

## **SPECIFIC QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF TRANSPORT SERVICES**

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*Summary: The transport is a necessary component of meeting the transport needs of the population and economic activity. It involved in raising living standards of population and the proper and effective functioning of the economy and society. Therefore it is necessary to meet the transportation needs of the required level of quality. The financial crisis together with other factors causing the existence of a fundamental impediment to obtaining a permanent position in the global business market.*

*Key words: quality, transport, transport services, human resources.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a result of globalization, the consumer market and subsequently the transport market is expanding more and more. The necessity to connect longer distances in a shortest time possible has become the most important requirement and criterion for customers mainly due to the augmented need for product exchange and increased mobility of persons. Transport services have their specific features which make them different from material products. Such specific characteristics of transport services affect directly the possible evaluation of the quality of work performed by individual transport staff as well as the possible evaluation of the quality of services by the consumer.

In order to be able to determine the level of quality of transport services and set adequately the basic and the most important criteria improving, from the point of view of customers, the quality of services, it is necessary to define specific qualities of transport services as well as problematic issues connected with the provision of transport services. Defining of such qualities and problematic issues will enable to determine the basic objectives which should result in the increased customer satisfaction with a transport service.

### **1. SPECIFIC FEATURES FOR MAKING QUALITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICES**

Transport services have specific features compared to other types of services. Such specific qualities of transport services mainly include:

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- **Non-materiality (non-tangibility)** – Transport services cannot be taken into hands, tried or stored as a standard product. It generally applies to services that the last level of production process has no material characteristics as it is an activity (tab. 1).

Tab. 1 – Kinds of non-materiality levels of transport services

Level of non-materiality	Services for production	Services for final consumption
Services, which are essentially non-materiality.	Rent handling and transport equipment.	Public transport, taxis.
Services providing added value to the tangible product.	Transport services in the form of additional services to the acquisition of material for the manufacturing process.	Supplementary services - the acquisition of the product as an additional service to the customer a product shipped home.
Services accessing the tangible product.	Transportation of materials intended for manufacture of the product.	Distribution of products to supermarket chains.

Source: Authors

- **Non-storability** – Problems arising from the non-storability of a service can be partially eliminated, if a transport company takes measures in the area of demand or offer (setting of preferential prices at the time of lower demand for a transport service, etc.).
- **Non-separability** - The provision of transport services is realized in time and is parallel to their consumption in contrast with material products which can be produced in a place other than a place of their consumption.
- **Variability (inconsistency and distinctiveness)** – The characteristics, quality and course of the production and consumption of transport services are always unique as they are connected to the existing state within the limits of internal and external variability (the personal influence of staff and impacts of environment, etc.)
- **Comprehensiveness** – The concept of a product and assortment is comprehensive in the context of transport services. The offer includes a set of elementary services which can be divided into basic and supplementary services.
- **Non-repeatability or relative repeatability** – This quality is similar to the aspect of variability. The same service cannot be repeatedly provided in an identical way. It is always affected by conditions on the part of the provider and consumer as well as by the time and space factor connected with the consumption of a service (e.g. a taxi drive cannot be repeated in an identical way).
- **Collectiveness** – A part of transport services is provided in a non-market way ( for free – winter road maintenance) or semi-market way (at support prices – public passenger transport, combined transport, etc.) which means that certain specific types of transport services necessitate various forms of state interventions. (2,1)

## 2. NEW TRENDS OF TRANSPORT SERVICES QUALITY

The term “quality of services” denotes the ability of the service provider to create (in collaboration with the customer) a required output on a level required by the customer subject to customer’s requirements. The criteria of transport quality affect the entire effectiveness of a transport process and are, at the same time, a crucial aspect of transport work division. In general, the main criteria of quality of transport services include:

- speed of transport ,
- reliability of transport,
- safety of transport process,
- level and cultural standard of travelling (applies to passenger transport).

The reliability and safety of transport are considered to be the basic criteria for the evaluation of the level and quality of transport. The reliability of transport can be determined on the basis of the extent, to which a required function of a certain system is fulfilled, according to set parameters or criteria. The safety of transport is defined as a quality of operating means of transport, the failure or damage of which will not (which is highly probably) jeopardise persons or environment or cause direct material and subsequent economic losses. These qualities can be perceived as a transport accident frequency which is evaluated on the basis of the number of accidents subject to the structure and severity of consequences. The transport requirements of customers differ mainly in dependence on the fact, if a passenger or freight transport is involved. (1)

The basic requirements of customers in the area of **freight transport**:

- continuous provision of services,
- high reliability,
- availability and capacity,
- flexible transport solutions in space and time,
- foreseeable time of delivery owing to IS,
- competitive and stable prices,
- high safety of transport,
- no damage to load.

