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# CONTENTS

| Sr.<br>No. | TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)   | Page<br>No. |
|------------|--|-------------|
| 1.         | <b>BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT: INTEGRATION WITH ACCOUNTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE IN ORGANISATIONS</b><br><i>RAMANPREET KAUR &amp; Dr. ADARSH ARORA</i>  | 1           |
| 2.         | <b>MICRO FINANCE THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGs): A TOOL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH (A CASE STUDY OF VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT)</b><br><i>Dr. V. GOWRI LAKSHMI &amp; Dr. G.V.K. KASTURI</i> | 5           |
| 3.         | <b>TRANSLATIONS OF POEMS AND PLAYS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE</b><br><i>M. MANJURIA &amp; Dr. J. RAJINI</i>   | 10          |
| 4.         | <b>FREIGHT FORWARDER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS IN CHENNAI AND TUTICORIN</b><br><i>Dr. G. PARIMALA</i>   | 13          |
| 5.         | <b>A SURVEY TO ASSESS THE ENTREPRENEURIAL QUALITIES AMONG WOMEN IN KOLKATA</b><br><i>Dr. KUSHAL DE &amp; PALLOBI CHATTOPADHYAY</i>   | 19          |
|            | <b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>   | 25          |

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- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

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## FREIGHT FORWARDER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS IN CHENNAI AND TUTICORIN

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### ABSTRACT

*Multimodal Transportation is an interesting approach that resolves a large part of cargo mobility problems. This comprise of the employment of more than one means of transport such as a blend of rail-car, truck, airplane, railways or ship in sequence under ownership of one operator who has relevant knowledge, experience and professional competence in cargo handling. In the present study 440 freight forwarders from Chennai and Tuticorin was selected based on convenient sampling technique. An interview schedule was used to collect data and Structural equation modeling was run using SPSS version 21 to find the goodness of fit whereby the factors are found to have positive effect on the perception of freight forwarders towards Multimodal Transport Operation.*

### KEYWORDS

multimodal transport, freight forwarder, cargo mobility, professional competence.

### JEL CODES

L90, L91, L97.

### INTRODUCTION

**M**ultimodal Transportation is an interesting approach that resolves a large part of cargo mobility problems. This comprise of the employment of more than one means of transport such as a blend of rail-car, truck, airplane, railways or ship in sequence under ownership of one operator who has relevant knowledge, experience and professional competence in cargo handling.

### CONCEPT

Freight forwarders or any logistics service intermediary who pursue MTO license are expected to extend their service arm by the shippers/consignees who give them business. On that focus, apart from the basic freight forwarding services, value added multimodal service are listed on and analyzing the perception of freight forwarders towards MTO services is the need of an hour. Since the competition is more a forwarder (even non asset based 3PL) should focus on rendering services by enhancing their warehousing facilities, offering packing and repacking service on demand, obtaining Quality Control Certificate, Consolidation, and many more. The perception of freight forwarders towards these multimodal services should be assessed to identify the investment opportunity in the logistics field.

### LITERATURE REVIEWS

**Ying Wang (2016)**, Currently, high-income countries use multimodal transportation to export large quantities of secondhand vehicles to low-income countries. Secondhand vehicle export has shown its highest growth in recent years, especially in Korea. The problem of transporting secondhand vehicles from Korea to Central Asia is becoming an important issue, but few researchers are interested in it. The objective of this research is to determine the optimal transport network for exporting secondhand vehicles from Korea to Central Asian countries by combining experts' opinions and real data from existing transport networks. The fuzzy Delphi method was applied to obtain factors to evaluate alternative multimodal transport networks for moving secondhand vehicles from Korea to Central Asian countries by judgment from experts. The analysis shows that among the five factors (total cost, total time, reliability, security, and transportation capability), total cost is the most considerable factor, followed by reliability, transportation capability, total time, and security. Additionally, in the mainly three multimodal transport networks, the sea+Trans-China Railway route is ranked first, followed by the sea+Trans-Siberian Railway and sea+truck routes.

**Dr.V.Sivakumar (2015)**, Multimodal transportation is a concept which places the responsibility for transport activities under one operator, who then manages and co-ordinates the total task from the shipper's door to the consignee's door ensuring the continuous movement of the goods along the best route, by the most efficient and, cost-effective means, to meet the shippers requirements of delivery. The research proposed various modes of transportation and the workings of multimodal transportation, which has been extremely helpful to transportation officials. It is believed that freight forwarders can get important outcomes about the main factors affecting their mode choice decisions in general, preference about multimodal transport specifically. Main service provider parties to the shipper and freight forwarding companies such as third party logistics service providers or other carriers can employ the research findings to enhance their service offerings to their customers by understanding their preference about multimodal transportation, areas to be developed and marketing strategies to be followed in order to influence the main stages in the decision-making process.

