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The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: The Case of Cameroon's Transport Sector.

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Abstract: *One of the most crucial factors for the success of any business is customer satisfaction. In the public transportation sector, where retaining customers depends mainly on the quality of service offered to them, this is even more pronounced. In this study, we investigated how service quality impacts customer satisfaction in Cameroon's passenger transport industry, focusing on NSO BOYZ EXPRESS. To assess these dimensions, we adopt a quantitative approach using a model developed from SERVQUAL. The surveys were conducted among 150 passengers of NSO BOYZ EXPRESS, and Excel 2016 and SPSS Version 21 were used for data analysis. According to the research, customer satisfaction in the passenger transportation industry is significantly enhanced by service responsiveness, including empathy, reliability, as well as tangibles. In order to guarantee customer satisfaction and loyalty, considerable modification of public transportation systems in accordance with these elements is vital.*

Keyword:
Service quality, customer satisfaction, transportation, Cameroon

INTRODUCTION

Across the past few decades, there has been a notable global advancement for transportation experts, especially those operating in the public sector. Commuter mobility needs in urbanized as well as cosmopolitan environments are increasing due to the desire to engage in increasingly diversified endeavors driven by economic considerations, Andaleeb & et al. (2007). Its many benefits, such as enhanced economic revenue opportunities, reduced carbon dioxide emissions, and minimized traffic jams, may be the reason for the notable increase in the usage of public transportation Deakin, 2001). The

population's quality of life is being improved in Cameroon as public transportation becomes a more significant factor and a solution to the country's economic issues. Its unique position in meeting consumer needs, along with business and sustainable development in cities, accounts for the sector's increasing influence. Boom periods for instance, can also bring up issues of inadequacy as well as inefficiency, which lead to poor productivity and an urge for high-quality services thus, lawmakers as well as operational executives in the broader transportation industry ought to get possession of information regarding consumer contentment (satisfaction) as well as service quality, in order to assure or actualize desired results in maintaining as well as recruiting new consumers. (Amponsah & Adams, 2016).

The SERVQUAL scale is superior in determining the degree of clients' contentment with the service. Not only does it work better at accurately identifying the perception of customers, but it also makes measuring elements easier and lower (Adil et al., 2013). This piece addresses the subject of implementation in relation to the service quality concept. Although SERVPERF may as well be considered, it is still uncertain which of the two scales is a better measure of service quality. Jain & Gupta (2004) proposed that client contentment can be related to key elements like driver's conduct, safety, including comfort, reliability, as well as consistency, since prior studies have only evaluated the psychometric as well as methodological issues' soundness of service quality measurements. The result of Pearson's correlation study shows that comfort demonstrates a significant influence on clients' satisfaction. When measuring their levels of satisfaction, commuters take into account a number of factors: the availability of buses at stations, when they arrive at a place of interest, as well as safety features such as seat belts, cautious drivers with excellent route knowledge (Horsu & Yeboah, 2015) Cameroon's passenger transport industry is facing a major transformation, largely influenced by market supply and demand dynamics. Consumer preference for economically sound options emphasizes the importance for transportation managers to meet or exceed customer expectations in order to retain customers (Zeithaml, 1990). Nso Boyz Express is one of many service providers in Cameroon, operating in Bamenda, Douala, Yaoundé, and Bafoussam. However, operators such as AMOUR MEZAM, MUSANGO, and GUARANTEE EXPRESS still suffer from widespread problems of

severe delays, overcrowding, and poor service, which are service upheavals according to Andaleeb et al. (2007). Research shows that customer dissatisfaction stems from neglect

of service dimensions such as reliability and empathy Islam et al, 2014). Although competition is said to increase efficiency, customer complaints about service quality remain widespread Zeithaml et al., 1996. Improving service quality by addressing these neglected aspects could increase customer satisfaction and loyalty in Cameroon's passenger transport sector; Vicente et al, 2020), Islam et al, (2014), Eboli & Mazulla (2007), Friman (1998), Eboli & Mazulla (2007), Abdulrazzaq et al, (2020), Nkyami (2016), Islam et al, (2014) and (Gobena, 2019) had in other economies with distinct economic features to that of Cameroon, investigated service quality influence on customers satisfaction. We therefore sought to contribute in this light by investigating the influence of service quality on customers' satisfaction in the context of Cameroon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GAP appraisal endeavor was another endeavor that commenced with the goal of guaranteeing satisfaction for clients initiated by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, its primary proponents, as outlined in (Parasuraman et al., 1988). It identified on the service providers' side four Gaps that could modify the way in which clients see the standards of service rendered.

