Impact of Service Performance on Commuter Satisfaction in Public Transport: A Case Study of Sajha Yatayat in Kathmandu Valley

Arhan Sthapit

Professor, Faculty of Management & Law, Nepal Open University

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2799-4936

E-mail: arhan@nou.edu.np

Rashesh Vaidya

Faculty Member, Faculty of Management & Law, Nepal Open University

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1536-6032

E-mail: rashesh@nou.edu.np (Corresponding author)

Ganesh Bahadur B.K.

Master's Student, Dhulagari Multiple Campus

Email: bishwakarmaganesh0@gmail.com

Abstract

Public transportation is essential for urban mobility, with service performance being a key factor in customer satisfaction. Sajha Yatayat - a government-backed public transport service - has established itself as a leading provider, aimed to deliver reliable, affordable, and efficient bus services to the community. This study examines the SERVPERF dimensions of Sajha Yatayat's services in the Kathmandu Valley, focusing on dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and culture. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement, providing actionable insights for enhancing service delivery and fostering a more commuter-centric public transport system. Based on the questionnaire survey successfully administered on 180 commuters sampled using a convenience sampling method, the study utilised descriptive and inferential analysis tools and concluded that reliability emerged as the key strength of Sajha Yatayat, while empathy was identified as a weakness within the SERVPERF framework among the sampled commuters. Overall, commuter satisfaction with Sajha's services was moderately high. The findings are expected to be instrumental in providing public service management and policymakers with valuable insights to enhance service delivery systems, ensuring they better meet the needs of their target beneficiaries.

Introduction

Nepal Transport Service launched a local bus service in September 1959 connecting Kathmandu and Lalitpur, the two cities of the Kathmandu Valley, initiating public transportation in Nepal. At its peak before shutting down in 1966, it operated a fleet of 11 buses, catering to over 10,000 passengers daily. Sajha Yatayat, a cooperative, began mass transit services in 1961/62, offering routes within the Kathmandu Valley and its neighboring districts. In 1975, electric trolleybuses were introduced on a 13 km route from Tripureshwor to Suryabinayak. Both Sajha Yatayat and the trolleybuses provided efficient public transport in the Kathmandu Valley for decades, but their prominence declined after 1990 due to mismanagement and political interference, coinciding with the rise of private sector involvement in transportation. The privatization of public transport increased the number of operators, but service quality worsened over time due to the syndicate system and the government's lack of effective planning and regulation (CANN & UNHABITAT, 2014).

Public transportation is a critical component of daily life, as it facilitates the movement of people across the valley for work, education, and other activities. However, the public transportation system in the Kathmandu Valley faces numerous challenges, which affect its service quality and user satisfaction. These challenges become particularly evident when analyzed through the SERVPERF (Service Performance) model, which assesses service quality across five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).

In the context of Nepal, Karki and Shahi (2019) assessed the service quality of public transport services of S-5 route in Kathmandu Valley, where the service was found to be of good quality. Similarly, Singh and Karki (2024) found piles of dissatisfaction among the commuters using one of the privately-operated public transportations in Kathmandu. However, the proper ticketing system in public transportation had increased time in collecting fares. Bhele and Rajchal (2023) pointed out the importance of quality public transport facilities in enhancing the quality of life of an individual. Undoubtedly, public transportation is crucial for passengers, providing safe, efficient, and affordable transportation services. It enhances the quality of life by allowing access to work, schools, and economic activities. The authors further added that the public perception of public transport services, including insurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangible, and comfort, is low in context to Nepal. However, with reference to college students, Eboli and Mazzulla (2007) found that route characteristics, complaints, and bus stop maintenance significantly influence global customer satisfaction and service quality attributes in a public transport service.

