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UNRAVELING PASSENGER SATISFACTION IN THE ROAD TRANSPORT INDUSTRY THROUGH A DELPHI TECHNIQUE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Passenger satisfaction is a critical determinant of success in the road transport industry, influencing both customer loyalty and operational efficiency. This study employs the Delphi Technique to systematically investigate the factors affecting passenger satisfaction. By engaging a panel of experts through multiple rounds of questionnaires, consensus was reached on key determinants, including service quality, safety, convenience, and customer service. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of passenger expectations and priorities, offering valuable insights for transport operators aiming to enhance their service offerings. This research highlights the utility of the Delphi Technique in eliciting expert opinions and developing actionable strategies to improve passenger satisfaction in the road transport sector.

KEYWORDS

Passenger Satisfaction, Road Transport Industry, Delphi Technique, Service Quality, Customer Loyalty, Operational Efficiency, Expert Consensus, Transport Services.

INTRODUCTION

Passenger satisfaction is a pivotal component in the road transport industry, directly influencing customer

loyalty, brand reputation, and operational success. As competition intensifies and consumer expectations

evolve, understanding and addressing the factors that drive passenger satisfaction has become increasingly crucial for transport operators. Despite its importance, the complexity and variability of passenger needs pose significant challenges in identifying and prioritizing these factors.

Traditional methods of assessing passenger satisfaction often fall short in capturing the nuanced and dynamic nature of passenger experiences. To address this gap, this study leverages the Delphi Technique, a robust methodological approach renowned for its ability to harness expert consensus through iterative rounds of surveys. By engaging a panel of industry experts, the Delphi Technique enables a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted elements that contribute to passenger satisfaction in the road transport sector.

The primary objective of this study is to unravel the critical determinants of passenger satisfaction from an expert perspective, offering valuable insights that can inform strategic decision-making and service improvements. By systematically identifying and prioritizing key factors such as service quality, safety, convenience, and customer service, this research aims to provide a clear roadmap for transport operators seeking to enhance their service offerings and better meet passenger expectations.

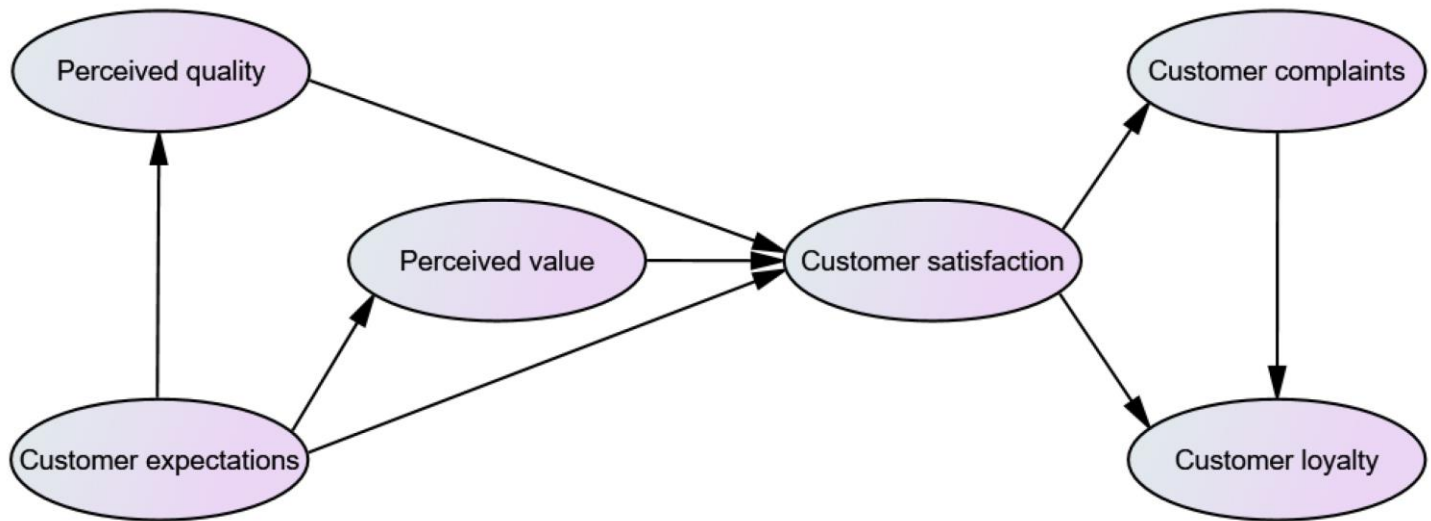
Through this introduction of the Delphi Technique in the context of the road transport industry, the study not only underscores the importance of expert-driven insights but also demonstrates the technique's applicability in addressing complex industry challenges. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on passenger satisfaction and presents actionable recommendations for fostering a more satisfying and efficient transport experience.

