

**ASSESSMENT OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION  
EVIDENCE FROM GOMBE STATE TRANSPORT SERVICE (GSTS)**

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***Abstract***

*It is undeniable fact that transportation is part of the daily rounds of activities and as such an essential component of the every human being. The study seeks to assess customer's satisfaction in public transportation evidence from Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe Line), with more empirical studies needed in the study area. The study used a quantitative approach and the data were collected through a survey, questionnaire method, which was adopted from previous studies as a data gathering instrument. The independent variables are Affordability and Safety, while the dependent variable is customer satisfaction. The population of the study is 994 and sampling size of 331 using Taro Yamane's formula. Questionnaires were distributed for data collection which amounted to 331 using convenient sampling with 305 returned which signifies 92% response rate. Data analysis was conducted through statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics and multiple regression using SPSS software version 26 in which the result indicated that Affordability has significant influence on customer satisfaction, whereas Safety has insignificant relationship on customer satisfaction. The study recommended that management should work hard to improve Gombe State Transport Service (GSTS) affordability and be able to guarantee safety of passengers to enhance customer satisfaction which leads to customer retention.*

***Keywords:*** *Customer Satisfaction, GSTS, Affordability, Safety, IGR.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world has embraced globalization and liberalization policies which have made, the business environment become more competitive giving room for a massive growth and expansion in the rate of doing business. This can be attributed to the rate of satisfaction customers derive from the usage of a products or services. This is because customers are more alert and conscious of the prevailing business environment; as a result, they tend to prioritize quality in determining where to purchase a certain service or a product. This in turn has necessitated putting quality at the centre of the delivery of services in both public and private organizations because the survival of any business mostly depends on its ability to satisfy its customers (Dibekulu, 2017).

Customer satisfaction is a critical factor which helps to generate customer loyalty (Pham and Abammed, 2017). It is a key aspect of companies' strategic planning. It is a sense of pleasure and bliss that one feels after purchase or usage. Customer satisfaction is important to determine decisions involving transport.eg time, modes, destination, choice & satisfaction base on ease (Torsha et al 2014).

For many years, public transport has been viewed as an inevitable need in several parts of the world (Cervero & Golub,2007). Transport is also the key player in the transfer and distribution of goods from the input points through the manufacturing line to the customer (Agunloye, 2011) perhaps, this led to the assertion by Badejo (2002), that there is no escape from public transportation since it is a key stone of civilization. No wonder a study in the area of public transportation indicated that more than 75% of population in cities depends on public transport while 25% depends on private transport (Ogunbodede,1990). Transportation system can be a reliable indicator of economic development. It works as a factor that stimulates economic growth by providing employment, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of other businesses and also contributing to national investment and development.

In developed economies, the transport sector is a key driver to economic development and strong revenue. According to the United States Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2021), Transportation service (for-hire, in-house and house hold) contributed \$1.3 trillion (5.6%) to enhanced U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) of \$23.7. trillion. The story is, however, different in many developing countries as inadequate transport facilities constitute a huge challenge to economic growth. Despite government several policies and frameworks aimed at

re-positioning the transportation sector, its contribution to the GDP remains unsatisfactory, unlike other developed countries. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) scored Nigeria ‘very low’ in the ease of doing business due to the lack of connectivity of its major transportation modes including the rail, pipeline, air, water, and road transport (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development,2021) Commenting on-road transportation in Nigeria, Chidoka (2011) reiterated that excessive speeding, unpredictable driving habits, the lack of basic maintenance and safety equipment in many vehicles, and the absence of any official inspection for road worthiness present additional hazards. No fewer than 6,205 persons died in road accident in 2001. The National bureau of statistics in its road transport data report said on a quarterly basis, road accidents killed a total of 1,668 people in Q1;1453 persons in Q2;1432 persons in Q3 and 1,652 persons in Q4. The report also shows that 13,027 road crashes occurred during the year. Speed violation, wrongful and dangerous overtaking account for more of the accidents. No wonder the federal Road safety strategic goal for the 2022 is to accomplish 15% reduction in road traffic crash fatality, enhance Road safety partnership for innovative intervention and consolidate on the road traffic data system for improved road safety policy formation. (National Bureau of Statistics / Federal Road Safety Corps, 2022).

