

A STUDY INVESTIGATING CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS ONLINE BUS TICKET BOOKING IN THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study investigates customer perspectives towards online bus ticketing in Thoothukudi, focusing on user experiences, satisfaction levels, and the factors influencing their preferences. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys and interviews with a diverse group of bus ticketing users. The findings reveal that convenience, user interface, payment options, and customer service significantly impact user satisfaction. While most respondents appreciate the ease of online booking, challenges such as technical issues and limited payment methods were noted. The study concludes with recommendations for improving online bus ticketing services to enhance user experience and satisfaction.

Key words: Online Ticket, Red bus, E-Commerce

Introduction

The advent of technology has transformed various sectors, including transportation, where online bus ticketing has gained popularity. In Thoothukudi, a coastal town in Tamil Nadu, the shift towards digital platforms for booking bus tickets has been significant. This transition offers numerous advantages, such as convenience, time-saving, and accessibility. However, understanding customer perspectives is crucial for service providers to enhance their offerings and address any shortcomings. "The integration of technology in transportation services has transformed customer interactions, as noted by Zhang et al. (2016). Their findings suggest that technology adoption in ticketing systems can enhance operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, but it also requires ongoing adaptation to

user needs."This study aims to explore the factors that influence customer satisfaction and preferences in online bus ticketing, providing insights that can help improve service delivery in this growing market.

Review of literature

According to Bhatti (2020), the ability to book tickets at any time and from any location is a primary motivator for users. The study highlights that user-friendly interfaces and streamlined booking processes enhance the overall experience, making it easier for customers to navigate the platforms. Similarly, Kumar and Singh (2019) found that a positive user experience, characterized by intuitive design and minimal steps in the booking process, significantly impacts customer satisfaction.

Gupta and Sharma (2021) noted that customers prefer platforms that offer multiple secure payment methods, including credit/debit cards, digital wallets, and net banking. The study also emphasizes that perceived security during transactions is paramount, as customers are increasingly concerned about the safety of their personal and financial information. Research by Sharma and Gupta (2022) further supports this, indicating that robust security measures and transparent payment processes can enhance user confidence in online ticketing systems.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing adoption of online bus ticketing in Thoothukudi, there is limited research on customer perspectives regarding this service. Many users encounter challenges that may affect their overall satisfaction, such as website usability, payment flexibility, and customer support. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive understanding of user experiences can hinder service providers from making informed improvements. This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating customer perspectives towards online bus ticketing, identifying key factors that influence their satisfaction, and providing actionable recommendations for enhancing the service. A study by Oliver (2014) identifies that customer satisfaction in e-commerce is influenced by service quality, product quality, and the overall shopping experience. This framework can be applied to online bus ticketing, where service quality, including customer support and refund processes, is crucial for user satisfaction."

Objectives

1. To assess the demographic profile of customers using online bus ticketing services in Thoothukudi district.
2. To measure customer satisfaction with various aspects of online bus ticketing, including ease of use, pricing, and customer support.
3. To identify the challenges faced by customers while using online bus ticketing platforms.
4. To provide recommendations for improving online bus ticketing services based on customer feedback.

Scope of the Study

This research focuses on the thoothukudi district in tamilnadu, targeting customers who use online bus ticketing services. The study covers various aspects of customer experience, including demographic characteristics, usage patterns, satisfaction levels, and challenges. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 90 respondents. The findings aim to inform service providers about the current state of online bus ticketing in the district and suggest areas for improvement to enhance customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis:

- ✓ There is no significant relationship between gender and satisfaction factors
- ✓ There is no significant relationship between gender and faced any issues while booking bus tickets online
- ✓ There is no significant relationship between age and factors influence your decision to book bus tickets online
- ✓ There is no significant relationship between occupation and improvements would you like to see in online bus ticketing services

Methodology:

Designing a suitable methodology and selecting analytical tools are important for a meaningful analysis of any research problem. This section shows the choice of the study area, sample design, collection of data, and tools of analysis used in the study. Keeping the objectives of the study in mind, the researcher constructed the questionnaire to elicit information from the customer. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 90 respondents selected at convenience using the sampling method given in the time frame

within which the researcher was meant to complete it. Data collection is the process of obtaining information from the respondents. In the present study, both the primary data and secondary data have been used. The study is largely based on primary data. The required primary data have been collected through a well-structured questionnaire both by visiting the houses of the respondents, online reservation centre and public places. Necessary secondary data have been collected from various secondary data have been collected from various sources like newspaper, magazines and websites. The questionnaire schedule thus filled up is thoroughly examined to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness. The Collected data are then edited and tabulated for analysis. The data collected from the primary source are analysed with reference to each of the objectives by applying appropriate statistical tools.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