METHOD

This study employed the Delphi Technique to investigate the factors influencing passenger satisfaction in the road transport industry. The Delphi Technique is a structured communication method that relies on a panel of experts who participate in multiple rounds of questionnaires. The goal is to achieve a convergence of opinion on specific topics through controlled feedback. This approach is particularly well-suited for complex issues where individual judgments need to be aggregated to form a collective consensus.

The first step involved selecting a panel of experts with substantial experience and knowledge in the road transport industry. Experts were chosen based on their professional roles, years of experience, and contributions to the field. The panel included transport operators, policy makers, academic researchers, and customer service specialists. A total of 20 experts were

invited to participate, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives.

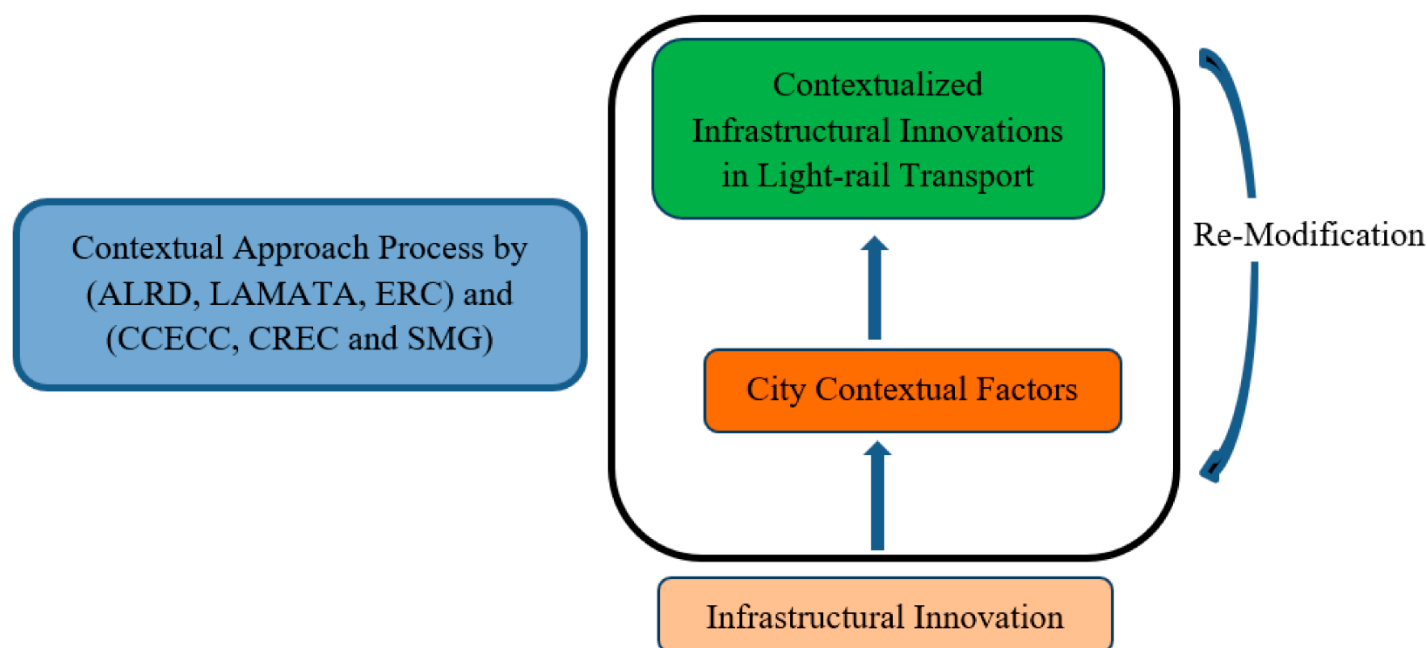


In the initial round, the experts were asked to provide open-ended responses to a set of questions designed to elicit a broad range of factors affecting passenger satisfaction. Questions focused on areas such as service quality, safety, convenience, pricing, and customer service. The responses were then collected, categorized, and analyzed to identify common themes and unique insights.