**M. SteadieSeifi et al (2014)**, Multimodal transportation offers an advanced platform for more efficient, reliable, flexible, and sustainable freight transportation. Planning such a complicated system provides interesting areas in Operations Research. This paper presents a structured overview of the multimodal transportation literature from 2005 onward. We focus on the traditional strategic, tactical, and operational levels of planning, where we present the relevant models and their developed solution techniques. We conclude our review paper with an outlook to future research directions.

**Konstantin Makukha and Richard Gray (2004)**, Although logistics partnerships are common, incentives for entering into strategic arrangements and the determinants of their success are not well researched. Many logistics partnerships, being operational in nature, are often designated as "strategic" without real understanding of the term, and the influence of a logistics partnership on a shipper's strategic moves and competitive positioning has not been researched thoroughly. A Delphi investigation reveals that although large companies form logistics partnerships, the perceptions of partnership formation motives, inhibitors and orientations by shippers and logistics service providers (LSPs) are likely to differ. In particular, shippers tend to avoid close integration with LSPs, whereas LSPs claim to be true strategic partners but remain unable to provide the service required. The failure to integrate on a strategic level suggests a lack of strategic management knowledge by relevant managers. The study suggests that most existing logistics partnerships are still operational rather than strategic in nature.

**Bart W. Wiegmans, et al (1999)**, Intermodality has become a major goal in modern transport policy. The improvement of combined transport within the European Union includes the refinement of freight terminal services. A freight terminal is a nodal place where goods are transshipped between any two or more transport modes. In this paper the researcher had analyzed the freight terminal market with the help of Porter's model of five competitive forces. The central question is: who are the stakeholders in the terminal market? We will particularly address the critical decision factors faced by terminal operators in terms of strategic importance, location and network configuration of freight terminals by employing Porter's competitive focus. First, the industry competitors in the freight terminal market will be analysed. Second, the buyers of the freight terminal services will be described, followed by the suppliers of the terminal infrastructure. Other competitive forces are the potential entrants into the terminal market and the substitutes for the use of freight terminals. An additional competitive force is added to our conceptual model in the form of the terminal environment. After the outline of this analytical framework of the freight terminal market, it is possible to identify where the economic power is located in the terminal market and how the positions of the different players in the market can be enhanced. The analysis will further address (de)regulation competences for different governmental levels involved in terminal activities.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To identify the various Multimodal Transportation services offered by Freight forwarders in the study area.
2. To analyze the perception of freight forwarders towards MTO in study area.

**RESEARCH AND SAMPLING DESIGN**

The study is mainly based on primary data, however, the secondary sources are also registered with theoretical overview and literature reviews. For this purpose, a pilot Study was conducted with 50 members (approx. 11% of the sample). The field survey was conducted in two areas viz. **Chennai (276)** and **Tuticorin (244)**, using a well-framed questionnaire using Census method. Primary data was collected from 520 respondents, but only 441 respondents had filled all the questions without error. The remaining 79 respondents omitted many parts of the questionnaire. Hence, the researcher finally selected only 441 respondents of this study.

**TABLE A: AREAS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY**

| Area         | No. of Respondents | Percentage     |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Chennai      | 226                | 51.25%         |
| Tuticorin    | 215                | 48.75%         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>441</b>         | <b>100.00%</b> |

Source: Primary data

The questionnaire covers 1. Demographic profile of the freight forwarders, 2. Level of awareness towards procedures and operations of the service institutions during imports and exports, 3 Selection of liners for multimodal operational services, 4. Problems faced by the freight forwarders in the study area and international environment

**VALIDITY**

After pretest, an investigation is taken-up by the researcher conducting the study considering the respondents involved in logistic operations in Chennai and Tuticorin (service sector). Census sampling method is applied. The purpose of the study is to test the role of freight forwarders and the problems faced by them in the selected areas for which 1) **Frequency on Selection of Liner, Container, Stuffing & Payment**, 2) **Multimodal Transport Operations** 3) **Problems Focused Based on International Environment** and 4) **Problems Focused with regards to Study Area** that comprises the questionnaire to confirm the feasibility of the study. The normal distribution and Hotellings' t-test in cronbach alpha method is used to identify the quality of each item of the questionnaire in 5-point scale and the following results were obtained.