TABLE NO: 1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Age		
Below 20years	4	4.4
21years - 30years	54	60
31years - 40 years	25	27.8
41years - 50years	4	4.4
Above 50years	3	3.3
Gender		
Male	49	54.4
Female	41	45.6
Educational Qualification		
Up to school level	4	4.4
Under graduation	40	44.4
Post - Graduation	18	20
Professional qualification	28	31.1
Occupational status		
Student	18	20
Private Employee	38	42.2
Government Employee	10	11.1
Professional	10	11.1
Business	14	15.6
Monthly Income		
Below Rs.10000	14	15.6
Rs.10000 - Rs.20000	36	40
Rs.20000 - Rs.30000	27	30
Rs.30000 - Rs.40000	4	4.4
Above Rs.40000	9	10

Total	90	100
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(Source: Primary data)

From the table, it is clear that out of 90 respondents, 4.4 % of the respondents are between the age group below 20, 60 % are between the age group 21-30, 27.8 % are between the age 31-40, 4.4 % are between the age 41 – 50 and the rest 3.3 % above 50. Hence, the majority of the respondents are between the age group of 21-30. 54.4 % are male and 45.6 % are female. Hence, the majority of the respondents are Male. 4.4 % of the above respondents are Up to school level, 44.4 % of them are Undergraduate level, 20 % are Post graduate, and the rest 31.1% are Professionals. Hence, the majority of the education qualifications of the respondent's Undergraduate holders. 20 % of the respondents are doing students, 11.1 % are government employees, , 42.2 % are private employees and the rest 15.6 % are Business. Hence, the majority of the occupational status wise respondent's Private employees. 15.6 % of the above respondent's monthly income is less than Rs.10000, 40 % respondent's monthly income is between Rs.10000-20000, 30 % respondent's monthly income is between Rs.20000-30000, 4.4 respondents' monthly income between Rs. 30000 – 40000 and rest 10 % respondents is above Rs. 40000. So, the majority of the respondent's monthly income is Rs.10000-20000.

PLATFORMS DO YOU USE FOR ONLINE BUS TICKETING

Table No: 2

S. No	Factors	Frequency	Percent
1	SETC	34	37.8
2	Red Bus	35	38.9
3	Makemytrip	14	15.6
4	Others	7	7.8
Total		90	100

(Source: Primary data)

The data presents the distribution of user preferences among different travel service providers based on a sample of 90 respondents. The results indicate that Red Bus is the most preferred option, with 35 respondents (38.9%) selecting it as their choice. Following closely is SETC, chosen by 34 respondents (37.8%), indicating a competitive preference between these two services. Makemytrip is less favored, with only 14 respondents (15.6%) selecting it, while the category labelled Others received the least preference, with just 7 respondents (7.8%). Overall, the data suggests that Red Bus and SETC dominate user preferences in this sample, while Makemytrip and other options have significantly lower appeal. This

distribution highlights the competitive landscape among travel service providers, with a clear inclination towards Red Bus and SETC among the surveyed users.

There is no significant relationship between gender and satisfaction factors

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Ease of use	Equal variances assumed	.073	.787	-1.509	88	.135	-.248	.164	-.574	.079
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.541	87.697	.127	-.248	.161	-.568	.072
Website/App interface	Equal variances assumed	1.433	.234	-.375	88	.709	-.068	.182	-.430	.293
	Equal variances not assumed			-.370	79.409	.713	-.068	.184	-.435	.299
Ticket availability	Equal variances assumed	.080	.778	-.157	88	.876	-.032	.203	-.436	.372
	Equal variances not assumed			-.156	83.975	.876	-.032	.204	-.437	.374
Pricing	Equal variances assumed	2.751	.101	-.115	88	.909	-.024	.213	-.447	.399
	Equal variances not assumed			-.116	87.742	.908	-.024	.210	-.443	.394
Payment options	Equal variances assumed	1.143	.288	-.398	88	.692	-.077	.193	-.460	.307
	Equal variances not assumed			-.392	79.051	.696	-.077	.196	-.466	.313
Customer support	Equal variances assumed	2.214	.140	.395	88	.694	.066	.166	-.265	.396
	Equal variances not assumed			.399	87.636	.691	.066	.165	-.261	.393
Refund process	Equal variances assumed	.374	.542	.330	88	.743	.065	.198	-.328	.458
	Equal variances not assumed			.333	87.512	.740	.065	.196	-.324	.455
Timeliness of buses	Equal variances assumed	.060	.807	.052	88	.959	.011	.221	-.427	.450
	Equal variances not assumed			.051	81.541	.959	.011	.223	-.432	.455

