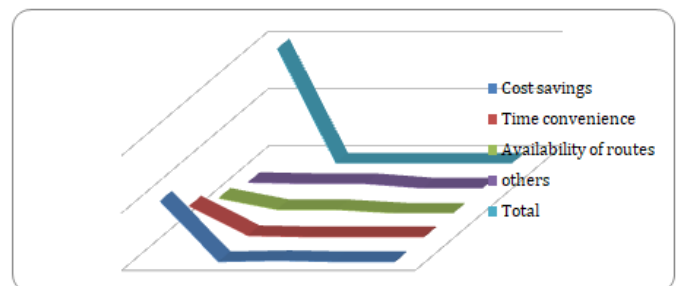
Sum of squared differences ($\sum d^2$):

$$\sum d^2 = 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 = 2 \quad \sum d^2 = 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 = 2 \quad \sum d^2 = 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 = 2$$

Spearman Rank Correlation:

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \times 2}{-4(4^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{12}{15} = 1 - \frac{12}{60} = 1 - 0.2 = 0.8$$

The Spearman Rank Correlation (ρ_{rhop}) is 0.8, which suggests a strong positive correlation between the rankings of respondents and satisfaction. This means that as the number of respondents for a particular reason increases, the satisfaction for that reason tends to increase as well.



1.6 FINDINGS:

More than 50% of the respondents used fare free busses daily, and a strong positive correlation between the rankings of respondents and satisfaction.

1.7 SUGGESTIONS:

The study suggest for enhancing the effectiveness of the fare-free initiative, aiming to foster greater public support and optimize the long-term sustainability of the program, a policy aimed at making public transport more accessible by eliminating fares for passengers. by understanding passengers attitudes and experiences, this study aims to provide valuable insights for improving the quality and efficiency of the service, as well as to guide the implementation of similar initiatives in other cities.

1.8 CONCLUSION:

This study provides a positive assessment of the "Fare-Free Bus" service, but also offers important insights for refining and expanding such initiatives in Madurai and

potentially other cities. by addressing key challenges, the program can become more sustainable, efficient, and equitable, benefiting a wider range of passengers and contributing to the overall urban mobility strategy.

REFERENCES

1. <https://www.tnstc.in/>
2. <https://www.idriveyourcar.com/blog/difference-between-private-and-public-transport>
3. <https://www.tamilnadutourism.tn.gov.in/plan-your-trip/public-transport>