Railway Passenger Satisfaction:
How good is good?

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Executive Summary

How good is the UK rail industry? And how can the UK rail industry truly satisfy passengers?

This report:

- reviews relative passenger satisfaction in the UK (e.g. based on the national rail passenger survey) as compared to passenger satisfaction revealed by surveys in the rest of Europe;
- reviews what passenger satisfaction means and how it is measured; and
- discusses the divergence between reported satisfaction levels and public perception in the UK.

The appraisal of existing data on passenger satisfaction available for both the UK and the rest of Europe indicates that the UK is doing well in terms of overall satisfaction.

For example, the UK is doing well compared to other European States as it is ranked in the top three out of thirteen countries for satisfaction levels in thirteen out of fifteen categories. Categories in which the UK is 'top three' include frequency of trains, punctuality/reliability, cleanliness and maintenance of trains, provision of information during journeys, ease of buying tickets, cleanliness and good maintenance of stations and accessibility generally (to stations/platforms, trains carriages, booking process and ticket offices). The satisfaction levels are also improving at a UK national level (e.g. 80% to 83% for the 2011-17 period).

Clearly, indicators show that the UK is doing something right, even if these sorts of indicators are limited and do not always provide a true picture of the wider issues associated with the emotional connection (or lack of) experienced by passengers.

Nevertheless, the media frequently seems to portray the UK rail industry negatively: there seems to be a discrepancy in the UK between these statistical facts and the general public perception of rail travel.

In order to attempt to explain this gap between these diverging views, there has been a review of relevant academic literature and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from the UK rail industry.

Following this review, the conclusion is that the discrepancy is related to the type of portrait painted by satisfaction indicators. These tend to focus on the opinions of rail users in the immediate aftermath of their travels while the public perception of the railway is created by users and non-users based on views that are more emotional than rational. Further, the two main factors underpinning customer satisfaction and public opinion are Trust and Advocacy.

Reported statistical evidence suggests that there is a strong correlation (85%) between last journey satisfaction and trust. Key aspects considered to be the essential constituents of trust are; i) trust in service (day to day delivery e.g. punctuality), ii) trust in relationship (engagement and emotional factors e.g. customer communication) and iii) trust in judgement (integrity and reputation e.g. always doing the right thing, innovation). The indicators for UK passenger satisfaction indicate that while, statistically, levels are right, trust is low.

Data also shows that public sentiment is intrinsically linked to the emotional aspects towards railways and these, in turn, are also a question of advocacy. Advocacy of the railway by non-users shapes public opinion, as revealed by the improved favourability towards UK rail during and after the RDG's "Britain Runs on Rail" advertising campaign in 2016.

To close the gap between UK passenger satisfaction and trust, and in order to truly satisfy passengers, train operators can't stop at just delivering the rational aspects of the service (e.g. value for money, punctuality) but must go beyond to address those emotional aspects that build relationships.

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1 Introduction

This report aims to carry out an assessment of passenger satisfaction (e.g. the national rail passenger surveys) and associated indicators to explore their possible interdependencies from a qualitative perspective. It also discusses the potential factors influencing the apparent discrepancy between relatively high levels of satisfaction and poor general perception of the railway in the public opinion.

This document summarises and discusses existing data on passenger satisfaction available for both the UK and the rest of Europe, as well as other indicators such as deregulation levels (e.g. liberalisation of services) and performance to discuss the apparent discrepancy between comparatively higher levels of satisfaction in the UK and the perceived negativity associated with the industry in the public opinion.

Section 2 briefly describes the approach followed to complete this report, section 3 discusses how passenger satisfaction is measured and in particular the UK's National Rail Passenger Survey and an equivalent pan-European survey. Section 4 highlights additional indicators that might have an influence in overall satisfaction levels. Section 5 discusses the wider view of the railways in the public eye and the possible enablers of the aforementioned discrepancy between satisfaction and public sentiment. Section 6 summarises the main conclusions of this report while section 7 provides the details of the works referred within this document.

2
Approach

This work has applied a combined bottom-up and top-down methodology. A literature review and assessment of published work (bottom-up) underpins a qualitative process describing the use of indicators to measure satisfaction as well as discussing the potential underlying reasons between the existing satisfaction levels and the perceived levels portrayed in the public eye.

Selected semi-structured interviews with key stakeholder representatives from the UK rail industry have been undertaken (top-down) to investigate this phenomenon. The following diagram (Fig. 1) summarises this overall approach.