Beyond the SERVPERF dimensions, the public transportation system in Kathmandu Valley faces several systemic challenges. Severe traffic congestion delays public transportation and reduces its efficiency, while the high number of old, poorly maintained vehicles contributes to air pollution, affecting both passengers and the environment (ADB, 2019). The absence of a unified public transportation system leads to inefficiencies and confusion for passengers, and many areas, particularly on the outskirts of the valley, multi-occupancy of vehicles within the roads of the valley have limited or no access to public transportation (Bhattarai et al., 2019). These challenges underscore the need for comprehensive reforms to improve the quality and accessibility of public transportation in the region. In this context, the present study aims to evaluate the impact of Sajha Yatayat's service performance (SERVPERF) on commuter satisfaction in the Kathmandu Valley.

Literature Review

Eboli and Mazzulla (2007) explored the impact of the relationship between global customer satisfaction and service quality attributes. The public transport service analyzed is the bus service habitually used by University of Calabria students to reach the campus from the urban area of Cosenza (southern Italy). The study used data from a survey of students to calibrate the model. Results showed that route characteristics significantly influenced network design, complaints significantly impacted service planning and reliability, and bus stop maintenance significantly impacted comfort and other factors latent variables, despite other factors having significant weight.

Randheer et al. (2011) examined the commuters' perception on service quality offered by the public transport services of twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, India. In general, people of the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad benefit from the service quality delivery by public transport services. The paper had identified that there is a need and scope to develop a distinctive measurement scale to measure service quality in public. The paper revealed that the expectations of commuters in terms of service quality are delivered by the public transport services.

Ojo et al. (2014) found the SERVQUAL scale revealed that respondents in Ghana's Cape Coast-Accra Route, public transport, had a poor perception of service quality. They were dissatisfied with over half of the attributes, including staff satisfaction, schedules, safety, politeness, occupational knowledge, confidence in staff behaviour, ample legroom, convenient operating hours, easy accessibility of information, personalized attention, timely and efficient services, clear communication with staff, and willingness to help passengers. The study highlights the need for improved service quality in public transport.

Yaya (2015) evaluated customers' perceived service quality in public transport then identifying the demographic characteristics factors that may influence customer perceived service quality and as well as identify any customers' perceptions differences between the subcategories. The study found that age, driving license, and physical environment quality are key factors affecting customer perceived quality in public transport settings. Education negatively impacts perceived quality, while being a car user and gender does not. Younger commuters have lower perceptions of service quality compared to adults.

Amponsah and Adams (2016) found a significant correlation between service quality and customer satisfaction in Vancouver Lower Mainland public transport operations. Overcrowding negatively affected satisfaction, while late-hour services negatively affected overall satisfaction and fair value. Manikandan and Vanniarajan (2016) evaluated passengers' perception of service quality in bus services and overall satisfaction at State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) in Tamil Nadu of India. Service quality factors such as planning, network, safety, cleanliness, comfort, and receptivity significantly impacted satisfaction. Reliability, personnel, and information variables also influenced service planning.

Ramalingam (2018) evaluated how service quality attributes are important to predict the customer attitudinal loyalty among long distance public bus travelers of Tamil Nadu. Using Importance-performance matrix analysis (IPMA) showed that bus stop quality and bus services are important factors to improve the satisfaction level of the customers and to retain them

Etuk (2021) identified reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance as key factors influencing passenger satisfaction in Calabar, suggesting that transportation companies should prioritize these dimensions to enhance user experiences. Similarly, Sukhov et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of attributes such as reliability, functionality, comfort, courtesy, simplicity, and safety in driving overall travel satisfaction in a Swedish city. Their study also revealed that contextual improvements in public transport services, particularly post-intervention, significantly boosted satisfaction levels, with all attributes (except information).

The study of Tuan et al. (2022) on transit service in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam, demonstrated that the three-factor theory, which has been limitedly utilized despite being more advantageous and robust, is superior to the IPA. Although the extent to which the service quality factors affect satisfaction varied across rider segments, the types of service quality factors were found to be consistent. The paper also found that captive riders (those who had no own vehicle) considered all service factors as performance. Non-captive riders considered the environment factor exciting.

