

ATTITUDE OF PASSENGERS TOWARDS OMNI BUS SERVICES

**Dr. P. Veeralakshmi, Assistant Professor and Head,
Department of Commerce, Thiruvalluvar University Constituent,
College of Arts & Science, Kallakuruchi.**

Abstract

The Purpose of the study is analysis to service quality and customer satisfaction of the Omni bus services. The Omni bus operators in Tamil Nadu analysed the customers' expectations and provide the appropriate service to various customers segment through the introduction of Omni bus services, deluxe buses, value-added services and service qualities. Hence, the passengers' prefer Omni bus service providers who are providing ad enriched services. In this study discuss the current situation of Omni bus service, satisfaction level of customers and over all issues.

Keywords: *Attitude, Omni Bus Services*

1.1. Introduction

Transportation is the physical movement of persons and goods from one place to another. For the large-scale development of trade and commerce, cheap and rapid transport is essential. Transport is the main stream of a nation's economy. It encourages specialization, division of labour, large scale production and so on. It reduces regional imbalances and promotes social integration of people in a country. It helps the economic development of the country and links villages, towns and cities. The demand for transport is likely to go up with population increase and economic growth coupled with rapid urbanization. The development and progress in the field of transport links different parts of the world and ensures close contact with one another.

1.2. Profile of Virudhunagar

➤ **Jurisdiction**

The District of Virudhunagar was carved out as a separate district in the year 1985 as a result of trifurcating of Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu State, vide state Government

Notification, G.O.Ms.347 dated 8.3.1985. The District headquarters is Virudhunagar town. It covers an area of 4232 sq. km. and is divided into 8 taluks, namely Aruppukkottai, Kariapatti, Rajapalayam, Sattur, Sivakasi, Srivilliputtur, Tiruchuli and Virudhunagar.

➤ Geographical Location

Virudhunagar District is situated in the southern portion of Tamil Nadu State. It is bounded on the north by the Districts of Madurai and Sivagangai, on the east by the Districts of Sivagangai and Ramanathapuram on the south by the Districts of Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli and on the west by a portion of Kerala State and the District of Madurai.

Table.1.1. Population in Virudhunagar District

Description	2011	2001
Actual population	1,943,309	1,751,301
Male	967,437	870,376
Female	975,872	880.92%
Population Growth	10.96%	11.50%
Area Sq. Km	4,283	4,283
Density	454	409
Proportion to Tamil Nadu Population	2.63%	2.81%
<i>Source: www.tn/sta.in</i>		

Average literacy rate of Virudhunagar in 2011 was 80.75 compared to 73.70 of 2001. If things are looked out at gender-wise, male and female literacy were 88.46 and 73.14 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 83.96 and 63.64 in Virudhunagar District. Total literate in Virudhunagar District were 1,421,270 of which male and female were 773,186 and 648,084 respectively. In 2001, Virudhunagar District had 1,136,574 in its total region. With regard to Sex Ratio in Virudhunagar, it stood at 1009 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 1012. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate.

Virudhunagar is a major business town and it is the capital of Virudhunagar District located at a distance of 45 Kms South-West of Madurai. This place was once referred to as 'Virudhupatti'. In the beginning of 20th century A.D., Virudhupatti was one among the six important places of Ramanathapuram District. Due to the rapid growth in the field of Trade and Education, it was renamed as 'Virudhunagar' on 29th October 1923. The term 'Virudhu' means

‘Award’ in Tamil. Efficient Chief Minister (1954-63) and King Maker – Karma Veerar Kamarajar belongs to this town.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Virudhunagar District is one of the Industrial areas in Tamilnadu. Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Rajapalayam, Srivilliputtur, Aruppukkottai, Sattur and Thiruthangal are the important manufacturing centers in Virudhunagar District. It has many Match Factories, Firework Industries, Printing Industries, Spinning Mills, Textile Mills, Weaving Mills, Oil Factories and Handloom Industries. So large number of people is moving to various places due to business and personal reasons. Omni bus plays an important role in this regard. In Virudhunagar District, there is no frequent train service. Hence, the Omni bus service is fulfilling this demand. In the modern era, Omni bus services are unavoidable and it renders valuable services to the passengers. Hence, an attempt is made by the researcher to study the Omni bus service sector and also the attitude of the passengers towards this service in Virudhunagar District.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are;

- ✓ To analyse the attitude of the passengers towards omni bus services.
- ✓ The fare is cheaper when compared to TNSTC bus fare”.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the ratings given by the respondents on “Special festival service trips”.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The study entitled “The Study of Omni Bus Services in Virudhunagar District” analyses the Chennai bound omni bus services in Virudhunagar District. This study focuses the attitude of passengers towards omni bus services.