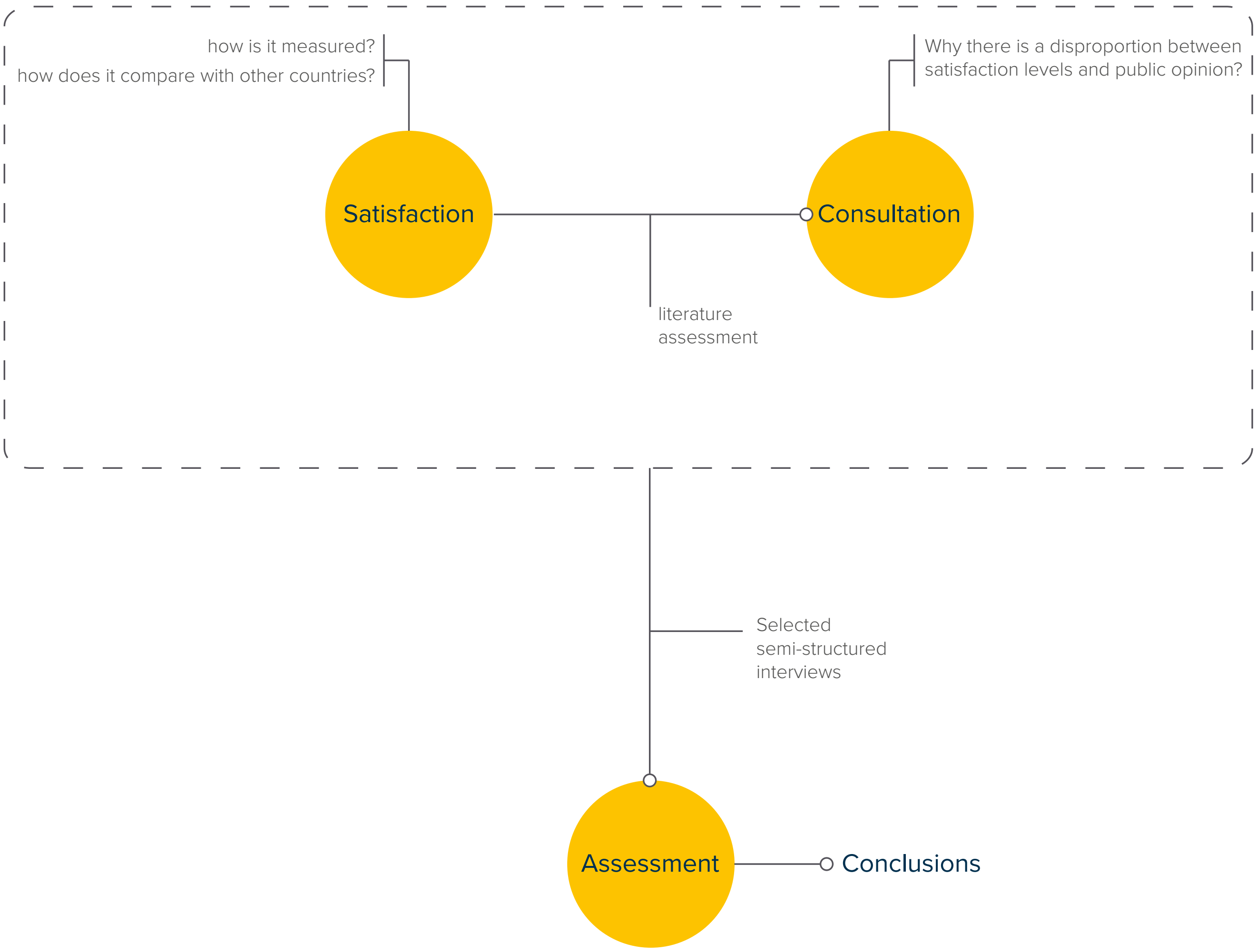


Fig 1. Overall approach

3
Measurement of satisfaction

Indicators are commonly used to measure passenger satisfaction, ranging from typical aspects such as punctuality and information provision to accessibility issues. This section describes and discusses key surveys aimed at measuring the level of satisfaction experienced by rail users in the UK and elsewhere.