GAP1 represents customers' expectations and reflects managerial perceptions of inadequacies. Incorrect ideas about customers' wants may arise due to the absence of key components such as a suitable market focus. Merely having a marketing function does not guarantee market focus; proper operational procedures, marketing data instruments, and mindset are crucial. GAP2 concerns service quality specification, where management may struggle to translate client expectations into service quality requirements. Requirements analysis and service design are pertinent to addressing this gap. GAP3 pertains to service delivery, where setting parameters does not guarantee excellent performance due to various factors such as process issues and inadequate frontline worker support. GAP4 involves external communication, where a company's external relations shape future demand based on client expectations. Service providers must accurately describe services in marketing materials Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004). Gap 5 arises from disparities

between customer aspirations and perceptions of provided service quality. It serves as a measure of service quality, influenced by marketing, service design, and delivery. Customers evaluate service based on dimensions like competence, responsiveness, access, courtesy, credibility, security, communication, as well as understanding, according to Kulašin & Fortuny-Santos (2005), although Parasuraman et al.'s study in 1988 condensed these dimensions to five.

In terms of evaluating service quality, SERVQUAL provides reliable elements to facilitate it. The three primary pioneers of this idea, Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml, went on to further develop, codify as well and innovate this tool through a number of significant works, most notably Parasuraman 1985, 1988 as well and 1993. These innovations have been widely cited in promotional, as well as studies in the marketing domain (Nyandoro, 2015)

SERVQUAL is a useful method for evaluating a service institution's quality in terms of both its strengths and flaws, according to Parasuraman et al. (1988). The main components of service quality that constitute the subject of this study include: assurance, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibility of the service. According to (Njau, 2020; Nyandoro, 2015), reliability has been established to be critical in several situations, in addition to being critical for client satisfaction. According to Saghier & Nathan (2013), assurance helps employees feel confident and dependable.

Tangibility and visibility are critical at the service delivery point, as the physical components should meet user needs. Saghier & Nathan (2013) highlighted the importance of attractive visible facilities. Likewise, empathy, as suggested by Parasuraman et al. (1988), is essential to fully consider customer concerns. Additionally, responsiveness includes the willingness to assist customers in a timely manner, which is critical to ensuring satisfaction. However, El Saghier & Nathan (2013) criticized SERVQUAL on the grounds that it only focuses on processes related to service delivery and ignores important aspects such as the consequences of the service encounter. Similarly, there are some flaws in the abstraction of the dimensions mentioned and used, which may limit their general applicability and contextualization. Despite these shortcomings, the theory remains crucial to the current study.

Responsiveness: A staff member's enthusiasm or willingness to perform a service is referred to as responsiveness, as described by Parasuraman et al. (1985). It is centered on giving prompt, thoughtful responses to customers' requests, questions, as well as grievances. Informing customers of the time it might require to address their concerns as well as resolve issues is a sign of a responsive transportation provider. Responsiveness in the present study also relates to how ready transportation vendors are to perform services on schedule. Five elements of SERVQUAL were measured in a study conducted by Yazid et al. (2020) to ascertain how Kuala Lumpur residents felt about the quality of public transport services in the said area. The results identified that, aside from Tangibility and Reliability, the other three criteria do not support consumer satisfaction; thus, the current study hypothesized that;

H1: Responsiveness positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction

Reliability: is a critical component of high-quality services, as characterized by SERVQUAL. It involves the ability to deliver specified service consistently, with respect to (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Maintaining the company's integrity as well as offering services as intended is a key component of reliability, it encompasses the ability to consistently deliver the promised service without errors. Parasuraman et al. (1988 emphasize the importance of maintaining consistency and reliability to meet consumer expectations; this involves minimizing faults and delays, adhering to schedules, and providing accurate information. Service providers generate profits by offering appealing services, while customers expect dependable service in return; they want assurance that they can access the service whenever needed and that each transaction meets their expectations, the components firms consider to have the major influence on consumers' satisfaction when it concerns service quality include; safety comfort as well as reliability Zeithamal et al: Fonseca et al.' (2010). Various categories of services could have unique quality standards with varying priorities. Considering that each service dimension has a distinct technique which assists executives in understanding each dimension's significance as well as impact on customer satisfaction, classification of these dimensions is vital; hence, we hypothesized that;