Based on the first round's findings, a structured questionnaire was developed for the second round. This questionnaire included a list of factors identified previously, and the experts were asked to rate the importance of each factor on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important). The

purpose of this round was to quantify the significance of each factor and to begin narrowing down the list to the most critical determinants of passenger satisfaction.

In the third round, the results from the second round were summarized and fed back to the panel. Experts were provided with the aggregated ratings and asked to reconsider their previous ratings in light of the group's responses. This iterative process aimed to refine the consensus and resolve any significant discrepancies among the experts' opinions. Additional comments and justifications were also solicited to enrich the understanding of each factor's impact.



The data from the final round were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify the mean, median, and standard deviation for each factor's importance rating. Factors with the highest mean ratings and lowest standard deviations were considered the most critical for passenger satisfaction. Qualitative data from open-ended responses were also analyzed using thematic analysis to identify any emerging trends and insights.

To ensure the robustness of the findings, a validation phase was conducted involving a smaller follow-up survey with a subset of the original panel. This phase aimed to confirm the reliability and relevance of the identified factors. Additionally, a comparison with existing literature and industry reports was performed

to contextualize the findings within the broader landscape of road transport research.

By systematically engaging experts and iteratively refining their input, this study was able to develop a comprehensive and prioritized list of factors influencing passenger satisfaction in the road transport industry. The use of the Delphi Technique provided a rigorous and collaborative framework for addressing the complex and multifaceted nature of passenger satisfaction, offering valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners in the field.

RESULTS

The Delphi Technique successfully identified and prioritized key factors influencing passenger satisfaction in the road transport industry. After three rounds of surveys, consensus was achieved on several critical determinants. The top factors, ranked by their mean importance ratings, included service quality, safety, convenience, pricing, and customer service. Service quality emerged as the most critical factor, with experts highlighting the importance of punctuality, cleanliness, and reliability. Safety was deemed essential, focusing on the maintenance of vehicles and adherence to safety regulations. Convenience, encompassing ease of access and route efficiency, was also highly rated. Pricing and customer service, particularly staff behavior and responsiveness, rounded out the top factors.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted nature of passenger satisfaction in the road transport industry. Service quality, as the highest-rated factor, aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of reliable and efficient transport services. This highlights the need for transport operators to invest in maintaining high standards of punctuality and cleanliness to meet passenger expectations.

Safety, as the second most critical factor, reflects growing passenger concerns about the physical security and maintenance of vehicles. This is consistent

with studies that indicate safety as a fundamental requirement for public transport users. Transport operators should prioritize safety measures, including regular maintenance checks and adherence to safety protocols, to build passenger trust and satisfaction.

Convenience emerged as another significant determinant, suggesting that passengers value accessible and efficient transport routes. Enhancing route planning and minimizing transit times can significantly improve the overall travel experience. Pricing, while critical, must balance affordability with the quality of services offered. Competitive and transparent pricing strategies can enhance passenger perceptions of value for money.

Customer service, particularly the behavior and responsiveness of staff, plays a crucial role in shaping passenger experiences. Training programs focused on improving staff interactions with passengers can lead to higher satisfaction levels. The study's findings suggest that a holistic approach, addressing multiple aspects of the travel experience, is essential for improving passenger satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing passenger satisfaction in the road transport industry through the application of the Delphi Technique. By engaging a diverse panel of experts, the research identified and prioritized key

determinants, offering valuable insights for transport operators.

The results highlight service quality, safety, convenience, pricing, and customer service as the top factors impacting passenger satisfaction. Transport operators are encouraged to focus on these areas to enhance their service offerings and better meet passenger expectations. Future research could explore the implementation of these findings in different contexts and evaluate the long-term impact on passenger satisfaction.

In conclusion, the Delphi Technique proved to be an effective method for unraveling the complexities of passenger satisfaction. The insights gained from this study can guide transport operators in developing targeted strategies to improve their services, ultimately leading to higher levels of passenger satisfaction and loyalty in the road transport industry.

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