3.1
Passenger satisfaction in the United Kingdom

The UK's national rail passenger survey (NRPS) is one of the largest of its kind, collecting information from a sample in excess of 29,000 participants every six months. This produces a snapshot of the passengers' mood and overall satisfaction with trains, stations and thirty three aspects of service provision (Transport Focus, 2016). The survey results rate the following aspects:

- Passengers journey for each train operating company (TOC);
- Operational sectors e.g. London and South East;
- Specific aspect of service provided by TOCs;
- Specific routes within TOCs;
- Station and train factors having the most significant influence on satisfaction levels.

Train factors are rated based on the TOC that operates the specific service on which the passenger has been travelling on. A summary translating the above rating into a national perspective is also provided in the NRPS as it is a more detailed evaluation of the performance of each individual TOC.

The latest set of results (Spring 2017) were published in July 2017 and are summarised in Table 1 below:

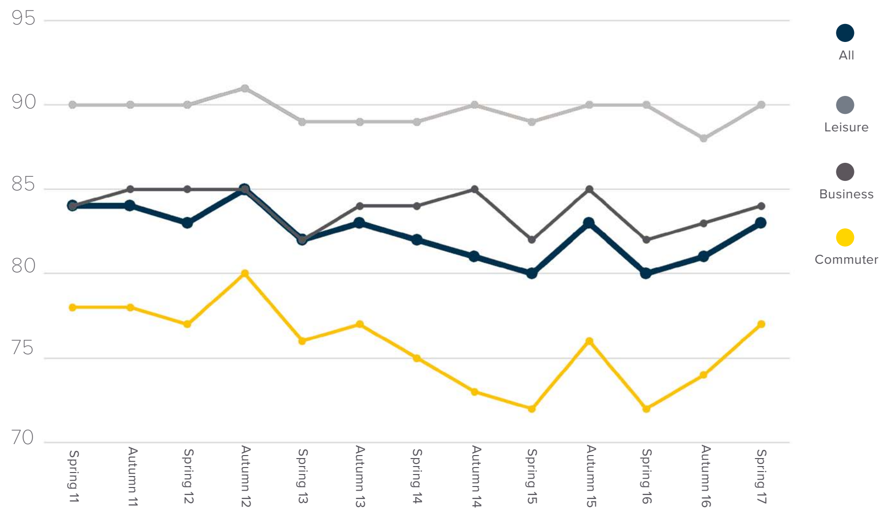
Area	Key outcome
General	National overall journey satisfaction of 83% (Commuting 77%, Business 84% and Leisure 90%)
TOCs	Overall satisfaction between 72% and 97%
	Highest satisfaction ratings for Hull Trains (97%), Heathrow Express (97%), Grand Central (94%) and Merseyrail (94%)
Routes	Overall satisfaction by individual routes within TOCs between 63% and 97%
	Highest satisfaction ratings for the Virgin trains London-Manchester route (97%), Merseyrail-Wirral route (97%) Chiltern Railways West Midlands (96%), Virgin Trains London-North Wales (96%) and Grand Central's London-Bradford route (96%)
	Routes operated in London and the South East show positive satisfaction ratings of 82%
	Operators of long distance routes were rated positively by 89% of passengers
	Operators of regional routes were rated positively by 87% of passengers

Area	Key outcome
Punctuality	77% of passengers nationally were satisfied with punctuality/reliability
	Satisfaction with punctuality/reliability at route level vary between 51% and 98%
	Highest satisfaction ratings given to South West Train's Island Line (98%), Grand Central London-Bradford (97%) and ScotRail Rural (96%)
Ticketing	47% Value for money satisfaction nationally
	Value for money satisfaction by individual routes between 33% and 87%
	Highest value for money ratings given to Grand Central London-Bradford (87%), ScotRail's Rural routes (77%) and Northern (Arriva) North East (73%)

Table 1. Summary of outcomes for the Spring 2017 NRPS, adapted from (Transport Focus, 2017)

It is interesting to stress that overall satisfaction levels have been relatively stable over the past twelve NRPS conducted in the 2011-17 period. Regardless of journey or sector/route type assessment, the overall satisfaction level has stayed within the 80-84% bracket (Fig. 2)

It is also important to stress that not all factors have equal relevance to the overall satisfaction, so a focus on those issues with greater influence are bound to drive performance levels. The analysis carried out by Transport Focus (2017) highlights punctuality (37%) as the most significant aspect driving overall satisfaction followed by cleanliness inside a train (16%). Similarly, the assessment attributes an overwhelming relevance to the way train companies deal with delays (55%) as the main contributing factor impacting dissatisfaction, followed by a punctuality (12%).



