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PERCEPTION, EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF PASSENGERS: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF USERS OF VAYU VAJRA BUS SERVICES IN BANGALORE BY USING ACSI MODEL

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ABSTRACT

By moving persons or things from the point of origin to the point of destination, transporters perform one of the most important activities. A key motivation for the growing emphasis on customer satisfaction is that higher customer satisfaction can lead to reduction in price elasticity, lower operating cost, reduce failure cost and reduce the cost of attracting new customers. The purpose of this study is to find out the key factors that affect the customer satisfaction of passengers using the services of Vayu Vajra bus services in Bangalore within the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) model and know how to improve the current bus services to fulfill the customer satisfaction. Based on the research, the authors are of the strong opinion that the ACSI model is unsuitable for Vayu Vajra bus case since Vayu Vajra bus service is provided by BMTC, a traditional public service. It has its own specificity and is different from the normal service, even from the normal public service like Government hospital. Vayu Vajra Bus services try to provide the convenient service to people but not with the purpose of making profit. Hence, the ACSI model has been modified and a suitable equation has been suggested.

KEYWORDS

ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index model), convenient service, customer satisfaction and price elasticity.

BACKGROUND

The civilization of the human sensitivity has revealed an urge for mobility leading to a measure of Society's progress. The history of this mobility or transport is the history of civilization. By moving persons or things from the point of origin to the point of destination, transporters perform one of the most important activities, at every stage of advanced civilisation. Thus, by examining the history of transportation and the various stages of its evolution, one can actually gauge the extent of economic development and the extent of progress of civilization itself. If we consider the "Invention of the Wheel" as one of the greatest transformation points in history of civilization, then it is fully justified to study transportation and its history, since the "Wheel" has basically transported while it transformed. Therefore, transportation maybe considered as both a cause and consequence of economic development.

BMTC AT A GLANCE

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) came into existence in 1997 with the sole aim of providing public transportation to the city and sub-urban areas of Bangalore. BMTC leads by example in being the only Bus Corporation within the city of Bangalore to ferry more than 4.5 million commuters. The organization comprises a fleet of over 6166 buses covering an area encompassed with a radius of 36 kilometers from the city centre. In a day BMTC operates on 583 city and 1785 sub urban routes, running 13 lakhs kilometers and making 79445 trips. BMTC has a 32000 strong labour force to carry out different aspects of BMTC bus operations.

BMTC services the transport needs of the urban and sub-urban population in and around Bangalore. And, despite the differentiated base of the commuting population, BMTC reaches far and wide, in every nook and corner of the city making public transport an attractive travel choice for everyone. BMTC's strong hold in the area of public transportation in Bangalore is a testimony to its adoption of sound Management, HR, Quality and Environmental policies.

Vajra services are premium services of BMTC that provide high comfort in order to attract people from using personalized mode of transport. The service is operated by deploying Volvo based buses that are Air-conditioned, Euro-III conforming with kneeling mechanism, collapsible exit floor and room for wheel-chair. These services are hard to miss as they are red in color and operate on almost all localities, including arterial and ring roads of Bangalore.

BIG10 services deploy buses branded in green and bottle green on 12 major corridors coming in from surrounding suburbs in the city viz., Hosur road, Bannerghatta road, Sarjapura road, Kanakapura road, Mysore road etc. These buses run on a direction based concept where the commuter takes the next (high frequency, every 15 minutes) bus in his/her direction of travel, and if need be, makes a changeover to another bus to reach the destination. The service terminates on different points on the radius of the city core, to avoid congesting the city centre.

Suvarna services are newly introduced services with a fleet comprising air-suspension and high comfort (without A/C) buses. There are 295 services in operation as on 31st January 2011, which are specially deployed during peak hours.

Pushpak services are operated by deploying branded buses having added comfort features such as better upholstered seats with head rest, more leg space etc. Their fares are structured higher than the ordinary fares. These services are especially popular for Chartered Service, Casual Contract etc.

BMTC operates **tailor made services** too to suit the specific requirements of commuters like students, factory employees, corporate staff etc. They are usually contracted out by charter services. BMTC also operates casual contracts to meet individual demand for transport on occasions like weddings, pilgrimage, rallies etc. These services are offered at special rates under different packages.