Gombe State which house GSTS, was created in 1996 with a population projection of 3,256,962 in 2026. The company conducts its business daily and its shuttle service to 15 states of the federation and all Local Government Areas of the state. It also provides hire services to all states of the federation and neighbouring countries.

It is an undeniable fact that without understanding the system dynamics and importantly the behaviours of public travellers, it would be difficult to make accurate forecast, which are necessary for making service planning and fair policies. In view of this, the study sought to assess the factors that influence the preference and patronage of public transport service. The researcher believes that armed with such valuable information, public transport service providers and operators generally would be in the position to step up their games in bid to capture more market and patrons, since patronage of their service would increase, having a knowledge of what commuters look out for in their travel mode choice.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective is to assess customers' satisfaction in Gombe State Transport service (Gombe Line). While the specific objectives are;

- i. To examine the affordability of Vehicles, own by Gombe State Transport service on customers' satisfaction.
- ii. To examine the effects of safety in Gombe State transport service on customer satisfaction

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

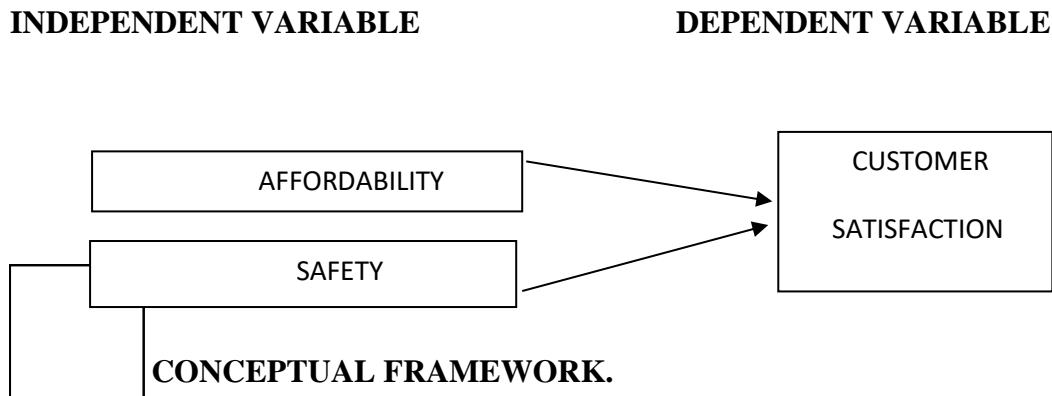
### **Concept of GSTS Affordability).**

Affordability, refers to people's capacity to get essential goods and services (Litman 2009). Many researchers outlined that affordability is defined as the capability of the households to incur cost for transport service (Govender, 2014). Holding other factors constant, as affordability increase; passenger capacity to pay for their transit also increases. Mosi (2010) also found ticket price as one of the major reason why commuters are not satisfied, very few route have standard fares. The fare vary depending on route, peak and weather. Alan (2015) stated that travel expenditure is viewed as the most important factor to consider when choosing a mode of transport by commuters having a low income. If the mode of transport is too expensive for them, they may consider other available options. He further explains that the extend of affordability depends on the earning level of the commuters.

### **Concept of Safety in GSTS**

Safety is a fundamental concern for transport, both as the basis of a citizen's right to travel without fear and as a condition for reliable and efficient transportation of goods. Nearly 3500 lives are lost each day to road crashes across the globe (safety and security summit, 2018). Safety issues were found by Smith and Clark (2000) as a constraint for people to choose public transport as a travel mode of choice. Safety, being equally important for all kinds of commuters, it is one of the most significant dimension of the quality of transport service. The commuters would, therefore obviously demand and expect a high level of safety. As a matter of fact the overloaded vehicles are generally exposed to greater incidents; the commuters

generally prefer to travel in less overloaded vehicles notwithstanding the fact that the time bound commuters many a times, compromise with the situation. Safety, among other things, is subservient to the approach of driving and maintenance of the vehicles.



Source: (Research construct 2021)

### 3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theories are viewpoints or perspectives with which people make sense of their world experience, (Mbasua, 2019).