(Source: Primary data)

The Independent Samples Test results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in user perceptions across various factors related to service quality, including ease of use, website/app interface, ticket availability, pricing, payment options, customer support, refund process, and timeliness of buses. For instance, the ease of use shows a t-value of -1.509 with a p-value of 0.135, suggesting that users perceive it similarly across

groups. Similarly, the website/app interface ($t = -0.375$, $p = 0.709$), ticket availability ($t = -0.157$, $p = 0.876$), pricing ($t = -0.115$, $p = 0.909$), payment options ($t = -0.398$, $p = 0.692$), customer support ($t = 0.395$, $p = 0.694$), refund process ($t = 0.330$, $p = 0.743$), and timeliness of buses ($t = 0.052$, $p = 0.959$) all yield non-significant results. These findings suggest a general consensus among users regarding their experiences with these factors, indicating that there are no major discrepancies in user satisfaction or perceptions across the evaluated areas.

There is no significant relationship between gender and faced any issues while booking bus tickets online

Independent Samples Test										
Factors		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Website/App crashes	Equal variances assumed	3.447	.067	-2.050	88	.043	-.384	.187	-.756	-.012
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.074	87.763	.041	-.384	.185	-.751	-.016
Payment failures	Equal variances assumed	3.157	.079	-1.901	88	.061	-.367	.193	-.751	.017
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.916	87.338	.059	-.367	.192	-.748	.014
Booking errors	Equal variances assumed	.234	.629	-.954	88	.343	-.196	.206	-.605	.212
	Equal variances not assumed			-.954	85.082	.343	-.196	.206	-.605	.213
Delayed refunds	Equal variances assumed	.719	.399	-.615	88	.540	-.118	.193	-.502	.265
	Equal variances not assumed			-.618	86.762	.538	-.118	.192	-.499	.263
Poor customer service	Equal variances assumed	.079	.780	.843	88	.402	.151	.180	-.205	.508
	Equal variances not assumed			.838	83.079	.404	.151	.181	-.208	.510
Incorrect information (e.g., bus timings, seat availability)	Equal variances assumed	2.365	.128	-1.137	88	.258	-.224	.197	-.617	.168
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.150	87.763	.253	-.224	.195	-.612	.163

(Source: Primary data)

The Independent Samples Test results reveal significant insights into user experiences regarding various factors affecting service quality. For website/app crashes, there is a statistically significant difference between the groups ($t(88) = -2.050$, $p = 0.043$), with a mean

difference of -0.384, indicating that one group experiences more crashes than the other. In contrast, payment failures show a near-significant trend ($t(88) = -1.901$, $p = 0.061$) with a mean difference of -0.367, suggesting potential issues that may need further investigation. However, factors such as booking errors ($t(88) = -0.954$, $p = 0.343$), delayed refunds ($t(88) = -0.615$, $p = 0.540$), poor customer service ($t(88) = 0.843$, $p = 0.402$), and incorrect information ($t(88) = -1.137$, $p = 0.258$) do not show significant differences, indicating that user perceptions regarding these issues are relatively consistent across groups. Overall, while website/app crashes and payment failures warrant attention, other factors appear to be perceived similarly by users.

There is no significant relationship between Age and factors influence your decision to book bus tickets online

ANOVA						
Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Convenience	Between Groups	3.523	4	.881	1.416	.236
	Within Groups	52.877	85	.622		
	Total	56.400	89			
Discounts and offers	Between Groups	5.334	4	1.334	2.040	.096
	Within Groups	55.566	85	.654		
	Total	60.900	89			
User reviews and ratings	Between Groups	5.501	4	1.375	1.724	.152
	Within Groups	67.788	85	.798		
	Total	73.289	89			
Payment flexibility	Between Groups	2.823	4	.706	.886	.476
	Within Groups	67.677	85	.796		
	Total	70.500	89			
Customer service	Between Groups	7.692	4	1.923	1.830	.130
	Within Groups	89.297	85	1.051		
	Total	96.989	89			
Recommendations from friends/family	Between Groups	6.796	4	1.699	1.516	.205
	Within Groups	95.260	85	1.121		
	Total	102.056	89			