**TABLE B: NUMBER OF ITEMS AND CRONBACH'S CO-EFFICIENT VALUE OF RELIABILITY**

| Statement                             | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | Sig  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|
| Frequency on Selection                | 12              | 0.812            | .000 |
| Multimodal Transport                  | 26              | 0.915            | .000 |
| Problems in International Environment | 18              | 0.891            | .000 |
| Problems in Study Area                | 30              | 0.941            | .000 |

From the above table it is ascertained that the items in Problems in Study area of the questionnaire is found highly reliable and the samples satisfies the normal distribution rationally. So, the items in the questionnaire were used further for conducting the study.

**PERIOD OF THE STUDY**

- Required primary data have been collected from freight forwarders in Chennai and Tuticorin during the year 2013-2015.
- The secondary data have been collected from various journals with theoretical overview and literature reviews during the year 2012-2015.

**COLLECTION OF DATA**

Primary and Secondary data have been used in this study. Required primary data have been collected with the pre-tested, well-structured questionnaires from Freight Forwarders or logistics operators in Chennai and Tuticorin. The Secondary data relating to the theoretical portions have been collected from various books, journals, magazines and websites. The libraries of ICAI University, Hyderabad, Coimbatore Marine College, International Maritime Academy, Chennai and Bharathiar University, Coimbatore have been visited for collection of required information from previous studies.

**TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES PROPOSED**

The objectives framed for the present study formed the basis of the identification of the relevant statistical techniques. Here we use factor analysis.

**STATISTICAL HACK**

The perception of the logistic operators towards multimodal transport operations has been measured related to various aspects such as type of assistance provided, facilities considered important in overseas shipment, company's core business areas in logistics and the opinion towards the factors considered in Indian market when compared with other emerging markets.

**PERCEPTION OF THE LOGISTIC OPERATORS TOWARDS MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS- STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING**

As the first step in Structural equation modeling, factors analysis has been carried out to measure the underlying dimensions that exist in the study variables.

**FACTOR ANALYSIS: MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT**

Factor Analysis technique has been applied to find the underlying dimensions (factors) that exists in the 25 variables relating to perception of the logistic operators towards multimodal transport operations.

TABLE 1: PATTERN MATRIX (a)

|     | Factor      |              |             |              |
|-----|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
|     | 1           | 2            | 3           | 4            |
| X7  | <b>.668</b> | .052         | -.067       | -.116        |
| X8  | <b>.628</b> | -.155        | -.045       | -.002        |
| X13 | <b>.503</b> | -.057        | -.020       | -.171        |
| X19 | <b>.495</b> | .140         | .262        | -.109        |
| X9  | <b>.487</b> | -.076        | .193        | .016         |
| X16 | <b>.458</b> | -.110        | .022        | -.136        |
| X6  | <b>.456</b> | -.301        | -.061       | -.046        |
| X14 | <b>.415</b> | -.198        | .137        | -.175        |
| X15 | <b>.342</b> | .051         | .109        | -.272        |
| X10 | <b>.275</b> | -.204        | .145        | -.094        |
| X4  | -.094       | <b>-.990</b> | -.098       | -.101        |
| X3  | .280        | <b>-.528</b> | .157        | .063         |
| X21 | .265        | <b>-.317</b> | .209        | .050         |
| X2  | -.102       | <b>-.299</b> | .232        | -.222        |
| X20 | .220        | .029         | <b>.569</b> | .005         |
| X18 | -.205       | .030         | <b>.517</b> | -.102        |
| X12 | .166        | -.210        | <b>.490</b> | -.007        |
| X11 | .234        | -.144        | <b>.434</b> | -.006        |
| X17 | .136        | -.074        | <b>.295</b> | -.121        |
| X5  | .129        | -.195        | <b>.238</b> | -.217        |
| X25 | .007        | .075         | .108        | <b>-.769</b> |
| X23 | .336        | .009         | -.149       | <b>-.654</b> |
| X1  | .262        | -.121        | -.036       | <b>-.495</b> |
| X24 | -.107       | -.077        | .131        | <b>-.436</b> |
| X22 | .198        | -.142        | -.062       | <b>-.408</b> |