#### **Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) Underpinning.**

This research introduced EDT as a substantial theory that can measure customer satisfaction from the perceived quality of products or services to measure the customer's satisfaction. Szymanski and Henard (2001) stated that EDT is the best theory used in predicting customer satisfaction. EDT was first developed in the area of marketing and in the future became Spopular in other scholarly domains. The theory was propounded by Oliver in 1980. According to expectancy disconfirmation theory, individuals anticipate a specific level of service when they are about to engage in a purchase transaction when they utilize the actual service, they form valid perception of service performance. The degree of positive or negative disconfirmation is developed when pre and post - purchase expectations are compared that in turn influences overall satisfaction. A positive disconfirmation occurs when service performance exceeds initial expectation which Leeds to higher satisfaction. In contrast, a negative disconfirmation takes place when service performance falls short of what was originally expected, which causes lower satisfaction.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

The study adopted a survey research design to Asses customer satisfaction in Gombe state transport service. The target population of this study will be the passengers who patronize the services provided by GSTS. The organization has 73 buses with 2 not functional due to mechanical issues and 71 available as of February 22nd, 2021 at least each goes out daily as it is a 14-setter bus. So, it does averagely have 994 passengers per day if (71) = 994.

The instrument for the primary sources of data collection that will be used is the questionnaire adapted from Okoth Phoebe (2017). The data analysis was conducted using Multiple Regression Analysis because we want to test the relationship which is performed using SPSS version 26.

**Table 1:** Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.921 <sup>a</sup>	.848	.846	1.62264

Source: SPSS v. 26

The model summary in table 1 showed an R square of .848 which means 84.8% variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by affordability and safety.

**Table 2:** ANOVA

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Difference	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4408.555	4	1102.139	418.595	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	789.885	300	2.633		
	Total	5198.439	304			

Source: SPSS v. 26

**a. Dependent Variable: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

**b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFORDABILITY AND SAFETY.**

**Table 3:** Coefficients Regression

Model		Coefficients						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.651	.868		-.751	.453		
	Affordability	.782	.030	.774	26.356	.000	.587	1.702
	Safety	-.011	.034	-.010	-.317	.751	.511	1.956

**Dependent Variable: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

**Source: SPSS v. 26**

The Coefficients in table 14 showed that  $CUS = -.651 - .782AFF - .011SAF$ . It also showed that customer satisfaction had decreased on average by 78.2% with a 1% change in affordability when safety and security was held constant. Moreover, customer satisfaction had decreased on average by 1.1% with a 1% change in safety when affordability was held constant.

**Table 4:** Summary of Result

Hypotheses	Relationship	Std Beta	T. Stat	P-V	Decision
H <sub>01</sub> :	AFF→CUS.	.774	26.356	.000	Not Supported
H <sub>02</sub> :	SST→CUS	-.010	-.317	.751	Supported

**Source: SPSS v.26**

Key: AFF–Affordability; SST–Safety; CUS–Customer Satisfaction.

**Test of Hypothesis I**

Decision: The results revealed in table 16 that P-value (.000) < α (.05). This means that H<sub>01</sub> is rejected. Meaning we reject the null hypothesis and H<sub>2</sub> is accepted.

**Test of Hypothesis II**

Decision: The results revealed in table 16 that P-value (.751) > α (.05). This means that H<sub>02</sub> is upheld. Meaning, we uphold the null hypothesis and reject the H<sub>1</sub> hypothesis.

## **5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This section discusses the major findings of this study.

**Relationship between Affordability and Customer Satisfaction at GSTS;** The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between Affordability and customer satisfaction.

**Relationship between Safety and Customer Satisfaction at GSTS;** The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between safety and customer satisfaction.

### **Summary of Findings**

The research findings are summarized as follows:

- i. The study showed that affordability had a significant relationship with customer satisfaction evidence from Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe Line).
- ii. The study also revealed that safety had no significant relationship with customer satisfaction evidence from Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe Line).

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study concludes that affordability leads to an increase in customer satisfaction evidenced from Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe Line). Furthermore, the study concluded that safety do not lead to customer satisfaction evidence from Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe line). The study concluded that the extent of customer satisfaction in Gombe State Transport Service (Gombe Line) is between medium to a high level of satisfaction; since most of the independent variables create a relationship with the dependent variable leading to customer satisfaction in the sector.



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