Abude and Okeke (2023) found no significant positive relationship between accessibility and satisfaction with transportation service quality in Nigerian mass transit companies. However, there was a significant positive relationship between comfort and satisfaction with the quality of mass transit services. Ismael et al. (2023) found that service hour, proximity, and frequency were key predictors of satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic in Budapest, while temperature and cleanliness were not significant. Kewate and Gandhewar (2023) studied passenger attitudes and satisfaction towards services provided by the Maharashtra State Road Transportation Corporation in India, finding that opinions varied based on age-group and gender.

In a Nepalese study, Singh and Karki (2024) reported that 59 percent of the Nepal Yatayat passengers felt uncomfortable with bus seating and internal space arrangements, while 78.1 percent reported dissatisfaction with cleanliness standards. 42.9 percent felt safe on buses, while 30.8 percent were dissatisfied with punctuality, and 37.7 percent rated staff behaviour as poor, indicating a need for improvement in professionalism. Overcrowding was a significant concern, with 67.1 percent agreeing that buses were frequently crowded, and 45.1 percent believed the station locations were appropriate.

Study Methods

The paper intends to assess the impact of service performance on customer satisfaction in public transportation in Kathmandu Valley. The study followed a correlation research design to analyze the relationship among the variables related to SERVQUAL and customer satisfaction. All the commuters taking a ride of local buses operating within Kathmandu Valley are the population of this study of which only the commuters of the Sajha Yatayat were considered as the sample of the study. The Sajha Yatayat has been operating three types of buses with different seat capacities. As of the beginning of 2025, the Sajha Yatayat has been running the fleet of 111 buses, among which 40 are electric (EV) buses and operating on seven routes in two districts of the Kathmandu Valley: Kathmandu and Lalitpur (Sajha Yatayat, 2025).

This study considers all commuters using Sajha buses across seven routes as the population, from which a sample of 180 commuters was successfully surveyed in the month of January 2025 using a self-administered questionnaire. The sampled commuters were surveyed while Sajha buses operated at full seating capacity, ensuring their opinions were gathered during typical peak travel conditions.

This study has adopted the constructs of SERVPERF, i.e., RRATE used by Ojo et al. (2014) with addition to construct of culture's items from Randheer et al. (2011) followed by Sukhov et al. (2021) for customer satisfaction. The paper further conducted the reliability test of each construct

after a pilot study among 50 commuters, using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability results for the constructs have been illustrated below:

Table 1

Reliability Results

Constructs	Initial Items	Items Dropped	Revised Alpha Values
Reliability	5	None	0.807
Responsiveness	5	2	0.799
Assurance	5	None	0.829
Tangibility	5	2	0.723
Empathy	5	None	0.793
Culture	5	None	0.831
Customer Satisfaction	5	None	0.853

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

All constructs demonstrate acceptable to high reliability (alpha > 0.7). Responsiveness and Tangibility required dropping 2 items each to achieve acceptable reliability. Customer Satisfaction has the highest reliability (0.853), followed by the dimensions of Culture (0.831) and Assurance (0.829). The constructs are well-measured, with no major reliability concerns.

Data Analysis and Results

This section of the paper presents the respondents' profile and opinions on the SERVPERF of the Sajha Yatayat, the sampled public transportation institution.

Respondents' Profile

Table 2 presents the respondents' demographic information and their purpose for bus travel.

Table 2

Commuters' Profile

Gender		Age Group		Profession		Purpose of Travelling	
Sex	Ratio	Age Group	Ratio	Profession	Ratio	Purpose	Ratio
Male	95 (52.8)	Below 20	52 (28.9)	Students	119 (66.1)	Going to college	78 (43.3)
Female	85 (47.2)	20-30	98 (54.4)	Jobholders	51 (28.3)	Going to school	24 (13.3)
		31-40	18 (10.0)	Business	7 (3.9)	Recreation	15 (8.3)
		41-50	6 (3.3)	Housewife	2 (1.1)	Relatives	5 (2.8)
		51 and above	6 (3.3)	Freelancer	1 (0.6)	Hospital	3 (1.7)
						Shopping	2 (1.1)
						Total	180 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Male respondents constitute the majority with 95 individuals (52.8%), while female respondents make up 85 (47.2%). Most commuters are students aged 20-30, primarily traveling for educational purposes.

