

Assessing Risks of Urban Public Transport Governance: A Study of Bus Passengers

Degwale Gebeyehu Belay, Department of Governance and Development Studies, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

This article explores the torment and risks of urban public transport users at the Bahir Dar intercity bus station. Ethnography research design is applied to collect the data. Accordingly, personal observation, informal discussions, and interviews were important sources of data collection. The findings show that passengers are exposed to risks of robbery and physical and psychological abuses from their departure from home to their final destination. The station is full of lawlessness. Women, children, elderly people, and passengers with luggage are disproportionately vulnerable to such risks. These risks and overall challenges are systemic and structural which are deprived of governance and regulation. Due to absence of care, responsiveness, tangibility, and other important dimensions of customers' satisfaction, customers are poorly satisfied with a transport service delivered in Bahir Dar intercity Bus station.

KEYWORDS

Bahir Dar, Customer Satisfaction, Risks, Torment, Urban Public Transport, Vulnerability

INTRODUCTION

Urban Public Transport (UPT) is a key element in most major cities around the world. It is a city's backbone – an essential element for both its development and its connectivity. It facilitates day-to-day travel for individuals throughout the urban environment (Song et al., 2018). Transportation helps people to move from place to place for various social, economic, and political reasons. It is meant for people to save their times. Public transportation provides a mobility service to the user, as well as producing a wide impact on the system (Joewono and Kuboto, 2006). It also helps the physical and economic development of cities and regions in particular and the society in general (Tomić et al., 2015). Modern life depends on the transportation of goods from the place of production to where they are needed, and transportation of people from their places of residence to where they must go to pursue all the activities of life: work, education, shopping and leisure activities and to return back to their place of residence (Iles, 2005). To make UPT to meet its goals, transport governance has received increasing attention from scholars in numerous disciplines and with respect to many segments of the transportation activities. This research note aimed at exploring the physical, economic, and psychological risks of travelers at Bahir Dar bus station.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban Public Transport and Customers Satisfaction

For the effectiveness of UPT, developing effective transportation system is vital. Without this, crime will be common particularly where there is overcrowd. This makes quality of public transport service to be compromised that can affect customers' satisfaction (De Oña and De Oña, 2014). Jen et al. (2011) also stated that without the link between loyalty of service providers and the quality of transport service, satisfaction of customers cannot be achieved. Customer satisfaction, therefore, highlights and explains the link between what a company does (in terms of the products and services offered) and how its customers react (Felleson and Friman, 2008). Different studies like Friman et.al. (2001), Friman & Gärling (2001) have shown that employee behavior is an important consideration for the traveler. Staffs have to be trained and incentives related to employees' behavior have to be provided to increase satisfaction of customers.

As indicated in different studies (Fellsson and Friman, 2012; Bates et al. 2001, Beirão & Cabral 2007, Friman & Gärling 2001, Hensher et al. 2003), customers perceive the quality of public transport based on different factors i.e. reliability, frequency, travel time and fare level, comfort and cleanliness, network coverage/distance to stop, and safety issues. Similarly, Palmer and Cole (1995) stated that transportation service users want to consume a comfortable service in agreed time and in a convenient place. They further stated that service producers have to be increasingly sure that they are producing the right services, in the right way, in the right places, at the right time, for the right price. Jonson and Clark (2005) stated that customer satisfaction is the

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