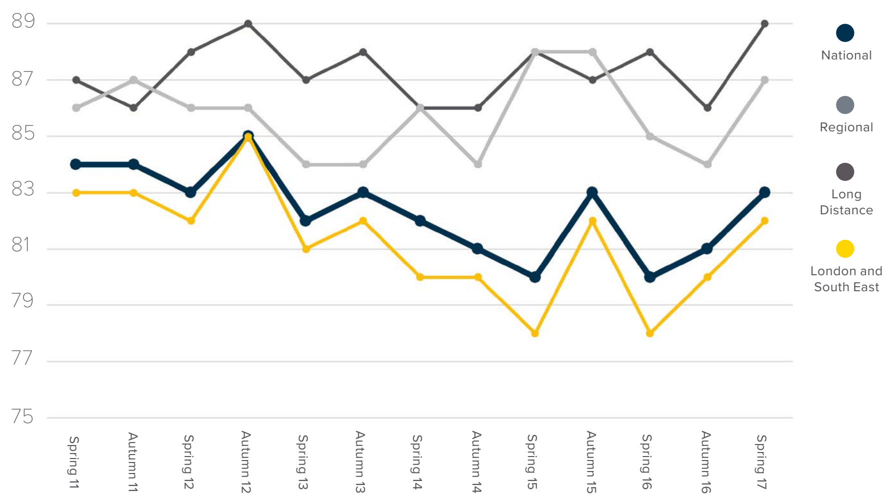


Fig 2. Overall national satisfaction levels for the 2011-16 period (Transport Focus, 2017)

3.2
Passenger satisfaction elsewhere

A survey (European Commission, 2013) was conducted in late 2013 at the European level to analyse passenger satisfaction with rail and urban transport services. This study is an extended follow-up on a similar previous study completed in 2011. The survey was carried out to provide i) a measure of satisfaction with rail services across Europe and ii) an understanding of key accessibility issues and the related level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the service provision in this respect. Three overall areas were explored i.e. satisfaction levels with stations, railway travel in general and accessibility issues. All three had a number of sub-categories addressing issues such as ease of buying tickets (satisfaction with stations), frequency of trains (satisfaction with rail travel) and accessibility of carriages (satisfaction with accessibility).

The sample size of this survey was just over 26,000 respondents which is very similar to the NRPS exercise carried out in the UK when looking at global satisfaction levels. The main difference being that the former includes citizens that do not use the railways.

The results portray a general image of the typical European passenger as someone that is likely to be in his/her twenties, studying or having recently completed higher education and living in a city within a distance to a station of 10 minutes or less. Those UK respondents who only use the trains once a year or less/never, indicted that the biggest factor preventing them to travelling by train was difficulties in getting to the station (21%).

The first cluster included in this study focused on railway stations. Citizens that use the railway in Europe tend to be broadly satisfied with stations, particularly with regards to information provision about timetables and ease of buying tickets. Cleanliness and particularly the complaint-handing processes available in stations were the main areas where dissatisfaction was present. The following graph (Fig. 3) summarises these results.