Opinions on SERVPERF of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

This section covers the opinions on SERVPERF of the sampled commuters of the Sajha Yatayat bus services.

Opinions on Reliability of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 3 presents the surveyed commuters' opinion on the reliability of the services of the Sajha Yatayat:

Table 3

Opinions on Reliability (REL) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Commuters get a ticket easily.	3.93	1.17	-1.10
The Sajha bus operates reliably without breakdowns on the road.	3.54	1.05	-0.58
The Sajha bus always arrives on time.	3.53	1.03	-0.80
Sajha buses operate according to a scheduled timetable.	3.49	1.09	-0.70
Bus staff promptly and accurately fulfil commuters' request on the first attempt.	3.44	1.13	-0.53
Overall Average	3.58		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Table 3 indicates that commuters generally have a positive perception of Sajha Yatayat's services, with an overall average score of 3.58 points. Sajha Yatayat performs well in ticketing as being first of its kind to provide a ticket to each commuter but needs to improve punctuality and staff responsiveness. Negative skewness across all items indicates a tendency toward higher satisfaction, but the variability suggests inconsistent experiences among commuters. Overall, the service is reliable but not exceptional, with areas for improvement to enhance commuter satisfaction.

Opinions on Responsiveness of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 4 exhibits the surveyed commuters' opinion on the responsiveness of the services of the Sajha Yatayat:

Table 4

Opinions on Responsiveness (RES) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Bus staff are always willing to help commuters.	3.59	1.09	-0.78
Bus staff provide individualised attention to help commuters.	3.21	1.12	-0.27
Sajha Yatayat informs commuters in advance about service availability and fare changes.	3.11	1.17	-0.12
Overall Average	3.30		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Staff willingness to help is a strength, but the service lacks consistent individualized attention and proactive communication. The negative skewness across all items suggests a tendency toward positive responses, but the variability indicates inconsistent experiences. To improve responsiveness, Sajha Yatayat should focus on better communication strategies and training staff to provide more personalized assistance.

Opinions on Assurance of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 5 presents commuters' perspectives on the assurance provided by Sajha Yatayat's services.

Table 5

Opinions on Assurance (ASSUR) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Bus commuters feel secure when conducting transactions with the bus staff.	3.72	1.14	-0.78
Commuters' luggage/belongings are safe on Sajha buses.	3.56	1.13	-0.55
The behaviour of bus staff builds confidence among commuters.	3.46	1.07	-0.35
Bus staff have in-depth knowledge of their job/ occupation.	3.41	1.09	-0.40
Sajha bus staff are always polite.	3.36	1.04	-0.23
Overall Average	3.50		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Table 5 indicates that commuters feel secure in transactions and moderately confident about luggage safety, highlighting these as key strengths of the service. However, staff behavior, knowledge, and politeness emerge as areas requiring improvement to enhance commuter confidence further. Negative skewness across all items indicates a tendency toward positive responses, but the variability suggests inconsistent experiences. To enhance assurance, Sajha Yatayat should focus on staff training to improve politeness, deepen job knowledge, and ensure consistent, confidence-building behaviour.

Opinions on Tangibility of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 6 presents the surveyed commuters' opinion on the tangibility of the services of the Sajha Yatayat:

Table 6

Opinions on Tangibility (TAN) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Sajha buses are well ventilated.	3.61	1.17	-0.60
Sajha buses have ample legroom and foot space.	3.47	1.16	-0.52
The Sajha bus has spacious seats for commuters.	3.37	1.21	-0.37
Overall Average	3.48		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Table 6 shows a moderate level of satisfaction with the tangibility of Sajha Yatayat's services, reflected in an overall average score of 3.48. Ventilation in Sajha buses stands out as a strength, enhancing commuter comfort, while legroom and seat spaciousness remain areas for improvement. Negative skewness across all items indicates a tendency toward positive responses, but the variability suggests inconsistent experiences. To enhance tangibility, Sajha Yatayat could focus on redesigning seating arrangements to provide more spacious and comfortable seating, as well as ensuring consistent legroom across all buses.

