Abstract

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Investigating the factors affecting transit user loyalty.

Public transit agencies are constantly looking for ways to increase their ridership. While many studies have attempted to identify the factors affecting new customer attraction, the issue of transit user loyalty has been far less researched. In addition to being a good indicator of a transit agency’s performance, customer loyalty provides several added benefits. Loyal customers are more likely to use the transit agency’s services and recommend them to potential new users. Furthermore, attracting users usually involves additional customer acquisition costs (e.g. marketing) not required in order to retain existing loyal users. This study used data provided by a mixed Stated Preference/Revealed Preference survey to identify some of the factors that affect customer loyalty in the context of public transit. Factors examined include service attributes, trip characteristics, as well as socioeconomic and psychological attributes of the individual. The findings suggest that service quality attributes play a critical role in transit user loyalty, while initiatives such as the provision of real-time information panels making park and ride facilities available have a less determinant effect on the customers’ mode shifting decisions, irrespective of their emotional response to public transit.