H2: reliability positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction in Cameroon

Empathy: According to Zeithaml et al. (2006), demonstrating empathy to clients entails that staff members devote full attention to each client. In this approach, the customer feels

special as well as respected. When it comes to meeting the demands of clients, executives of the firm ought to try to find out who they are, what their preferences are, as well as what they desire. Due to their potential to offer individualized services to customers, small firms are more empathetic than large corporations. There is disagreement about which parameters best represent service quality in the link between it and customer satisfaction. A study by Sanita & Mutuku (2019) sought to pinpoint factors that consistently affect service quality; their research focused on the dimensions impacting service quality in Kenya. Based on their findings, they concluded that service reliability, assurance, and empathy, along with tangibility and responsiveness, significantly affect customer satisfaction. To this effect, we hypothesized that;

H3: Empathy positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in Cameroon

Service Assurance: The term "service assurance" describes an employee's professionalism, demeanor, as well as ability to instill trust in the client's mind. It also encompasses trustworthiness along with competence, civility, as well as security. People who serve as intermediaries between a company and its clients may be viewed as trustworthy individuals (Zeithaml et al., 2006). According to Rachman (2017), superior quality is paramount for securing client loyalty, defending against competitors, and ensuring sustained growth and profitability for businesses. Assurance, as outlined in SERVQUAL, plays a crucial role in this process by assessing how effectively service providers establish trust with their clients. This trust is vital for retaining clients and outperforming competitors. SERVQUAL emphasizes aspects such as staff knowledge, demeanor, and ability to instill confidence in customers, particularly in terms of trust. Employee assurance involves their ability to uphold the promises made to customers (Rachman, 2017). Furthermore, according to Putri et al. (2022), assurance has a partially positive effect on consumer satisfaction. This result facilitates the notion that customer satisfaction is influenced by service assurance, thus stimulating the current proposition:

H4: Assurance positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in Cameroon

Tangibility: Service tangibles, as defined by Parasuraman (1985), are the tangible indicators and evidence that clients utilize to assess and understand intangible services provided to them. According to the SERVQUAL model, tangibles encompass the outward appearance of facilities, equipment, staff, and marketing materials associated with the service. These are elements of a service that are perceived or experienced but not directly purchased. Businesses leverage tangibles, or the visible aspects of their services, to enhance external consumer satisfaction (Panda & Das, 2014). Considering that services are immaterial and that clients often face difficulties in appraising service quality before, during, or after consumption, tangibility becomes crucial. The European school of thought emphasizes that consumers evaluate service quality from both functional and technical perspectives. However, it tends to overlook the significance of the physical setting where the service is provided or traded. The American paradigm fills the gap by defining service quality as the discrepancy between customers' perceived expectations and what they receive (Parasuraman, 1988). Intangibles significantly influence clients' gratification and thus, businesses utilize them in delivering quality service according to (Zeithaml et al. (2006). In this regard, the current study stated that;

H5: Tangibility positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in Cameroon