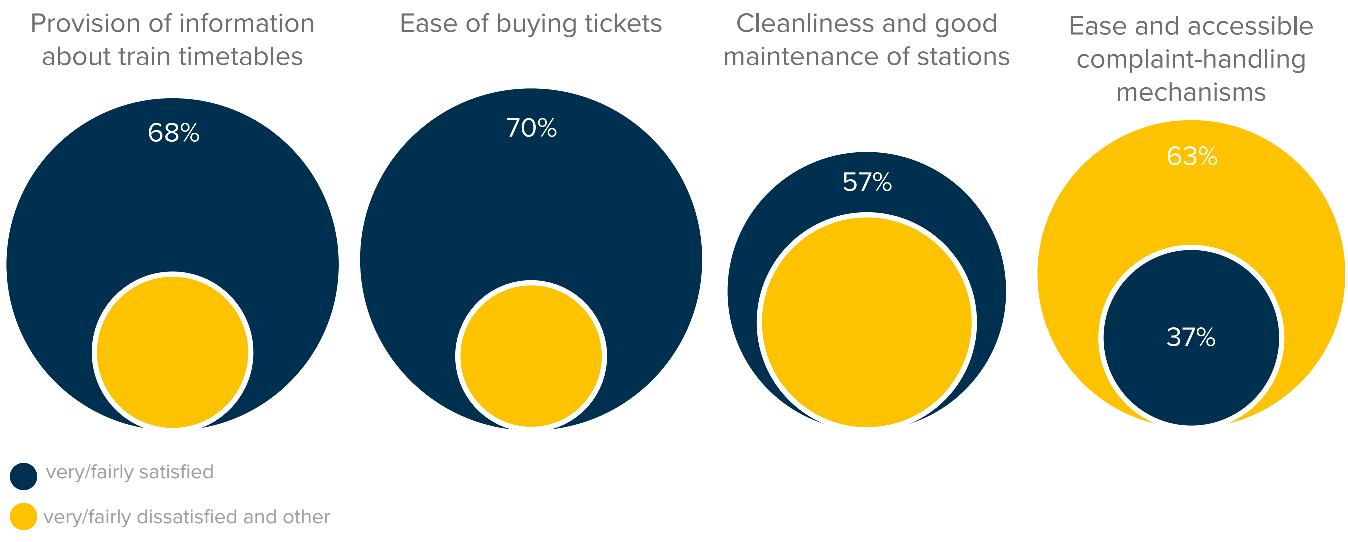


Fig 3. Overview of results related with satisfaction at railway stations. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013)

This study also created a general index to gauge the overall understanding of satisfaction levels associated with stations in general. To this extent, the index ranked satisfaction in four levels i.e. High, Good, Medium and Low depending on whether respondents were satisfied with all four aspects of stations (see Fig. 3), three, two or one/none respectively. Just over half of Europeans (51%) had high or good levels of satisfaction. Using this index, the UK was the country with the highest levels of overall satisfaction with stations (73%).

The second cluster of assessment included in this unique pan-European study was related to satisfaction with rail travel. Availability of trains, through tickets, staff on trains and punctuality and reliability are aspects considered positive and with significant levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, the provision of information during trips and when delays take place is a source of general dissatisfaction as are accessibility for bikes on trains and cleanliness of rolling stock. The following graph in Fig. 4 summarises these results.

Just over half of Europeans (51%) had high or good levels of satisfaction.