BMTC also operates **ordinary Services** within the city with 48742 total numbers of trips in Bangalore City alone and 1864 total number of trips covering the semi urban areas around Bangalore, with a total route length of 47665.6 KMs a day. The total number of schedules operated by BMTC is around 5918 with 50506 trips carrying a total of around 4.5 million passengers a day.

TABLE – 1: DETAILS OF BMTC

PARTICULARS	Figures
No of Schedules	5918
No of Vehicles	6166
Total No. trips – Urban	48742
Total No. trips – Semi Urban	1864
Route Length	47665.6 KMs
Daily Service kms	12.72 Lakhs
Daily Passengers Carried Around	4.5 Million

Source: BMTC website: www.bmtc.org.in

VAYU VAJRA OF BMTC, BANGALORE

Volvo based Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) Services, also known as **Vayu Vajra**, offer high-end air-conditioned comfort to passengers in an effort to wean them away from personalized modes of travel. The service is available round the clock, providing seamless connectivity between important areas of the city and BIAL. The table No. 2 gives a detailed report about the Vayu Vajra operations in Bangalore. The Transport Corporation has a fleet strength of 61 exclusively to provide transport services between Bangalore International Airport and various destinations in Bangalore. On an average around 5000 passengers are being carried to and from BIAL and the minimum fare is Rs 125/= (from/to Majestic) and the maximum fare is Rs 220/= (from/to Electronic City). Compared with other routes, **Vayu Vajra (VV)** in Bangalore which plies from Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) to various destinations and from various destinations to BIAL is chosen for this research because it is one of the modes of conveyance being used by the air passengers to reach the Bangalore International Airport and to their respective destinations from BIAL even at odd hours. Therefore, researching and studying of customer satisfaction of Vayu Vajra bus services tend to be very helpful for the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Bangalore to improve its performance.

A key motivation for the growing emphasis on customer satisfaction is that higher customer satisfaction can lead to reduction in price elasticity, lower operating cost, reduce failure cost and reduce the cost of attracting new customers.

TABLE – 2: DETAILS OF VAYU VAJRA IN BANGALORE

Route No	ORIGIN	No. of Trips per/day Both ways	Schedule from BIAL		Schedule from Destinations	
			Starting Hrs	Ending Hrs	Starting Hrs	Ending Hrs
BIAS 4	HAL Main Gate	59	00.00	2300	00.30	22.00
BIAS 5	JP Nagar 6th Phase	56	00.10	2245	00.35	22.00
BIAS 6	Kadugodi Bus station	26	07.30	2320	06.00	22.40
BIAS 7	HSR Layout(BDA Complex)	38	00.30	2330	04.30	22.45
BIAS 7A	HSR Layout(BDA Complex)	23	08.40	2200	06.40	20.20
BIAS 8	Electronic city	45	00.40	2355	03.00	22.30
BIAS 8A	Kuvempu Nagar(BTM layout)	22	05.30	2335	06.30	21.20
BIAS 9	Majestic/KBS	114	00.10	2315	00.10	23.40
BIAS 10	MCTC Bus station	4	09.45	1945	07.10	07.10
BIAS 11	Chikkasandra bus station	29	06.35	2330	04.30	21.20
BIAS 12	Kuvempu Nagar(BTM layout)	46	05.40	2350	00.55	21.50
BIAS 5	JP Nagar 6th Phase	56	00.10	2245	00.35	22.00
BIAS 6	Kadugodi Bus station	26	07.30	2320	06.00	22.40
BIAS 7	HSR Layout(BDA Complex)	38	00.30	2330	04.30	22.45
BIAS 7A	HSR Layout(BDA Complex)	23	08.40	2200	06.40	20.20

Source: BMTC website: www.bmtc.org.in

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to find out the key factors that affect the customer satisfaction of passengers using the services of Vayu Vajra bus services in Bangalore within the ACSI model and know how to improve the current bus services to fulfill the customer satisfaction.