The upkeeping of quality during the entire transportation will become more and more important in the area of freight transport. The criterion “speed of transport” as a transport quality indicator is becoming less important. The customer requires that a shipment is delivered with a determined period, whereby the transport quality is measured based on such requirement. Among other quality factors of increasing importance is an effective IS providing customers with up-to-date information during the entire transport chain. The customers of **passenger transport** require transport services to be mainly:

- smooth,
- unlimited,

- fast,
- comfortable and safe,
- connected with an intermodal transport information offer,
- connected with an intermodal sale of tickets,
- provided by an adequate vehicle fleet, etc.

When the customer is deciding on the way of transport, the quality and scope of provided services plays a key role. It is becoming common that the passenger is willing to pay a higher price for above-standard services. The “comfort of purchase” is becoming a more and more crucial factor in the area of transportation of passengers. It includes the problem not only where but also how the relevant service will be sold. The aim is to eliminate the barriers faced by the consumer. This approach is clear – the issue is not how the consumer will get to the product but rather how the product will get to the consumer. [1] In public passenger transport, it is possible to make the product available, for example, through the SMS sale of tickets.

### **3. HR INFLUENCE ON THE QUALITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICE**

Within the process of provision and consumption of services in the area of transport, emphasis is laid mainly on the quality and use of capacities. The marketing of transport services is thus dominated by the requirement for the flexibility of the provider of services on all levels of the management as well as on the level of staff who is directly involved in the provision of services and is in contact with the customer. Whereas the area of services is, in general, typical of a low level of anonymity of the service provider, the requirements placed on the quality of work and standards of professional approach to customers during direct interaction are becoming dominant. It is obvious that the quality of services perceived by customers is also largely affected by the premises of contact places and provision of the service itself, in addition to the requirements for the staff and level of technical devices (means of transport, handling equipment, etc.). The perception of quality of a transport service is affected by:

- **Direct contact** – Within the process of the provision and consumption of a service in the area of transport, three subjects are involved:
  - a) Client** – It is a subject who initiates and finances the provision of a service, whereby it must not be necessarily the receiver of a service (services provided in the public interest).
  - b) Provider** – It is a subject who provides for the presence of a service in terms of place and time. Among the main elements on the part of the provider is staff, equipment at the place of the provision of a service and technical devices and instruments. An important part is constituted by staff that is in direct contact with the object of the working process.

- c) Object of service** – It can be a person or article which is moved in space as a result of the process of the provision of a service and which specific quality is often changed as a result of supplementary services. The persons can be connected with the process of the provision of a service in various ways, i.e. they can act as:
- initiator,
  - client,
  - influencer,
  - receiver of a service,
  - informant of the provider of a service,
  - active staff in the process of the provision of a service,
  - person who automatically manages the sequence of individual steps of the process.

As the customer can play different roles during the provision of a service, it often becomes co-responsible for the quality and result of a service (e.g. in case of the provision of information – true information concerning the type and qualities of transported load). (4;1)

- **Marketing orientation in the process of the production of a service** – During the process of the provision of a service, the consumer is present to the extent, to which the consumer itself acts as an external factor. It is thus apparent in what way it is necessary to approach the structure and course of a service from a marketing point of view. It is necessary to focus on the demand needs while creating a service (the environment of interaction with the customer, provision of supplementary services, etc.). Furthermore, it is necessary to pay attention to the preparation of the provision of services in direct contact with the customer.
- **Asymmetric division of information** – Important qualities of services are often unknown and unperceivable to the customer or the customer is hardly able to assess them which means that there exists asymmetric division of information among the involved parties during their mutual interaction.
- **Demarketing in case of simultaneously rendered services** – As a result of integration of an external factor, it often happens with some types of transport services that a service is consumed at the presence of other consumers which means that the quality of a service and its subjective perception by the customer is affected by the qualities and behaviour of other consumers (public passenger transport). If rules and obligations connected with the consumption of a provided service are clearly set, it is possible to affect the quality of a service so that the service meets certain standards in this respect (the elimination of non-adaptable customers or customers giving offence, etc.). (3;5)

The quality of services in the area of transport is influenced by several factors affecting the perception of the level of a transport service as a whole. In this aspect, it is important to define all important elements affecting the perception of quality by the customer. On the basis of such elements, it is possible to determinate the most crucial phenomena influencing the

perception of the level of quality and thus representing the most effective way of improving the quality of transportation services. The continuous increasing of quality of services is becoming one of the main competitive advantages on the global market and is therefore a strategic point for each company which, at the end, can affect its entire standing.

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