Opinions on Empathy of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 7 showcases the surveyed commuters' opinion on the empathy of the services of the Sajha Yatayat:

Table 7

Opinions on Empathy (EMP) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Sajha bus stations are easy to locate and access.	3.75	1.07	-0.66
Sajha Yatayat provides easily accessible service information	3.47	1.06	-0.57
Sajha buses operate at convenient hours.	3.34	1.02	-0.42
Sajha Yatayat prioritises commuters' interests.	3.23	1.08	-0.31
Bus staff are skilled in managing crowded commuters.	3.22	1.19	-0.26
Overall Average	3.40		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Table 7 shows that station accessibility and service information are strengths, contributing to commuter convenience for Sajha Yatayat. Improvements in operating hours, commuter prioritization, and crowd management are essential to strengthening empathy in Sajha Yatayat's services. Negative skewness across all items indicates a tendency towards positive responses, but the variability suggests inconsistent experiences. To improve empathy, Sajha Yatayat should focus on extending or adjusting operating hours, training staff in effective crowd management, and ensuring commuter interests are consistently prioritized.

Opinions on Culture of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 9 presents the surveyed Sajha Yatayat passengers' perspectives on the cultural aspects of Sajha's services.:

Table 8

Opinions on Culture (CULT) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Sajha Yatayat enjoys a positive reputation among the local people/population.	3.62	1.04	-0.47
Sajha Yatayat aligns with local values.	3.48	0.96	-0.24
Sajha bus staff prioritise punctuality and clear communication over personal interaction	3.47	1.03	-0.48
Sajha Yatayat is committed to the welfare of society.	3.45	0.96	-0.29
Sajha Yatayat respects and upholds local culture.	3.27	1.04	-0.30
Overall Average	3.46		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Sajha Yatayat's positive reputation (3.62 points) and alignment with local values are key strengths, contributing to its cultural acceptance. Punctuality, communication, and social welfare commitment are moderately rated, highlighting the room for improvement. Respect for local culture emerges as the weakest area, underscoring the need for greater focus on cultural integration and sensitivity. Negative skewness across all items indicates a tendency toward positive responses, but the variability suggests some inconsistency in passenger experiences. To strengthen its cultural alignment, Sajha Yatayat should focus on enhancing its respect for local culture and reinforcing its commitment to social welfare through visible initiatives.

Opinions on Commuter's Satisfaction of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Table 9 displays the perceptions of surveyed commuters regarding their satisfaction with Sajha Yatayat's services.

Table 9

Opinions on Commuter's Satisfaction (SAT) of the Sajha Yatayat Buses' Services

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
I am satisfied with the seat positioning and the allocation of seats for those in need, including women, pregnant women, children, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities.	4.07	1.18	-1.19
I am satisfied with the onboard announcements of bus stations.	3.82	1.14	-0.79
I am satisfied with the safety and security measures implemented by Sajha buses.	3.76	1.16	-0.83
I am satisfied with the punctuality, and the location of bus stops within the city.	3.67	1.09	-0.75
I am satisfied with the amenities provided on Sajha buses.	3.48	0.97	-0.34
Overall Average	3.76		

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

Table 9 highlights that Sajha Yatayat excels in seat allocation for special needs and onboard announcements — key strengths that drive high commuter satisfaction and are consistently maintained, setting it apart from other public transport service providers. Safety, punctuality, and bus stop locations are well received by the passengers, but they could be further improved to enhance the commuter experience. Amenities are the weakest area, although provided by the sampled company than other competitors in the market, suggesting a need for better facilities (e.g., Wi-Fi, charging ports, or improved seating comfort) being as a benchmark in the Nepalese public transportation to initiate Intelligent Transport System (ITS) using the latest technology-GPS tracking system and installation of close-circuit (CC) camera in public buses. Negative skewness across all items indicates a strong tendency toward positive responses, though the variability suggests some inconsistency in experiences. To maintain and improve satisfaction, Sajha Yatayat should focus on enhancing amenities and ensuring consistent punctuality and safety measures.