Based on the purpose of this study, two research questions are identified to be important to answer in this paper:

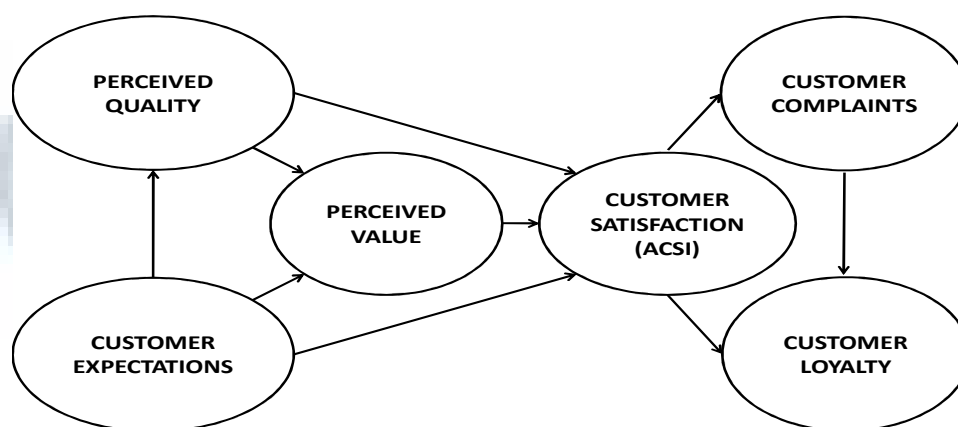
1. What are the relationships between Customer Expectation, Perceived Quality, Perceived Value and Customer Satisfaction of Vayu Vajra bus services?
2. What is the suitable Customer Satisfaction model for a public bus service company like Vayu Vajra?

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction can be defined as the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met the customer's needs and expectations (Valarie A. et al 2006). Satisfaction can be associated with the senses of fulfillment, contentment, the feeling of pleasure, relief and ambivalence with a mix of positive and negative experiences.

ACSI MODEL

The ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) is a measure of quality of goods or services as experienced by customers (Valarie et al 2006). The ACSI model is a cause-and effect model which starts from "customer expectations" to "perceived quality", and to "perceived value", then the three factors impact on "customer satisfaction (ACSI)" which in center, finally it may induce two results: "customer complaints" or "customer loyalty". You can see in the figure below:

FIGURE 1: ACSI MODEL

(Source: <http://www.theacsi.org>)

CUSTOMER EXPECTATION (CE)

Expectation is the results of prior experience with the company's products (Ali et al 2007), it represents both prior consumption experience, which includes some non-experiential information, and a forecast of the company's ability to deliver quality in the future (ACSI Methodology 2008). Knowing what the customer

expects is the first and possible most critical step in the whole service, because being wrong with what customer expectation is, may cause lose the customers or expending money and time that don't count to the customers.

PERCEIVED QUALITY (PQ)

Perceived quality is the evaluation that reflects from customers' experience of the quality of products or services. It evaluates customization which is the degree to meets the customer's individual needs, and reliability which is the frequency of given products or services go wrong. Quality is the most critical factor, if customers find the product or service is worth, even the price is a little bit high, the customers still would like to come back. The ACSI model delineates two types of perceived quality: produce quality and service quality.

PERCEIVED VALUE (PV)

Perceived value is the price paid which related to the level of product quality. Fonell et al (1996) argue that as the impact of value increased relation to quality, price is a more important determinant of satisfaction (Michael et al 2000).

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Customer satisfaction may have two impacts, one is positive, another one is negative. Customer complaints are measured as a percentage of respondents who indicate they have complained to a company directly about the product or service (ACSI Methodology 2008).

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty can be defined as the customers have a long-term commitment to repurchase the same product or service at a tolerance of price. At the same time, the customers may be an advertisement by themselves to recommend the other people to have the same product or service. The indices indicate which drivers of satisfaction, if improved, would induce customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance in relation to his or her expectations. Satisfaction is a function of perceived performance and expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted.