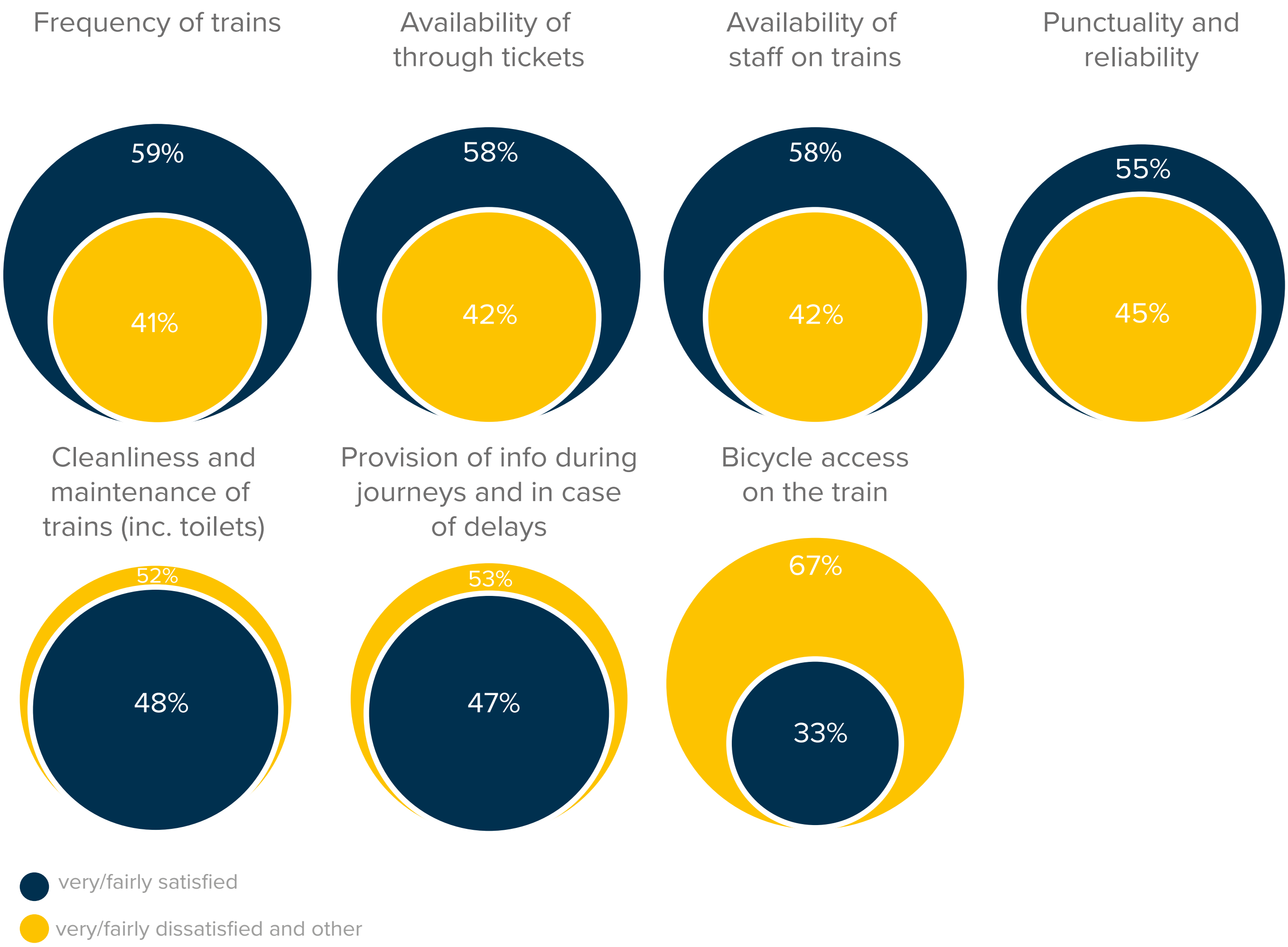


Fig 4. Overview of results related with rail travel satisfaction. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013)

Similar to the index created to gauge the overall understanding of satisfaction levels associated with stations in general, this study also set up a satisfaction index for rail travel using the same categories i.e. High, Good, Medium, Low. Over half of Europeans show a high/good level of satisfaction with railway journeys (55%). Again, using this index, the UK was ranked second overall with a level of 75% (Finland was highest ranked at 79%). Furthermore, the aggregated value of these two general indexes provides a somewhat more complete picture of the general level of satisfaction with the various aspects involved in a railway journey. Based on the same four-point scale i.e. High, Good, Medium, Low, the graph opposite (Fig. 5) summarises the sentiment of Europeans towards rail journeys.

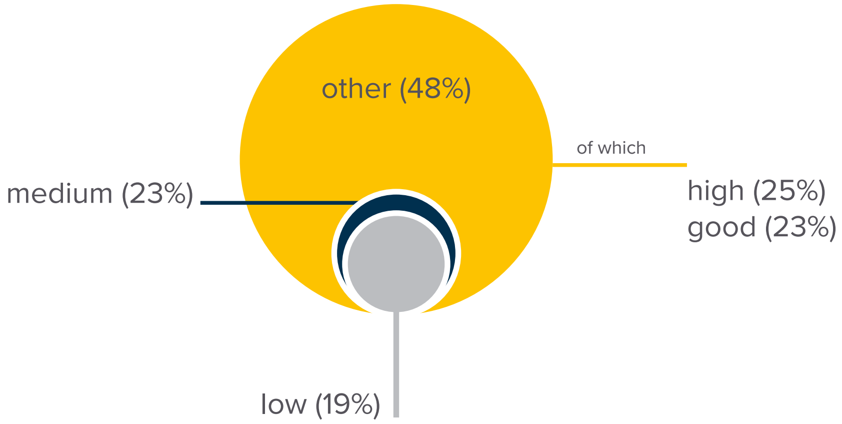


Fig 5. Aggregated index showing satisfaction levels with railway travel and stations. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013)

From a country perspective, the UK has the second highest level of aggregated general satisfaction with 78% after Finland (80%). At the other end of the spectrum, Estonia (30%) and Italy (39%) have the lowest levels of overall satisfaction.

The third and final cluster covered by this comprehensive study is related to accessibility of railway stations. Overall, 11% of Europeans were reported to have issues with accessibility, this being as a result of a disability (5%), ageing process (3%), travelling with children (2%) or a temporary impairment (1%). The UK was shown to have the second largest contingent of people with accessibility issues (18%) after Latvia (23%). Overall, access to ticket offices or vending machines, the booking process and the accessibility to the station building and platforms were identified as those providing higher levels of satisfaction. On the other end of the spectrum, pre-journey information about accessibility and assistance options as well as the actual presence of assistance at platforms/stations for people with reduced mobility (PRM) were cited as main sources of dissatisfaction. The following graph (Fig. 6) summarises the outcomes related to this third and final cluster.