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

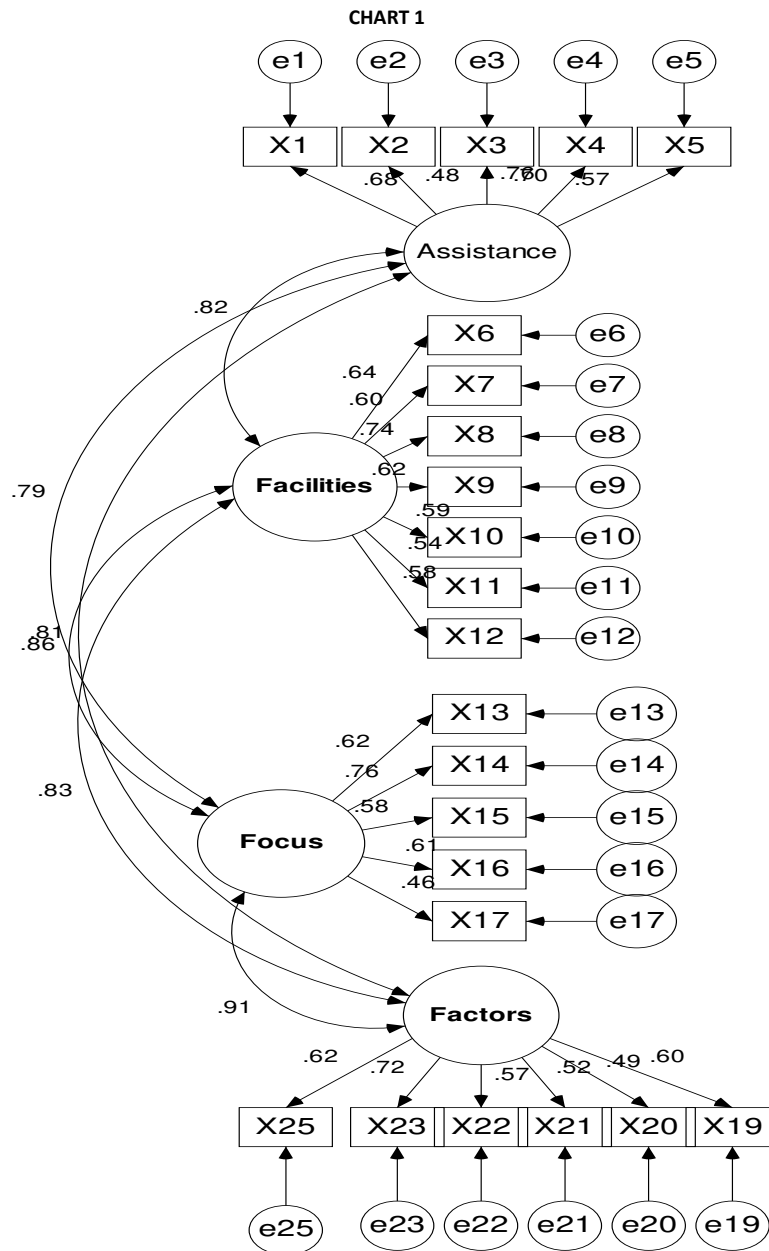
Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

TABLE 2: CLUSTERING OF VARIABLES INTO FACTORS

| Factor        | Multimodal Transport Operations | Rotated Factor Loadings |              |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| I. (33.80 %)  | X7                              | <b>.668</b>             |              |
| Facilities    | X8                              | <b>.628</b>             |              |
|               | X13                             | <b>.503</b>             |              |
|               | X19                             | <b>.495</b>             |              |
|               | X9                              | <b>.487</b>             |              |
|               | X16                             | <b>.458</b>             |              |
|               | X6                              | <b>.456</b>             |              |
| II. (6.652%)  | X14                             | <b>.415</b>             |              |
|               | X15                             | <b>.342</b>             |              |
|               | Assistance                      | X10                     | <b>.275</b>  |
|               |                                 | X4                      | <b>-.990</b> |
|               |                                 | X3                      | <b>-.528</b> |
|               |                                 | X21                     | <b>-.317</b> |
| X2            |                                 | <b>-.299</b>            |              |
| III. (5.749%) | X20                             | <b>.569</b>             |              |
|               | Factors                         | X18                     | <b>.517</b>  |
|               |                                 | X12                     | <b>.490</b>  |
|               |                                 | X11                     | <b>.434</b>  |
|               |                                 | X17                     | <b>.295</b>  |
|               |                                 | X5                      | <b>.238</b>  |
| IV. (5.027%)  | X25                             | <b>-.769</b>            |              |
|               | Focus Area                      | X23                     | <b>-.654</b> |
|               |                                 | X1                      | <b>-.495</b> |
|               |                                 | X24                     | <b>-.436</b> |
|               |                                 | X22                     | <b>-.408</b> |