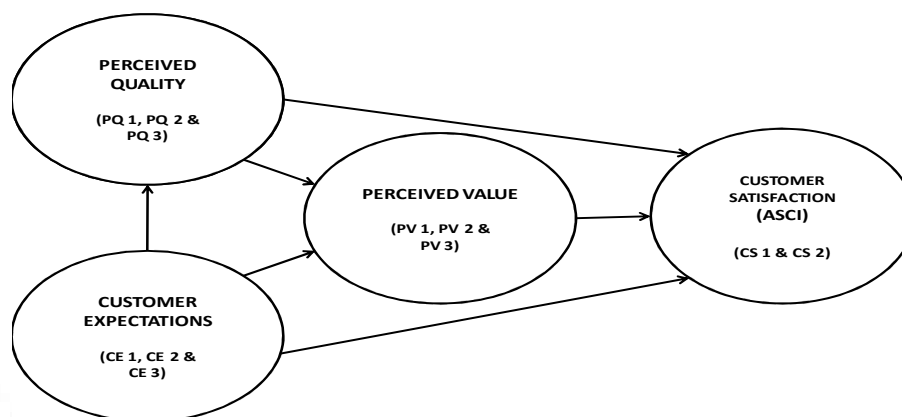
In the economic system, satisfaction is equated with utility, or the consumer's ability to enjoy a good and utility is never measured directly but inferred from the action of the market place, through the theory of revealed preference (Bennet and Kassrjian 1972)²⁷. In the buyer behaviour model developed by Howard and Sheth (1969)²⁸, "Customer's satisfaction is defined as the point at which expectation and reality coincide".

METHODOLOGY

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a statistical technique for testing and estimating causal relationships using a combination of statistical data and qualitative causal assumption. A structural model combines with two types of models: the outer model links the manifest variables to the latent variables, while the inner model relates to the mode of estimation of latent variables.

The ACSI model is a structural model based on the assumptions that customer satisfaction (CS) is caused by some factors such as perceived quality (PQ), perceived value (PV), expectations of customers (EC). Each factor is represented as a construct (latent) variable which is indirectly described by a group of observable variables (manifest variables or indicators). This paper will only discuss the foremost part of ACSI, in another word, this study dispenses with the last two factors: customer loyalty and customer complaints, because the key point in this paper is to discuss the relationship between CE, PQ, PV and CS, trying to find out a good way to achieve the customer satisfaction. Therefore, both complaint factor and customer loyalty have less incentive to analyze. It shows in figure 2.

FIGURE 2: THE COEFFICIENT IN ACSI MODEL



From the Figure 2, the arrow points indicate the causality between construct variables. In addition, ζ_n and δ_n are residual of construct variables and manifest variables. The outer model can be described by the matrix: λ_{nm} is an effect of m latent variables on n latent variables, causality can not be zero.

There are two common statistical approaches for structural model estimation. The most prominent SEM technique is the ML-based covariance structure analysis method. (Bollen, 1989). The second approach is partial least squares (PLS)-based variance analysis method developed by Wold (1982, 1985). Compared with ML estimation, PLS method can work with small observations and multiple variables with discrete continuous or binary date, and also supports two types of relations, formative and reflective. Fornell (1992) states that PLS is a powerful estimation method for CSI.

DATA COLLECTION

In the ACSI model, construct variables are unobservable variables, observable variables are obtained by either interview or questionnaire. In this paper, a survey was made with the help of a structured questionnaire. There were twelve questions and each question was measured with Likert Scale where 1 expresses an extremely dissatisfaction and 5 expresses a very satisfaction. As table 3 shows, questions from one to three described expectations of customers; questions from four to eight indicated perceive quality; questions from nine to ten represented perceived value. Question eleven and twelve were relative to customer satisfaction.

TABLE 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

Latent variables	Manifest variables
Customer expectation (CE)	CE11: Expectation for being on time
	CE12: Expectation for number of bus runs
	CE13: Expectation for ticket price
Perceived quality (PQ)	PQ21: Vayu Vajra buses schedule
	PQ22: Vayu Vajra buses routers
	PQ23: Arriving on time
	PQ24: Drivers performance
	PQ25: Bus condition
Perceived value (PV)	PV31: Price paid for quality received.
	PV32: Quality received for paid price.
Customer satisfaction (CS)	CS41: Overall satisfaction
	CS42: Fulfillment of expectations

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

TEST OF RELIABILITY

Internal consistency reliability defines the consistency of the results delivered in a test, ensuring that various items under CRM are measured correctly and reliably by respondents on Likert scale. This is checked (statistically) through Cronbach's coefficient of reliability Alpha (∞) which is depicted below in table 4.