(Source: Primary data)

The ANOVA results provide insights into the differences among various factors influencing user preferences, including convenience, discounts and offers, user reviews and ratings, payment flexibility, customer service, and recommendations from friends/family. For convenience, the F-value is 1.416 with a significance level of 0.236, indicating no significant differences among the groups. Similarly, discounts and offers show an F-value of 2.040 and a p-value of 0.096, which approaches significance but does not reach it. The user reviews and

ratings factor have an F-value of 1.724 and a p-value of 0.152, also indicating no significant differences. For payment flexibility, the F-value is 0.886 with a p-value of 0.476, suggesting that this factor does not significantly differ among groups. The customer service factor yields an F-value of 1.830 and a p-value of 0.130, indicating no significant differences as well. Lastly, recommendations from friends/family have an F-value of 1.516 and a p-value of 0.205, further supporting the lack of significant differences. Overall, the results suggest that there are no statistically significant differences in user preferences across the evaluated factors, indicating a general consensus among respondents regarding their importance.

There is no significant relationship between Occupation and improvements would you like to see in online bus ticketing services

ANOVA						
Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Better user interface	Between Groups	.925	4	.231	.368	.831
	Within Groups	53.475	85	.629		
	Total	54.400	89			
More payment options	Between Groups	7.418	4	1.854	2.082	.090
	Within Groups	75.704	85	.891		
	Total	83.122	89			
Improved customer service	Between Groups	5.952	4	1.488	1.694	.159
	Within Groups	74.670	85	.878		
	Total	80.622	89			
Faster refunds	Between Groups	1.919	4	.480	.716	.584
	Within Groups	56.981	85	.670		
	Total	58.900	89			
Accurate real-time information	Between Groups	4.218	4	1.055	1.222	.308
	Within Groups	73.382	85	.863		
	Total	77.600	89			
More discounts and offers	Between Groups	1.835	4	.459	.683	.605
	Within Groups	57.065	85	.671		
	Total	58.900	89			

(Source: Primary data)

The ANOVA results assess the differences among various factors that may influence user satisfaction, including better user interface, more payment options, improved customer service, faster refunds, accurate real-time information, and more discounts and offers. For the factor of better user interface, the F-value is 0.368 with a significance level of 0.831, indicating no significant differences among the groups. The more payment options factor shows an F-value of 2.082 and a p-value of 0.090, which is close to significance but does not reach it, suggesting some variability in preferences. For improved customer service, the F-value is 1.694 with a p-value of 0.159, indicating no significant differences. The faster

refunds factor has an F-value of 0.716 and a p-value of 0.584, further supporting the lack of significant differences. The accurate real-time information factor yields an F-value of 1.222 and a p-value of 0.308, indicating no significant differences as well. Lastly, more discounts and offers show an F-value of 0.683 and a p-value of 0.605, reinforcing the conclusion that there are no significant differences across the groups. Overall, the results suggest a general consensus among respondents regarding these factors, with no statistically significant differences in user preferences identified.

Discussion

Positive Aspects. The study confirms that convenience and cost-effectiveness are the primary factors driving the adoption of online bus ticketing. Users appreciate the ability to book tickets from anywhere and at any time, along with the availability of various discounts.

Areas for Improvement. Despite the advantages, several challenges hinder the overall customer experience. Technical issues, such as website/app crashes and payment failures, are significant deterrents. Additionally, the quality of customer service needs substantial improvement to address user concerns effectively.

Implications for Service Providers. Service providers must focus on enhancing the technical robustness of their platforms and improving customer service. Ensuring a seamless booking experience, reliable payment processes, and responsive customer support can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Conclusion

This study investigating customer perspectives towards online bus ticketing reveals several key insights that are crucial for enhancing user experiences in this sector. The findings indicate that while convenience, accessibility, and time-saving features are significant motivators for customers to choose online bus ticketing, various challenges persist that can negatively impact their overall satisfaction. Issues such as payment failures, lack of reliable customer support, and insufficient information regarding schedules and routes were identified as major pain points for users. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of trust and security in online transactions, as customers are increasingly concerned about the safety of their personal and financial information. To address these challenges, it is essential for service providers to invest in improving the technical reliability of their platforms, offering diverse and secure payment options, and enhancing customer service

responsiveness. By focusing on these areas, bus ticketing companies can foster greater customer satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately leading to increased usage of online booking systems. The insights gained from this study can serve as a foundation for further research and development in the online bus ticketing industry, ensuring that customer needs are met effectively and efficiently.