1.6. Sampling Design

The study area is Virudhunagar District. The researcher has collected information from those passengers of the omni bus and crew members who are travelled from Virudhunagar District to Chennai on 31.3.2014. For the selection of passengers, the researcher adopted stratified random sampling technique, the classifying the study area into municipalities. The study area consists of seven municipalities namely Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Rajapalayam, Srivilliputtur, Sattur, Thiruthangal and Aruppukottai. On 31.03.2014, 1651 passengers travelled from different parts of Virudhunagar District to Chennai in omni buses. The researcher has selected 20 per cent of the passengers for the study.

Table.1.2. Sample Respondents

S.No.	Name of the Municipality	Number of Operators	Population	Sample Respondent 20 per cent
1.	Virudhunagar	11	340	68
2.	Sivakasi	11	326	65
3.	Rajapalayam	12	394	79
4.	Srivilliputtur	12	342	68
5.	Sattur	4	124	25
6.	Thiruthangal	4	85	17
7.	Aruppukottai	1	40	8
	Total	55	1651	330

Source: Primary Data

1.7. Hypotheses of the Study

To give focus to the objectives, few hypotheses have been drawn up and tested by using appropriate statistical tools.

- ✓ The Socio economic factors like age, gender, marital status, type of family, family size, educational qualification and monthly salary do not influence the level of attitude of the passengers towards the safety aspects of omni bus service.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the ratings given by the respondents on “The fare is cheaper when compared to TNSTC bus fare”.
- ✓ There is no significant difference in the ratings given by the respondents on “Special festival service trips”.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

The present study is carried out with the following limitations. Since time was a limiting factor for the study, the researcher could concentrate on only Chennai bound omni buses operating in Virudhunagar District. Air conditioned buses are avoided to have uniform comparison. Cargo services by omni buses are not considered.

Table.1.3. Socio Economic Factor

Profile	Labels	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	210	63.63
	Female	120	36.34
Age (in years)	20 Year - 29 Year	45	13.63
	30 Year - 39 Year	121	42.73
	40 Year - 49 Year	141	13.63
	50 Year - 59 Year	20	6.06
	60 and Above	3	0.91
Marital Status	Single	47	14.24
	Married	283	85.76
Academic Qualification	Upto HSC	113	33.94
	Graduate	53	16.06
	Post – Graduate	80	24.24
	Professional	68	24.61
Occupation	Government Employee	75	32.05
	Businessmen	58	24.79
	Employee in Private	47	20.08
	Technical Job	26	11.12
	Labourer	16	6.84
	Pensioner	12	5.12
Income Level	Below Rs.10,000	40	12.12
	Rs.10001 – Rs.20000	71	21.52
	Rs.20001 – Rs.25000	32	9.70
	Rs.25001 – Rs.30000	148	44.85
	Above Rs.30000	39	11.81
Period of Using	Below 1 Year	19	5.76
	1 Year - 2 Years	171	51.82
	3 Year - 4 Years	72	21.82
	5 Year - 6 Years	16	4.85
	Above 6 Years	52	15.75
Source: Primary Data			

Three hundred and thirty (330) questionnaires were distributed, From the table tabulated, 63.63% were male, while 33.34% are female which indicated that men are ready to face challenges of life than women. Majority of the respondents are in active age, respondents between age brackets of 20-29 years were 13.63% and those within the age bracket of 30-39 years were 42.73%, 40-49 years 13.63%, 50-59 years 6.06% and above 60 were only 0.91% . Also, 85.76% of the respondents were married while 14.24% were single. Besides, 33.93% of respondents have upto HSC, 16.06% were Graduates, 24.24% have Post- Graduate and remaining 24.61 were complete Professional course.

Only 234 respondents were earning members other also non-earning members, 32.05 per cent of the respondents were government employees; 24.79 per cent of them businessmen; 20.08 per cent were employee in private concern; 11.12% and 6.8% of the respondents were technical job and Labourer, remaining 5.12 % of them belongs to pensioner. 12.12 % of the passengers earn below Rs.8,000 followed by the passengers of 21.52 % belongs to Rs.8,001 - 10,000 range; 9.70% belongs to Rs.10,001 – 12,000; 44.85 % belongs to the income group of Rs.12,001 – 15,000 and the balance 11.81% of them have the family income of more than Rs.15,000. An average of 51.82 per cent of the interviewees has been using the omni bus service for 1 – 2 years.