TABLE - 4: RELIABILITY TEST RESULT

CRONBACH'S STATISTIC

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
0.8325	12

As the Cronbach's ∞ (0.720) is greater than 0.70, we can statistically conclude that there is a consistency or inter reliability in measuring various items of ASCI model. In a sense, the result ensures that responses are not too varied across time in a summated scale.

COEFFICIENT CALCULATION

The inner model is estimated by PLS. PLS refers to principal component analysis and multiple regressions; it is a method of casual modeling. In the ASCI model, it extracts principal components from different measurement variables of latent variables, by using those data in the regression model, to find the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables.

MEAN VALUE AND SD

Through data collection and data compilation from the survey, this study got the mean value and standard deviation (as shown in table 5). Mean value shows the average level of customer's evaluation; and the results indicate Customer Expectation is good; they like good service, the kind driver and the lower price. At the same time, the mean value of PQ shows Vayu Vajra buses provide good service in eye of customers. However, it also shows that the price is a little bit expensive for customers; furthermore, the average mean value of Customer Satisfaction (4.38) is almost nearer to 5, which means most of customers are satisfied with Vayu Vajra bus services. The standard deviation (SD) measures the dispersion of a data set; the low standard deviation indicates all of the data points are very close to mean value, while high standard deviation indicates that the data are "spread out" over a large range of values. All the SD in these surveys is almost equal to or than 1, which means the agreeability of the respondents is more or less same.

According to the data from survey, the coefficients for each latent variable and R^2 are shown in Figure 4. The coefficient value describes the relationship between variables, the larger the value of coefficient, the higher correlation between independent variable and dependent variable. If the value of coefficient is negative, which indicates independent variable is negative correlated with dependent variable, vice versa. They are written on the arrows line. The R^2 is a statistics that give some information about goodness of fit of a model, the larger the value of R^2 , the more accurate the model is. The value of R^2 varies from 0 to 1. If R^2 equals to 1 which means the regression line perfectly fits the data and the model highly closes to the reality. In general situation, the value of R^2 should be at least greater than 0.7. They are given in the circles.

As the Figure 4 shows, all relationships between latent variables are positive, except between Perceived Quality and Perceived Value. The positive relationship means that an increase in the value of an independent variable will lead to increase the value of dependent variable simultaneously, vice versa. According to the results, PQ and CE have a significant effect on customer satisfaction, the regression coefficient are 0.094 and 0.108, respectively. While PV has a positive relation with customer satisfaction, coefficient of PV only up to 0.551. Moreover, R^2 measure for customer satisfaction is 0.076, which means the regression model could explain 7.60 percent of the total variance in customer satisfaction.

TABLE 5: RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

		Mean Value	Average of Mean Value	Standard Deviation
CUSTOMER EXPECTATION (CE)	CE 1	3.95	4.12	.977
	CE 2	3.99		.976
	CE 3	4.41		.783
PERCEIVED QUALITY (PQ)	PQ 1	4.17	4.33	.852
	PQ 2	3.97		.968
	PQ 3	4.57		.524
	PQ 4	4.30		.460
	PQ 5	4.62		.476
PERCEIVED VALUE (PV)	PV 1	4.38	4.37	.487
	PV 2	4.35		.479
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (CS)	CS 1	4.37	4.38	.676
	CS 2	4.41		.726

Source: Primary Data

Moreover, PQ and CE are considered as independent variable for dependent variable PV. PQ have a negative relationship with PV, regression coefficient value is - 0.172, which means the value of PQ increases by one will lead the value of PV increases by 0.172. There is a positive relationship between CE and PV, the coefficient value of CE is 0.448. R^2 measurement of this regression model is 0.147 which is somewhat not strong.