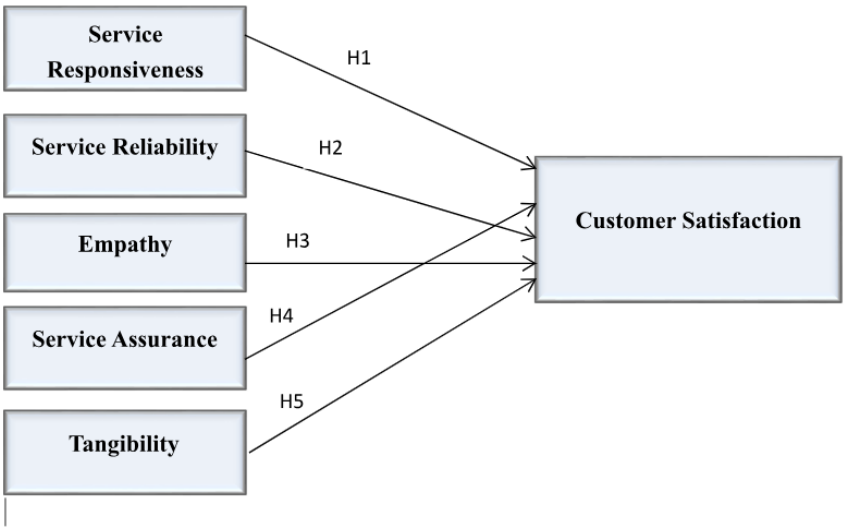

Figure: Summarizes the hypothesis announced above

METHODOLOGY

Both descriptive and causal research methods were used to study the context in which this study was conducted, in order to grasp its current development. Data collection based on predicting

outcomes related to research questions was presented in accordance with Vogt et al (2012). Analytical studies are crucial when investigating individual perceptions, emotions, and behaviors regarding the organization, according to Mohajan (2020). This survey sought to determine the correlation between customer satisfaction and service quality in Cameroon's transportation sector. A descriptive approach was employed to describe the current state of the research area, which in this case was the inter-regional bus service provider Nso Boyz Express in Cameroon. Convenience sampling, a non-probability approach, was utilized. A sample of fifteen hundred participants (150), constituting Nso Boyz Express commuters, was established for the study.

Multiple Correspondence analyses were utilized to calculate indices. Similarly, regression analysis was employed in explaining the relationship among service responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility, as well as service assurance.

Similarly, a point Likert scale was utilized in measuring the study's constructs, the scale ranged from strong agreement to strong disagreement. The measurement framework aimed at assessing the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction was adopted from SERVQUAL, a scale established by Parasuraman et al. (1988). Its dimensions include service responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility, as well as assurance; Minor modifications were applied in assessing each of these dimensions. Indicators were used; service assurance had six indicators, while service tangibility used seven indicators, service responsiveness, reliability, and service empathy had five indicators each. Six satisfaction indexes derived from Wu et al (2011) served as a measure to evaluate customer satisfaction. Questionnaires were then utilized to collect data from respondents, while statistical packages for social Sciences were employed in analyzing the data.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

The findings were examined and presented in accordance with the study's specified objectives as well as hypothesis, utilizing descriptive statistics to show how variables correlate. In the same light, pie charts, bar charts, as well as frequency tables were employed to represent the viewpoints of respondents. In total, one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed. With one being eliminated and 143 appropriate for data analysis, the response rate was 95.3%. The findings revealed that out of 143 participants, 120 (84.0%) were male and 23 (16.0%) were female. These results indicate an uneven distribution of data concerning gender.

Table 1. Reliability test

Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha coefficient	Acceptability
Responsiveness	5	0.721	0.721> 0.7, acceptable.
Reliability	5	0.756	0.756> 0.7, acceptable.
Empathy	5	0.799	0.799> 0.7, acceptable
Assurance	6	0.821	0.821> 0.7, acceptable
Tangibility	7	0.843	0.843> 0.7, acceptable

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for service responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, and tangibility were found to be 0.721, 0.756, 0.799, 0.821, and 0.843, respectively, as indicated in Table 1 above. According to these findings, every variable had a Cronbach value exceeding.

0.7 threshold demonstrating the suitability and reliability of the research tools that were employed. The claim made by Cronbach (1951) that study validity requires a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of not less than 0.7 lends credence to this. Furthermore, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.914 was obtained for the dependent variable "Customer Satisfaction," which was examined using six items