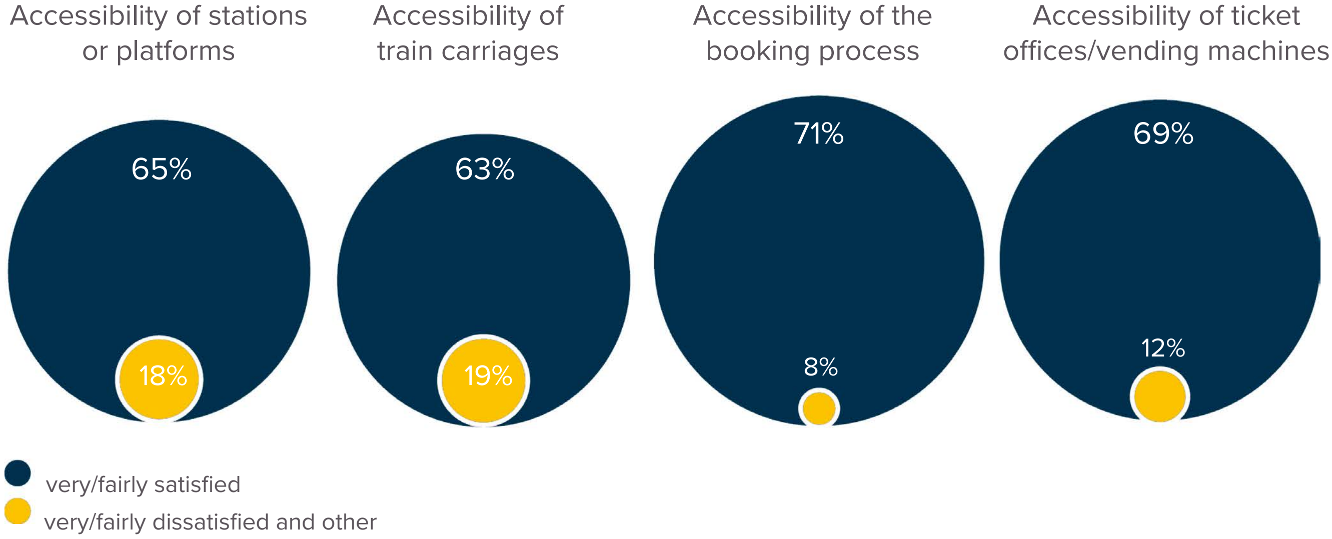


Fig 6. Overview of results related with accessibility satisfaction. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013)

In a similar fashion as with the previous two clusters, an index was generated to rank the satisfaction levels related to accessibility of railway stations. The majority of responses rank the satisfaction levels as low (39%) compared with high/good (37%). The opposite graph (Fig. 7) summarises the distribution of this index.

The overall outcomes of this study indicate that the UK has the highest level of satisfaction with, for instance, the frequency of trains (77%) and with provision of information during journeys (70%). Similarly, only the Republic of Ireland (78%) and Latvia (74%) have higher levels of satisfaction with punctuality than the UK (73%). It is interesting to highlight that the survey identified fifteen aspects involved in satisfaction/dissatisfaction with railway services. When assessing these multiple aspects as a whole, the UK is ranked in the top three for thirteen of those. The following Table 2 summarises the main outcomes in relation to the UK. The difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction is used as a measure to accommodate for the fact that non-rail users were asked questions about satisfaction with rail services, resulting in relatively frequent "non applicable/do not know" responses. The difference between satisfaction and dissatisfaction allows to discuss the level of satisfaction (e.g. the higher the difference the more accurate the satisfied/dissatisfied assessment is).