Finally, CE is the independent variable for PQ with the regression coefficient value of 0.841. It implies CE has a strong positive relationship with PQ. An increase in one value of CE will result in 0.841 value increased in PQ. The R^2 measurement of this regression is 0.175.

MODEL VARIABLES, PARAMETERS AND RELATIONS

The overall customer satisfaction in ACSI model has three factors: *perceived quality, perceived value, and customer expectation*. This study will discuss the relationships between them. Because the three factors are three determinants of overall customer satisfaction (CS), they have an influence not only on CS on themselves. So this analysis lists the relational expressions in table3; the later discussions will be based on these equations, to analyze how these three parameters impact CS and which is the most important relationship.

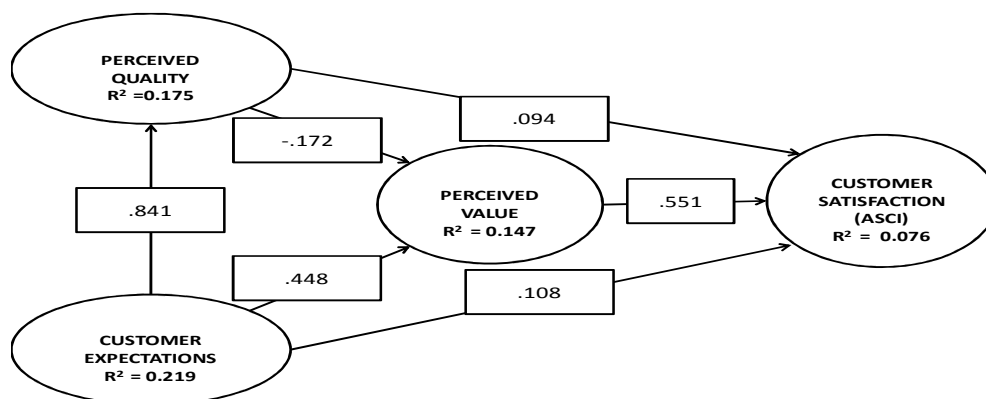
TABLE 6: MODEL VARIABLES, PARAMETERS AND RELATIONS

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Equations
Perceived Quality	Customer Expectation	$PQ = C + \beta_1 CE + \delta$
Perceived Value	Perceived Quality	$PV = C + \beta_2 PQ + \beta_3 CE + \delta$
	Customer Expectation	
Customer Satisfaction	Perceived Quality	$CS = C + \beta_4 PQ + \beta_5 CE + \beta_6 PV + \delta$
	Customer Expectation	
	Perceived Value	

As shown in Table 5, Customer Expectation (CE), Perceived Quality (PQ) and Perceived Value are either independent variable or dependent variable, β is the regression coefficient value; δ is error term, which describes some factors that cannot be explained by model. The relationship between latent variables can be represented by the coefficient value; the PLS process is based on the data which was obtained from the survey. It is to be noted that the higher β , stronger the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable is; in other words, if the value of one independent variable changes, the dependent variable will change β value.

All the questions in the questionnaire are based on the factors in ACSI, the later discussions are also related to the questionnaire. Since the study concentrates only on the impact of CE, PQ and PV on Customer Satisfaction in case of Vayu Vajra, the questionnaire has been developed considering only CE, PQ, PV and CS and the further discussion will also be on the relationship between these the above four factors..

FIGURE 3:THE CALCULATED COEFFICIENTS



CUSTOMER EXPECTATION/ PERCEIVED QUALITY RELATIONSHIP

The first discussion starts from the relationship between CE and PQ. In this equation, CE is an independent variable, while PQ is a dependent variable. Through PLS testing, the coefficient value of CE was found as 0.841, R^2 measurement is 0.175, which is not very high. It means perceived quality cannot be exactly explained by customer expectation. In this case, the result of coefficient value indicates customer expectation has a strong impact on perceived quality, one value of customer expectation increases will lead to 0.841 value increased in perceived quality.