Table 2. Construction of indices; Multiple correspondence analysis

Imention	Principal	Percent	Cumul percent
Tangibility index (number of axes = 2)			
Dim1	0.0341822	65.05	65.05
Dim2	0.0073184	13.93	78.98
Dim3	0.0001841	0.35	79.33
Total	0.052549	100.00	
Reliability index (number of axes =2)			
Dim1	0.0208161	82.02	82.02
Dim2	0.0070764	17.08	100.0
Total	0.0414222	100.00	
Empathy index (number of axes =2)			
Dim1	0.0344637	68.118	68.18
Dim2	0.00434	32.82	100.0
Total	0.0440819	100.00	
Assurance index (number of axes =2)			
Dim1	0.075045	80.02	80.02
Dim2	0.0023854	19.98	100.00
Total	0.0937773	100.00	
Responsiveness index (number of axes =2)			
Dim1	0.0528004	64.21	64.21
Dim2	0.0396523	45.79	100.00
Total	0.0924527	100.00	
Customer satisfaction index (number of axes =2)			

Indexes are represented in Table 2 above. Based on the established indices, the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) results show two axes. There are three dimensions that add up to the total primary inertia of 0.052549. The primary inertia of the first dimension, which makes up 65.05% of the service tangibility index, is 0.0341822. In a similar vein, the second dimension maintains a primary inertia of 0.0073184 by contributing 13.93% to the index. Furthermore, the third dimension maintains a major inertia of 0.0001841, adding 0.35% to the service tangibility index. These three dimensions are hence the basis for the service tangibility index.

Two distinct sets of dimensions are used in predicting the reliability index; the initial dimension contributed 82.02% with a principal inertia of 0.0208161. In the same light, dimension 2 contributed 17.08% to the index with its principal inertia 0.0070764.

Similarly, two dimensions make up the Assurance index; the initial dimension has a main inertia of 0.075045, contributing 80.48% to the index, while the principal inertia of dimension two, which makes up 19.45% of the index, is 0.0023854

Two distinct sets of dimensions are used in predicting the Responsiveness index; the initial dimension contributed 64.21% with a principal inertia of 0.0528004. In the same light, dimension 2 contributed 45.79% to the index with its principal inertia 0.0396523.

Moreover, the Index of Customer Satisfaction is forecasted using three aspects independently. The initial dimension has a main inertia of 0.121117, contributing 58.74% to the index, while the principal inertia of dimension two, which makes up 40.41% of the index, is 0.083348. The third dimension accounted for 1.00% of the score with a principal inertia of 0.001721

Table 3. Descriptive statistic summary

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Tangibility index	143	2.313333	1.775030	1.450709	2.213386
Assurance index	143	2.286667	1.045006	-1.40249	2.20585
Empathy index	143	2.100000	1.014006	-1.78403	2.057344
Reliability index	143	2.066667	1.006006	-1.41161	1.536068
Responsiveness index	143	1.940000	0.812899	0.812899	2.313333
Customer satisfaction index	143	2.486667	0.836553	0.320000	2.328000

The result of the tangibility index specifies a mean of 2.31333 and a standard deviation of 1.775030, showing a considerable degree of variability as shown in Table 3. Assurance index value ranges from 1.0450709 to 2.213386. Similarly, the assurance index also revealed a standard deviation of 1.045006, including a minimum value of -1.402495 as well as a maximum value of 2.20585. Empathy index specifies a mean value of -1.78403 as well as a standard deviation of 1.006006. Empathy index revealed a range of -1.784032 to 2.057344. In the same light, the Responsiveness index specifies a mean of 1.940000

and a standard deviation of 0.812899, this index has a range of 0.812899 to 2.057344. In conclusion, the customer satisfaction index revealed a mean of 2.486667 alongside a standard deviation of 0.836553 and a range of 0.320000 to 2.328000

In order to determine if there exist any strongly correlated independent variables that would indicate multicollinearity in the model, we first performed a correlation analysis prior to estimating the model parameters. Table 4 below displays the pairwise correlation for each variable.

Table 4. The pairwise correlation matrix

	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy	Tangibility	Reliability
Responsiveness	1.0000				
Assurance	0.7104 ***	1.0000			
Empathy	0.6859***	0.5366***	1.0000		
Tangibility	0.8101***	0.5384***	0.7714***	1.000	
Reliability	0.7145***	0.6417***	0.6603***	0.660**	1.000

Based on the correlation coefficients of the independent variables (service reliability, assurance, empathy, responsiveness, and tangibility) in Table 4, it can be inferred that these variables have strong associations. Thus, to guarantee the accuracy of the model, a rigorous test of multicollinearity was necessary. The multicollinearity test results for Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. VIF Multi-collinearity results