Correlation Analysis

Table 10 presents the correlation coefficients among the dependent and independent variables for the SERVPERF and customer satisfaction among the commuters of the Sajha Yatayat:

Table 10

Correlation Matrix

Variables	REL	RES	ASSUR	TAN	EMP	CULT	SAT
REL	1						
RES	0.568**	1					
	(0.000)						
ASSUR	0.652**	0.637**	1				
	(0.000)	(0.000)					
TAN	0.548**	0.424**	0.513**	1			
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)				
EMP	0.535**	0.562**	0.707**	0.636**	1		
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)			
CULT	0.630**	0.581**	0.765**	0.580**	0.768**	1	
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)		
SAT	0.665**	0.616**	0.668**	0.607**	0.722**	0.752**	1
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	

Source: Field Survey, Jan. 2025

*Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 10 reveals that intangible factors — such as culture, empathy, and assurance — have a stronger influence on commuter satisfaction than tangible factors like physical infrastructure within the SERVPERF framework of Sajha Yatayat. Therefore, to improve commuter satisfaction, Sajha Yatayat should focus on cultivating a positive cultural image, showing empathy, and building trust through assurance. Although reliability, responsiveness, and tangibility remain important, their overall impact appears comparatively smaller. Furthermore, the correlation matrix in Table 10 reveals evidence of multicollinearity among culture, empathy, and assurance, indicating these dimensions are closely interconnected in shaping commuter perceptions.

Conclusion and Implications

The analysis of SERVPERF dimensions for Sajha Yatayat bus services reveals that while the service is generally perceived as reliable — particularly in ticketing — there are areas needing improvement, notably in punctuality and staff responsiveness and empathy. Strengths of Sajha Yatayat include staff willingness to help, secure transactions, good ventilation, and station accessibility. However, individualized attention, proactive communication, staff behaviour, seat comfort, operating hours, and crowd management require enhancement, as far as the service performance of the public transporter is concerned. Moreover, the company's cultural alignment and reputation are valued, though greater emphasis on respecting local culture and social welfare

could further improve the perceptions of the Sajha service customers. Overall, intangible factors like culture, empathy, and assurance show a stronger correlation with commuter satisfaction than tangible factors, indicating that Sajha Yatayat should prioritize these aspects to elevate service quality and enhance the commuter experience.

The findings from the SERVPERF analysis of Sajha Yatayat bus services have several important implications for improving service quality and enhancing commuter satisfaction:

Focus on Intangible Factors: There is the need to foster positive organizational culture, demonstrate empathy, and build trust through consistent and reliable service in Sajha Yatayat.

Improving Reliability and Punctuality: Sajha Yatayat should adhere to scheduled timetables, minimize breakdowns, and promptly address commuter requests to enhance service reliability and build confidence.

Enhancing Responsiveness: The Sajha Yatayat management should make efforts to strengthen individualized attention and proactive communication to ensure commuters feel valued and well-informed.

Upgrading Tangibility: There is the need for improving legroom, seat spaciousness, and overall comfort in Sajha Yatayat to enhance the tangible experience for commuters.

Strengthening Empathy: To improve the service performance, Sajha Yatayat should extend operating hours, improve crowd management, and prioritize commuter interests to enhance empathy.

Cultural Integration and Social Welfare: The Sajha Yatayat management should emphasize respect for local culture and reinforce commitment to social welfare.

Addressing Variability in Experiences: Service quality should be standardized to ensure a consistently positive experience for all commuters of Sajha Yatayat.

Investing in Amenities: It is also essential for investing in providing Wi-Fi access, mobile-charging ports, and improved seating comfort to make Sajha Yatayat more competitive and appealing to commuters.

Thus, the study findings suggest that Nepal Government-run Sajha Yatayat should prioritize improving intangible service aspects — such as empathy, assurance, and cultural alignment — to enhance overall commuter satisfaction more effectively than focusing solely on physical upgrades. Strengthening staff training, personalized service, and social responsibility initiatives could foster greater trust, loyalty, and a more positive public image.