Related to the questionnaire, the expectation of ticket price, routes and on time arrival of buses from customer directly influence the quality which provided by Vayu Vajra buses, Fornell (1996) found that CE has positive correlation with PQ. Customer expectation can be influenced by a series of factors such as prior experience (already availed the services), which is a positive function. Whatever the type of company is, the design and development of products and services always rely on the customers' needs. In other words, companies always concentrate on improving their products and services to fulfill customer expectation. On the other hand, customers always require better service. However, some expectations are not rational and reasonable so that perceived value may be lower. In this case, customer expectation has a strong positive impact on perceived quality. Moreover, the respondents in our survey are both national and international air passengers who have different expectation because of their nature and need for travel and hence the evaluation standards are different.

PERCEIVED VALUE/CUSTOMER EXPECTATION/ PERCEIVED QUALITY RELATIONSHIP

The second step mainly analyzes the relationship between independent variables PQ, CE and dependent variable PV. R^2 measurement of this regression for PV is 0.147, which means the PV and CE are poor to explain the independent variable PV. The coefficients value of PV with PQ and CE are -.172 and 0.448 respectively, which means PV and PQ has a negative relationship and CE has a small impact on PV. Perceived value relies on price that indicates whether it is worth to pay. In the case of Vayu Vajra buses, many customers think the ticket price is a little expensive. They are of the opinion that if they a higher price, they expect the services are to be better.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION/ PERCEIVED VALUE/ CUSTOMER EXPECTATION/ PERCEIVED QUALITY RELATIONSHIP

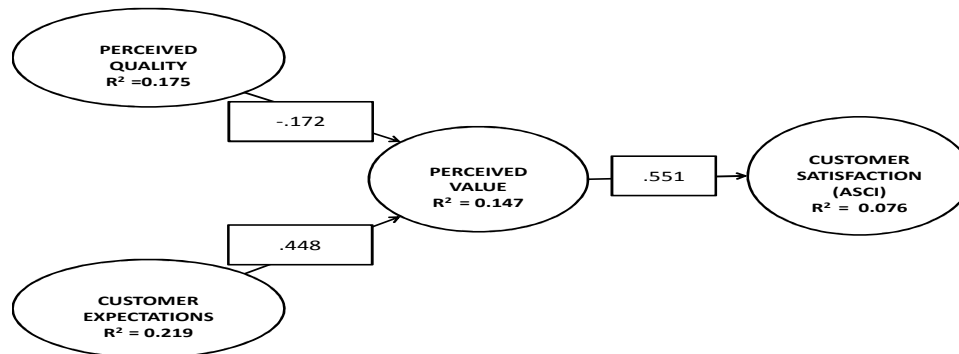
The third determinants of customer satisfaction are the relationships between independent variables PQ, PV, CE and dependent variable CS. R^2 of this regression for CS is 0.076. The coefficient value of dependent variable CE related to CS is 0.108, it is the second important factor of CS. Customer satisfaction is the customer's evaluation of a product or service in term of whether that product or service has met the customer's needs. In general terms, customer expectation has a direct influence on degree of customer satisfaction.

The most important factor in this model through PLS tested is perceived quality, which obtains 0.094 of coefficient value. It is true, quality is crucial for a company, if there is a good service quality in Vayu Vajra buses, the customer can be satisfied. Even if the price is a little high, customer still would like to have the service. Moreover, coefficient value of PV is 0.551, which indicates the price of ticket has an impact on CS.

OVERALL ANALYSIS**FIRST SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP**

The first significant relationships in this paper, as depicted in Fig. 4, are: PQ and PV, CE and PV, PV and CS.

Firstly, the coefficient in the relationship between perceived quality and perceived value is negative -0.172, which indicates the perceived quality has a very weak impact on perceived value. Vayu Vajra buses service is a traditional service and only provides the quality of service but not the specific production. Hence, it is hard to say that Vayu Vajra Services provide a good or bad quality of service and it is also hard to evaluate if it is worth to achieve the perceived value.

FIGURE 4: THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP IN ACSI MODEL

Secondly, the coefficient in the relationship between PV and CE is also high (0.898). Vayu Vajra is the only one bus service provider to and from BIAL other than Private Taxis and hence it monopolises the market. The customer expectation has a positive impact on PV; the R-square value is not high. .