Variables	VIF	1/VIF
Responsiveness	2.53	0.395779
Assurance	2.20	0.454517
Empathy	1.62	0.618353
Tangibility	1.59	0.630902
Reliability	2.11	0.473933
Mean VIF	**2.51**	

Considering the mean VIF is less than 2.5, the VIF test results indicate that the model's multicollinearity is not a problem, and every single individual VIF coefficient exceeded the critical value 10, as described by Gujarati 2004) and Tay (2017). Thus, it is conceivable to utilize the ordinary least squares estimate

Tables 5, 6, and 7 display the findings of the ordinary least squares (OLS) analysis of the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

Table 6. Model summary

Model Summary				
Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	.611[a]	.373	.354	.573

a. Predictors- constant; Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, and Empathy

Model one specifies an adjusted R square of 35%, R square of 37%, as well as an R figure of 61%. Thus, variation in Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, and Empathy jointly explains 35% in regards to customer satisfaction.

Table 7. ANOVA

	Model	**Sum of squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	26.354	4	24.758	20.080	.000[b]
	Residual	44.296	135	.127		
	Total	70.650	139			

a. Dependent variable: Customer satisfaction

b. Predictors- constant; Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, and Empathy

Table 8.: Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.760	.166		4.591	.000
	Service Responsiveness	.184	.064	.241	2.890	.004
	Service Reliability	.258	.382	.368	2.707	.004
	Service Assurance	.128	.082	.429	4.822	.000
	Service Tangibility	.128	.078	.144	1.644	.002
	Service Empathy	.412	.079	.475	5.254	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The Fisher statistic likelihood (prob>F=0.0000 was less than 1%, signifying a global significance of the model at the 1% level as indicated in Table 8 above. It indicates that customer satisfaction is thereby influenced by the studied dimensions. The results revealed a positive 0.241 coefficient index as well as a probability value of 0.004 for responsiveness, indicating that an increase in service responsiveness positively impacts consumers' contentment or satisfaction. Thus, holding other influences constant, a unit increase in the responsiveness index would lead to a 0.241-point increase in the customer satisfaction index.

Similarly, the results specified a positive 0.368 coefficient index and a probability value of 0.004 for Reliability, indicating that an increase in Reliability would positively impact consumers' satisfaction; thus, holding other influences constant, a unit increase in Reliability index would lead to a 0.368 unit increase in the customer satisfaction index, explicitly supported (Prob 0.004<1%).

In the same light, assurance and customer satisfaction exhibit a positive correlation, as indicated by the positive coefficient associated with service assurance (0.429) as well as its probability value (0.000). Holding other elements constant, a one unit increase in assurance index would correspond to a 0.429 unit increase in the customer satisfaction index; statistical proof since (Prob 0.000<1%).

Moreover, the results specified a positive 0.144 coefficient index and a probability value of 0.002 for Tangibility, indicating that an increase in Tangibility would positively impact customers' satisfaction; thus, holding other influences constant, a unit increase in Tangibility index would lead to a 0.144 unit increase in the customer satisfaction index, explicitly supported (Prob 0.002<1%). Thus, Tangibility significantly influences customer satisfaction. To end with, Empathy and customer satisfaction exhibit a positive correlation, as indicated by the positive coefficient associated with Empathy (0.475) as well as its probability value (0.000). Holding other elements constant, a one unit increase in the Empathy index would correspond to a 0.475 unit increase in the customer satisfaction index; statistical proof since (Prob 0.000<1%). Thus, Empathy positively and significantly influences consumers' satisfaction.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

H1: Responsiveness positively and significantly influences customer satisfactionThe preceding OLS estimate result shows a positive as well as significant influence of Responsiveness in regards to customers' satisfaction; this substantiates hypothesis one, which identifies commuters' satisfaction with Nso Boyz bus service as being influenced by responsiveness. The correlation is in line with earlier findings in research by Vicente et al (2020) and Islam et al (2014), which revealed that empathy has a substantial or significant impact in regards to customer satisfaction in the passenger transportation industry. These findings emphasize that reliability as well as responsiveness are important components of excellent customer service.