1.9. Test of Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in the ratings given by the respondents on the opinion that “The fare is cheaper when compared to TNSTC bus fare”

Table.1.4. KS Test

S. No.	Opinion	Observed Number	Observed Proportion	Cumulative Observed Proportion	Expected Proportion	Cumulative Expected Proportion	D = O.E.
1.	Strongly Agree	23	0.19	0.19	0.20	0.20	-0.01
2.	Agree	26	0.10	0.29	0.20	0.40	-0.11
3.	No Opinion	41	0.16	0.45	0.20	0.60	-0.15
4.	Disagree	135	0.52	0.97	0.20	0.80	0.17
5.	Strongly Disagree	105	0.40	1.37	0.20	1.00	0.37

Calculated value: (largest difference) = 0.37

The table value at 95 per cent confidence level = $\frac{1.36}{\sqrt{330}} = 0.075$

As the calculated value (0.37) is greater than the Table value (0.075), the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the opinion of the passengers on the fare is cheap when compared to TNSSTC bus fare of the service.

1.10. Nature of Difficulties in Getting Tickets during Festival Periods

They are non-availability of tickets in required bus service, hike in ticket fare, not getting intended seats, unannounced change in departure time, not getting required number of seats, irritating behavior of booking staff and issue of few over tickets. The reasons are ranked by the respondents and tabulated in Table.

Table.1.5. Ranking of Difficulties in Getting Tickets during Festival Periods

S. No.	Reason	Total Score	Average	Rank
1.	Hike in ticket fare	8764	58.82	I
2.	Not getting required number of seats	8174	54.86	II
3	Not getting intended seats	7885	52.92	III
4.	Non availability of desired tickets in the required bus service	7838	52.60	IV
5.	Unannounced change in departure timings	7640	51.28	V
6.	Irritating behavior of booking staff	6627	44.48	VI
7.	Issue of few over tickets	5669	38.05	VII

Source: Primary Data

Based on the above calculation it is found that hike in ticket fare is the major difficulty with the total score value of 8764 and rank value of I; not getting required number of seats scored 8174 – rank value of II; not getting intended seats scored 7885 – rank value of III; non availability of tickets in desired bus service scored 7838 – rank value of IV; unannounced change in departure time scored 7640 – rank value of V; irritating behavior of booking staff scored 6627 – rank value of VI and issue of few over tickets scored 5669 – rank value of VII. Table 4.28 narrates these details. Hike in ticket fare and not getting required number of seats are the two major difficulties normally faced by the passengers of omni bus especially during festival occasions.

1.11. Rotated Factor Matrix for the Factors over all opinion about omni bus service

The following Table exhibits the rotated factor loadings for the twenty four statements and the twenty four statements have been graded into six factors. They are:

- Advantages
- Behaviour of Crew and Facilities
- Safety and Ticketing Aspects
- Basic Requirements
- Safety and Maintenance
- Other Services

Table.1.6. Factor I - Advantages

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	Special festival service	0.721	0.557
2.	Reach the destination without any difficulty	0.678	0.505
3.	Reach in appropriate time	0.665	0.559
4.	Adequate moving space inside the Bus	0.330	0.294

The passengers normally expect more facilities in the bus. Special festival service, reach the destination without difficulty, reach in appropriate time and adequate moving space inside the bus constituted Factor I with higher factor loadings and named Advantages. Some significant advantages in omni buses are very important consideration in omni bus service. The operator should try to offer all of them.

Table.1.7. Factor II - Behavior of Crew and Facilities

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	No unnecessary stops	0.629	0.465
2.	Politeness of the crew	0.596	0.442
3.	Waiting for well- being of passengers	0.523	0.421
4.	Stopping at convenient location	0.519	0.450
5.	Foot Berth/Semi Sleeper facility	0.425	0.407
6.	Separate fan facility	0.304	0.287

The attributes of no unnecessary stops, politeness of crew, waiting for well- being of passengers, stopping at convenient location, foot berth/semi sleeper facility and separate fan facility from part of Factor II. A gentle attitude of the crew members even with an aggressive passenger also adds to the image of the omni bus operators.

Table.1.8. Factor III - Safety and Ticketing Aspects

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	Ticket fare is low compared to TNSTC Bus fare	0.624	0.433
2.	Correct number of Passengers	0.531	0.378
3.	Smooth Driving	0.468	0.465
4.	Online Ticket Booking	0.442	0.326
5.	Speed of the Bus	0.400	0.257

The omni buses met minimum level of accident. A proven track record of safety is bound to add to the positive image of the omni bus services operated by particular firms. Safety in travel is the concern of not only by the passengers but also for the omni bus operators. Many road accidents are attributed to human failure rather than the failure of the machine. The higher factor loading on the statements indicate that Factor III underlies these variables. The higher value of communality for the above statements indicates that a higher amount of variance is explained by the extracted factors.