Thirdly, the relationship between PV and CS is positive, and to some extent, the price of the bus ticket is fixed. Hence, the researchers are of the opinion that the price has an influence on CS.

In summary, the coefficients and R-square values in model shows that there are positive effects between them, the correlation between CE and PV, CS and PV are also positive except the correlation between PQ and PV. Considering that Vayu Vajra services, provided by state owned bus transport corporation BMTC, are the only one bus service provider to and from BIAL other than Private Taxis, the researchers are of the strong opinion that the ACSI model is unsuitable.

SECOND SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP

There are three antecedents: perceived quality, perceived value, and customer expectation have positive correlation on customer satisfaction.

The coefficients and R-square values in the relationship are positive and hence, it can be conclude that there is a relationship of cause and effect between two parameters and CS. This study filters the three antecedents and the PV is ignored, CE can have influence on PQ but do not have direct impact on CS. Hence, according to this model, the equation can be modified as :

TABLE 7: MODIFIED EQUATION

$PQ = C + \beta_0 CE + \delta$,
$CS = C + \beta_1 PQ + \delta$

It means PQ has the largest impact on CS and hence Vayu Vajra buses must improve the service of quality to achieve CS. Through the survey, it can be concluded that some customers are satisfied and some are not. Moreover, many of them are dissatisfied with the frequency.

SUGGESTIONS

The suggestions in this study are as follows:

Firstly, Vayu Vajra buses should get in touch with customers frequently in order to know the customer expectations, through questionnaire or interview, to get the feedbacks, because the more information the company have, the more ways the company can think of improving.

Secondly, Vayu Vajra should analyze these feedbacks, analyse the useful expectations and try to find the good way to improve the quality of service, so that achieve Customer Satisfaction.

Finally, BMTC should know what expectations the customers have so as to provide quality of service, to meet customer needs and fulfill the customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The customer satisfaction index models have been used commonly in the marketing strategies. The higher the customer satisfaction, the higher competitive power firms obtain. The American customer satisfaction model used survey method to collect the data and estimate the indices. This study collected the data from 216 air passengers in Bangalore using Vayu Vajra Bus services and based on the ACSI model, key factors in Vayu Vajra buses service were analysed.

There were two types of model: the outer model and the inner model. This paper estimated PLS value in the inner model; as the coefficients for each latent variable and R² statistics shown and all relationships between latent variables.

Based on the research, the authors are of the strong opinion that the ACSI model is unsuitable for Vayu Vajra bus case since Vayu Vajra bus service is provided by BMTC, a traditional public service. It has its own specificity and is different from the normal service, even from the normal public service like Government hospital. Vayu Vajra Bus services try to provide the convenient service to people but not with the purpose of making profit.

Based on the arguments put forth above, the ACSI model had been modified as "customer expectation—perceived quality—customer satisfaction" and accordingly the equation changed to:

$$CS = C + \beta_1 PQ + \delta$$

$$\text{while } PQ = C + \beta_0 CE + \delta.$$

To summarize, the ACSI model provides a complements to conventional measures, and Fornell (1996) suggested that the customer satisfaction is more quality-driven than value-or price driven (Fornell 1996); similarly, this study found a positive relationship between PQ, CE and customer satisfaction. The service marketing is the trade of the global field, especially for a service company like BMTC and it is necessary to recognize the need for quality improvement. So it is noteworthy that this study empirically examines the relationships between three customer satisfaction factors and finally finds a suitable model for Vayu Vajra bus services, about how to achieve customer satisfaction, by expanding previous research and based on ACSI model.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Vayu Vajra bus service is provided by BMTC, a traditional public service. It has its own specificity and is different from the normal service, even from the normal public service like Government hospital. Vayu Vajra Bus services try to provide the convenient service to people but not with the purpose of making profit. Hence, a study may be conducted using the same ACSI model for a service oriented organisation which is operating with a motive of making profit and also the same study can be carried out for comparison purpose in the same sector as to how the ACSI model helps in terms of identifying the gap in the services so as to enhance the same to satisfy their customers and thereby delight them if possible.

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