From the Table, it could be seen that four factors were identified as being maximum percentage variance. The types of facilities based on the ten variables viz., X7, X8, X13, X19, X9, X16, X6 and X14 were grouped together as Factor I and they accounted for 33.80 per cent of the total variance towards facilities realized during logistic operations. The six variables towards multimodal transport operations viz., X15, X10, X4, X3, X21 and X2 constituted Factor II and they accounted for 6.625 per cent of the total variance revealed the type of assistance provided to the logistic operators. Another six variables based on multimodal transport operations viz., X20, X18, X12, X11, X17 and X5 constituted Factor III and they accounted for 5.749 per cent of the total variance towards Types of factors that assisted during logistic operations. Finally, five variables viz. X25, X23, X1, X24 and X22 constituted Factor IV and they accounted for 5.027 per cent of the total variance towards assistance provided in the focus area during logistic operations. Thus the factor analysis condensed and simplified the twenty-five factors related to perception towards multimodal transport operations practiced by the logistic companies and grouped them into four factors explaining 51.237 per cent of the variability of the twenty-five variables.



It is clearly understood from the above model that the values were measuring the regression based on its latent variables which shows the source of influence of the respondents towards celebrity endorsement which revealed that majority (76%) was the highly regressed value towards Focus Area (X14) and Assistance (X3). Whereas, considering the lowest (46%) values regressed towards by X-17 in the Focus area.  
 ELIMINATION: X18 and X24

TABLE 3: REGRESSION WEIGHTS: (Group number 1 - Default model)

|                                  |                 | Estimate | S.E. | C.R.   | P   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| Q21_Lorry                        | <--- Assistance | 1.000    |      |        |     |
| Q21_Trailer                      | <--- Assistance | .622     | .070 | 8.923  | *** |
| Q21_Container_Train              | <--- Assistance | 1.096    | .082 | 13.442 | *** |
| Q21_Ocean_Transport              | <--- Assistance | .887     | .070 | 12.602 | *** |
| Q21_Air_Transport                | <--- Assistance | .771     | .073 | 10.558 | *** |
| Q21_WareHouse_Facilities         | <--- Facilities | 1.000    |      |        |     |
| Q21_Packing_Repacking_Facilities | <--- Facilities | 1.050    | .097 | 10.826 | *** |
| Q21_Obtaining_QC_Certificate     | <--- Facilities | 1.272    | .100 | 12.692 | *** |
| Q21_Advice_of_financial_matters  | <--- Facilities | .887     | .080 | 11.034 | *** |
| Q21_Obtaining_Marine_Insurance   | <--- Facilities | .951     | .090 | 10.535 | *** |
| Q21_Advance_Vessel_Schedule      | <--- Facilities | .947     | .097 | 9.799  | *** |
| Q21_Online_Shipment_Status       | <--- Facilities | 1.148    | .111 | 10.382 | *** |
| Q21_Air_Ocean_Cargo              | <--- Focus      | 1.000    |      |        |     |
| Q21_Consolidation                | <--- Focus      | 1.213    | .096 | 12.643 | *** |
| Q21_Warehousing_Facility         | <--- Focus      | .922     | .090 | 10.297 | *** |
| Q21_Consignment_Handling         | <--- Focus      | .935     | .088 | 10.636 | *** |
| Q21_Freight_Management           | <--- Focus      | .895     | .105 | 8.499  | *** |
| Q21_Transport_Infrastructure     | <--- Factors    | 1.000    |      |        |     |
| Q21_Technological_Advancement    | <--- Factors    | .867     | .101 | 8.618  | *** |
| Q21_Market_Competition           | <--- Factors    | .900     | .099 | 9.045  | *** |
| Q21_Working_Condition            | <--- Factors    | .849     | .086 | 9.821  | *** |
| Q21_Economic_Status              | <--- Factors    | 1.182    | .102 | 11.571 | *** |
| Q21_Cultural_Impact              | <--- Factors    | 1.038    | .099 | 10.436 | *** |

The above table shows the regression coefficient of the variables and it is observed that the critical ratio of all the variables found to be high and it is significant at 1 per cent level. Out of the selected twenty-five variables after elimination of two variables (X18 and X24) which was found to have low loading the other variables revealed maximum significance based on the perception towards the multimodal transport operations during logistic operations by the companies operating from Chennai and Tuticorin. The model fit summary explains the fitness in the statistical point of view which are as follows:

TABLE 4: COVARIANCES: (Group number 1 - Default model)

|                            |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R.  | P   | Label |
|----------------------------|--|----------|------|-------|-----|-------|
| Assistance <--> Facilities |  | .293     | .034 | 8.623 | *** |       |
| Assistance <--> Focus      |  | .285     | .034 | 8.383 | *** |       |
| Facilities <--> Focus      |  | .244     | .029 | 8.483 | *** |       |
| Factors <--> Facilities    |  | .245     | .030 | 8.188 | *** |       |
| Factors <--> Focus         |  | .272     | .033 | 8.339 | *** |       |
| Factors <--> Assistance    |  | .306     | .037 | 8.284 | *** |       |

It is found that there is a significant covariance between the dimensions of multimodal transport operations taken for the study shows that the Assistance and facilities towards multimodal transport operations was not significant at 1% level is proved through the critical ratio at 8.623, followed by the covariance between Assistance and focus area (8.383), Facilities and Focus (8.483), Factors and Facilities (8.188), and finally, factors and Assistance (8.284) are found to be significant at 1% level. The model fit analysis is given below:

TABLE 5: CMIN

| Model              | NPAR | CMIN     | DF  | P    | CMIN/DF |
|--------------------|------|----------|-----|------|---------|
| Default model      | 75   | 1344.883 | 224 | .000 | 6.004   |
| Saturated model    | 299  | .000     | 0   |      |         |
| Independence model | 23   | 4528.061 | 276 | .000 | 16.406  |

NPAR is the number of distinct parameters (q) being estimated. Two parameters (two regression weights, say) that are required to be equal to each other count and the value is found to be 75 The CMIN is the minimum value of discrepancy which shows 1344.883 with the degree of freedom of 224 and the  $\chi^2/df$  is found to be 6.004 is found to be in the range of acceptable fit between the hypothetical model and the perception of the logistic operators towards multimodal transport operation of the study.

Table 6: RMR, GFI

| Model              | RMR  | GFI   | AGFI | PGFI |
|--------------------|------|-------|------|------|
| Default model      | .104 | .865  | .752 | .557 |
| Saturated model    | .000 | 1.000 |      |      |
| Independence model | .336 | .448  | .370 | .392 |

The smaller the RMR is, the better the result. An RMR of zero indicates a perfect fit. The study has been found 0.104 as its root mean square. GFI is less than or equal to 1. A value of 1 indicates a perfect fit. However, the study has been conducted using maximum likelihood and the fit is found that the value has been with majority (86.5%) which supports the model.

TABLE 7: BASELINE COMPARISONS

| Model              | NFI<br>Delta1 | RFI<br>rho1 | IFI<br>Delta2 | TLI<br>rho2 | CFI   |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------|
| Default model      | .703          | .634        | .740          | .675        | .736  |
| Saturated model    | 1.000         |             | 1.000         |             | 1.000 |
| Independence model | .000          | .000        | .000          | .000        | .000  |

RFI and CFI values close to 1 indicate a very good fit. The study shows that the RFI is found to have 0.634 and the CFI is found to be 0.736.

TABLE 8: RMSEA

| Model              | RMSEA | LO 90 | HI 90 | PCLOSE |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Default model      | .107  | .101  | .112  | .000   |
| Independence model | .187  | .182  | .192  | .000   |

Based on their experience with **RMSEA**, Browne and suggest that a **RMSEA** of.05 or less indicates a "close fit" while 0.10 indicates low fit. The study also shows that the Root Mean Square of Error Approximation was found to be 0.107 and the P-Close was found to be 0.000 gives a test of low fit while **P** gives a test of exact fit. "p value" for testing the null hypothesis that the population RMSEA is no greater than 0.05 level. Hence, it is concluded that the study is found with **low fit** and is proved through the Confirmatory Factor Analysis taken for the study.

### DISCUSSION OF THE RESULT AND CONCLUSION

From the path diagram, measured variables based on factors contributing towards perception of the logistic operators with regards to multimodal transport operations is found to have low fit however, was found to have positive significant relationship with 1 per cent levels when considering all the other fitness indexes taken for the study. The analysis of the model, from the view point of the researcher, suggests that all the measured variables significantly associated and have positive effect on the perception towards multimodal transport operations among logistic operators conducting their operations from Chennai and Tuticorin respectively. With this result we could identify the investment opportunity in the field of logistics, the range of service deliverance could be determined based on the logistic asset that a company holds. Multimodalism in India could still be developed with some motivational activities from the part of Government.

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