References

Abude, P., & Okeke, T.C. (2023). Customer satisfaction and transportation service quality of mass transit operators in South-South States. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 4*(5), 3924-3933.

Amponsah, C.T., & Adams, S. (2016). Service quality and customer satisfaction in public transport operations. *International Journal of Services and Operations Management, 25*(4), 531-549. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSOM.2016.080279

Asian Development Bank (ADB). (2019). *Urban transport development in Nepal*. https://www.adb.org

Bhattarai, K., Yousef, M., Greife, A., & Lama, S. (2019). Decision-aiding transit-tracker methodology for bus scheduling using real time information to ameliorate traffic congestion in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. *Journal of Geographic Information System, 11*(2), 239-291. https://doi.org/10.4236/jgis.2019.112016

Bhele, R., & Rajchal, P. (2023). The effect of public transport services on quality of life: A case on road section from Dhulikhle to Ratnapark. *Journal of Engineering Research and Applied Science, 12*(1), 2277-2284.

CANN & UN HABITAT (2014). *Public transportation in Kathmandu Valley: Restructuring and reforming the system: MaYa Fact Sheet #4*. https://www.cen.org.np/uploads/doc/public-transportation-in-kv-maya-factsheet-4-60b9e4406ee31.pdf

Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(3), 55-68. https://doi.org/10.2307/1252296

Eboli, L., & Mazzulla, G. (2007). Service quality attributes affecting customer satisfaction for bus transit. *Journal of Public Transportation, 10*(3), 21-34. https://doi.org/10.5038/2375-0901.10.3.2

Etuk, A. (2021). Service quality and passengers' satisfaction of public road transportation firms. *International Multilingual Journal of Science and Technology, 6*(6), 3262-3271.

Ismael, K., Esztergár-Kiss, D., & Duleba, S. (2023). Evaluating the quality of the public transport service during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perception of two user groups. *European Transport Research Review, 15*(5), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12544-023-00578-1

Karki, B., & Shahi, P.B. (2019). *Assessing the service quality of public transport service: A case of S-5 route in Kathmandu Valley.* Proceedings of IOE Graduate Conference, 2019-Summer, 6, 739-744.

Kewate, S.R., &. Gandhewar, V.R. (2023). Perception-satisfaction based quality assessment of public transportation services using SERVQUAL model. *Tuijin Jishu/Journal of Propulsion Technology, 44*(4), 871-895.

Manikandan, B., & Vanniarajan, T. (2016). Service quality in bus services: An empirical study in Tamil Nadu. *Shanlax International Journal of Management, 4*(2), 28-45.

Randheer, K., Al-Motawa, A.A., & Vijaya J., P. (2011). Measuring commuters' perception on service quality using SERVQUAL in public transportation. *International Journal of Marketing Studies, 3*(1), 21-34.

Ramalingam, M. (2018). Evaluation of service quality attributes in public bus transport corporation using importance-performance map analysis. *International Journal of Advanced in Management, Technology and Engineering Sciences,8*(5), 65-70.

Sajha Yatayat (2025). *About Us.* https://sajhayatayat.com.np/about-us

Singh, B., & Karki, S. (2024). Customer satisfaction and service quality assessment of Nepal Yatayat public buses: A statistical analysis of passenger perceptions. *NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 1*(7), 67-80. https://doi.org/10.3126/nprcjmr.v1i7.72466

Sukhov, A., Lättman, K., Olsson, L.E., Friman, M., & Fujji, S. (2021). Assessing travel satisfaction in public transport: A configurational approach. *Transportation Research Part D, 93*(102732), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trd.2021.102732

Tuan, V.A., Truong, N.V., Tetsuo, S., & An, N.N. (2022). Public transport service quality: Policy prioritization strategy in the importance-performance analysis and the three-factor theory frameworks. *Transportation Research Part A, 166,* 118-134. Transportation Research Part A 166 (2022) 118–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2022.10.006

Yaya, L.H.P., Fortià, M.F., Canals, C.S., Marimon, F. (2015). Service quality assessment of public transport and the implication role of demographic characteristics. *Public Transport, 7*, 409–428. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12469-014-0099-7