H2: reliability positively and significantly affects customer satisfaction in CameroonThe OLS estimates above show that reliability has a significant influence on commuters' satisfaction in support of hypothesis two, which suggested that commuters' satisfaction with Nso Boyz bus service is affected by Reliability. The correlation is in line with earlier findings in research by Abdulrazzaq et al (2020), Friman (1998), as well as Eboli & Mazulla (2007), which highlighted Reliability as a significant component in regards to customer satisfaction in the passenger transportation industry.

H3: Empathy positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in CameroonAdditionally, the outcome of the aforementioned OLS approximation specifies that Empathy and commuters' satisfaction positively correlate; this is in line with the third hypothesis, which posits that commuters' satisfaction with Nso Boyz bus service is influenced by Empathy. This correlation is consistent with earlier research by Friman (1998), Mudenda (2017), as well as Zein (2019), whose findings emphasized a strong correlation between Empathy and excellent customer service and satisfaction within the transportation sector. They singled out empathy as the most vital service quality element that stimulates consumers.

H4: Assurance positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in CameroonFurthermore, The OLS estimates above shows that Assurance has a significant influence on commuter's satisfaction in support of hypothesis four which suggested that commuters' satisfaction with Nso Boyz bus service is affected by Assurance; this correlation is consistent with earlier research by Nkyami, (2016) as well as, Mudenda (2017) whose correlation findings revealed that all SERVQUAL dimensions had a positive relation to customers' satisfaction but only assurance and responsiveness had a significant effect on customers satisfaction based on regression analysis.

H5: Tangibility positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in CameroonAs a result of the previously given OLS estimation, it can be concluded that service tangibility significantly and directly affects customer satisfaction or gratification.

This result provides credence to the fifth hypothesis. This correlation reflects a strong predisposition towards improving customer happiness through tangible service aspects, which is in line with Islam et al (2014) as well as Gobena (2019), who also indicated a substantial influence of service tangibility on customer satisfaction.The outcome or findings of this study revealed that the five studied variables, responsiveness, reliability, empathy, service assurance, as well as tangibility, significantly influence customers' satisfaction.

These results are in concordance with the findings of Vicente et al (2020) and Islam et al (2014), whose findings revealed a significant effect of empathy on customers' gratification. Similarly, the association is consistent with the previous results in studies by Eboli & Mazulla (2007), Friman (1998), Eboli & Mazulla (2007), and Abdulrazzaq et al (2020), whose findings revealed a significant effect regarding service empathy as a precursor in regards to client contentment.

In the same light, the association is also consistent with the previous results in studies by Nkyami (2016), whose correlation findings revealed that all SERVQUAL dimensions positively influences customers' satisfaction as well as Islam et al, (2014) and (Gobena, 2019) whose findings also indicated a substantial influence of service tangibility on client gratification; this therefore streamlines SERVQUAL as a credible measure of service quality from customer's satisfaction stand point.

CONCLUSIONS

Primarily concentrating on Cameroon's passenger sector, our foremost objective was to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. We created a conceptual framework and five specific objectives to achieve this, based on the scale developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988 (SERVQUAL). With the use of a causal research design and descriptive statistics, our study attempted to adequately illustrate the relationship between customer satisfaction and level of service quality.

In summary, this study examined the critical link that exists between consumer satisfaction and service quality in Cameroon's passenger transport industry, with a particular focus on NSO BOYZ EXPRESS. Adopting a quantitative approach, the study determined that customer satisfaction is positively and significantly influenced by service reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. The results emphasize how crucial it is for transportation service providers to keep enhancing transportation services to foster customer gratification, retention, and loyalty. These findings not only emphasize how crucial several service dimensions are but also offer operational managers and policymakers practical advice on how to improve service quality and effectively satisfy customers.

Limitations

This investigation has its limitations, just like other earlier studies conducted in respectable domains of life. This work is primarily inadequate because it only addresses service quality and customer satisfaction within the context of Cameroon's passenger transport sector. As a result, its findings may not apply to other economies with distinct working environments from Cameroon's. Other sectors, including financial institutions, the educational sector, and the products sector, were ignored; our study focused only on the passenger transportation sector.

Similarly, the SERVQUAL 5 elements of responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, as well as tangibility were the exclusive focus of the study.

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