Table.1.9. Factor IV - Basic Requirements

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	Space for Luggage	0.666	0.485
2.	Audio-Video Facilities	0.649	0.503
3.	Good Condition of the Bus	0.414	0.262

The statements on space for luggage, audio-video and good condition of the buses are collectively titled as basic requirements. It is constituted as Factor IV. The passengers get more satisfaction when the basic requirements are met. Hence the operators should do the needful.

Table.1.10. Factor V - Safety and Maintenance

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	Availability of first-aid kits	0.687	0.566
2.	Cleanliness in the Bus	0.630	0.430
3.	Proper Maintenance	0.583	0.494

Proper maintenance will avoid unexpected break down. Most of the passengers like hygienic and first –aid kits should be maintained properly. Some buses are dirty and this will cause great nuisance to the passengers. This unit is titled as Safety and Maintenance.

Table.1.11. Factor VI - Other Services

S. No.	Variables	Factor Loading	Communality (h ²)
1.	Stopping at Motels	0.638	0.573
2.	Proper light facilities	0.525	0.452
3.	Water Facility	0.492	0.364

The variables of stopping at motels, proper light facilities inside/outside of the bus, water facility are called Other Services and constituted as Factor VI with higher factor loadings of 0.638, 0.525 and 0.492. The respective communality values are 0.573, 0.454 and 0.364. To know about the opinion of the passengers, the researcher has applied factor analysis. Among the six factors, Factor I – Advantages has the high loading factor which indicates that a higher amount of variance prevails.

1.12. Suggestions

- ✓ Efforts may be taken by the operators to go for electronic display of filled up seats in their booking offices to show the realities and integrity in seating allotment to the passengers.
- ✓ Elaborate seating and toilet arrangement may be made available to the passengers, in their booking offices.
- ✓ Maximum number of passengers felt that the ticket fare is very hike in festival time compare with ordinary days.
- ✓ Last minute boarding by the passengers should be avoided. So that the operators are not under any undue pressure.
- ✓ The basic attitude of passengers always demanding window seat must be changed, so that seating allotment problem could well be kept under control.
- ✓ It is high time on the part of omni bus operators to offer morning service and noon service to Chennai to offer flexibility in departure timings for the passengers.
- ✓ Most of the passengers are satisfied with the normal speed of the omni buses. The same should be maintained by the operators.

- ✓ A small demo of precautionary measures during omni bus travels may be made available to the passengers.
- ✓ In the current scenario omni bus service is quite invaluable to all classes of people.

1.13. Conclusion

Most of the engineering graduates are placed in Chennai based concerns and hence naturally the dependents of them regularly go to Chennai. Moreover as Chennai is the head quarter of Tamil Nadu State business and official travelers are in plenty. In this context railways alone could not meet all their travelling requirements. Thereby this situation warrants a committed transportation service from the omni bus sector. In the study area of Virudhunagar District, the mode of performance of omni buses is highly commendable and in fact fulfilling all the requirements of passengers. Only very few aspects need to be tuned in the light of expectations of the commuters.

Reference

1. Carvana, Y., Lawrence M. Corbett and Y.L. Lo (2007), Developing Zones of Tolerance for Managing Passenger Rail Service Quality, *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 24(1).
2. Arawati Agns, Sumita Barker and J. Kandampully (2007), An. Exploratory Study of Service Quality in the Malaysian Public Service Sector, *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 24(2).
3. Kadir, S.L.S.A, Abdullah, M and Agns, A (2000), On Service Improvement Capacity Index: A Case Study of the Public Sector in Malaysia, *Total Quality Management*, 11(406).
4. Jhon Disney (1998), Competing through Quality in Transport Service, *Managing Service Quality*, 8(2).
5. Tolba, M, K. and Saab, N.W. (2008). Arab Environment Future Challenges, Report of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED).
6. Tronvoll, B. (2007). Customer Complaint Behaviour from The Perspective of The Service-Dominant-Logic of Marketing. *Managing Service Quality*, 17 (6), pp.601-20.
7. Tronvoll, B. (200). Customer Complying Behaviour in Service, dissertation, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Communication and IT, Business Administration, Karlstad university Studies, 200:14 Varmil and strafik AB (2003).
8. Mr. A. Elgin, Dr. V.R. Nedunchezian, An Emprical Investigation On Service Quality & Passengers' Perception – A Gap Analyssis. *International Journal of Management*, 2(2), 2011,pp167-175.
9. Umrigar, F.S., Sikdar, P.K. and Khanna, S.K., (1988), *Quality of Urban Bus Services – Evaluating Diffferent Ownerships in Tansport System Studies*, Tata MC Graw Hill , New Delhi.