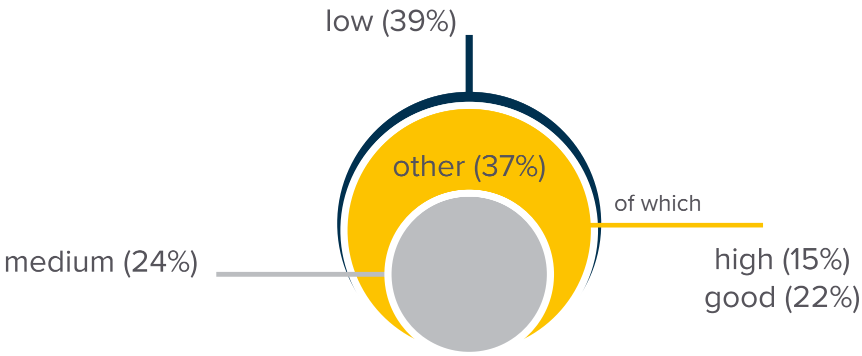


Fig 7. Aggregated index showing satisfaction levels with accessibility to stations. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013)

Aspect	Sub-category	satisfied	dissatisfied	difference	ranking
Railway travel	frequency of trains	77%	10%	+67	1st
	availability of through tickets	68%	7%	+61	4th
	availability of staff on trains	64%	21%	+43	6th
	punctuality and reliability	73%	14%	+59	3rd
	cleanliness and maintenance of trains	68%	21%	+47	2nd
	provision of info during journeys (in case of delay)	70%	14%	+56	1st
	bicycle access on the train	44%	7%	+37	2nd
Stations	provision of information about train timetables	80%	7%	+73	3rd
	ease of buying tickets	77%	9%	+68	3rd
	cleanliness and good maintenance of stations	79%	11%	+68	3rd
	easy and accessible complaint-handling mechanisms	55%	8%	+47	1st

Aspect	Sub-category	satisfied	dissatisfied	difference	ranking
Accessibility	Accessibility of stations or platforms	65%	18%	+47	1st
	Accessibility of train carriages	63%	19%	+44	1st
	Accessibility of the booking process	71%	8%	+63	1st
	Accessibility of ticket offices/ vending machines	69%	12%	+57	1st

Table 2. Summary of satisfaction/dissatisfaction outcomes related to the UK. Adapted from (European Commission, 2013).

Other studies have investigated issues related to punctuality of services which is one of the factors related with satisfaction identified in the Eurobarometer report. Aubry and Sauvant (2017) have performed an extensive analysis of punctuality performance amongst French, European and Japanese rail services using data from 2014. In this context, the study places the UK 10th out of 13 countries with 76% for long distance travel being within five minutes of expected time at terminus, excluding cancellations. The Netherlands has the top score with 94.9%. When assessing regional trains, the UK is ranked 7th out of 17 countries with 92.9% of trains being on time compared with 98% in Japan, the highest ranked country.

Swiss Railways have a dedicated online platform where the passenger satisfaction levels are openly reported together with open criticism and related projects introduced to mitigate/eradicate the source of the dissatisfaction.

A dashboard showing the satisfaction levels on the day (immediate 24h period) is displayed using a simple five star rating system on nine categories, namely:

1. Global level of satisfaction;
2. Customer service;
3. Information provision;
4. Level of security;
5. Cleanliness;
6. Punctuality;
7. Ease of use;
8. Service levels;
9. Cost.

The following figure (Fig. 8) shows a screenshot of the dashboard.

Travel surveys using questionnaires are conducted on a daily basis throughout the year. Thus, changes in satisfaction are identified quickly and equally so that the impact and effectiveness of measures taken can be quickly assessed in terms of success in obtaining the desired results. In the 2012-2015 period, the Swiss global satisfaction index has been steady at a 73.4-74.1% level. All these results are published on the dedicated online platform.

Fig 8. Screenshot of digital dashboard from Swiss Railways displaying the satisfaction levels on real time (SBB, 2017)

4
Other indicators

Performance levels influence passenger satisfaction and have their own set of indicators that, while not directly included in the general satisfaction assessment, can potentially have an influence. Similarly, satisfaction can potentially be affected by the introduction of private operators and competition as part of the European liberalisation process and the privatisation of Britain's railways.

The rail liberalisation index (LIB Index) was developed in Germany (Kirchner, 2002; 2004; 2007; 2011) to assess the progress being made by the different European Member States plus Norway and Switzerland in implementing legislation to liberalise their railway services. These legislative measures are grouped into what is termed as Railway Packages aimed at gradually creating a competitive single European Railway Area (SERA). One of the primary implications of this process is the introduction of competition through the liberalisation of transport service operations. The level of competition introduced and the pace in which such liberalisation process is taking place varies between European Member States depending on the way in which and the time scales that the Directives have been incorporated into national laws. In some cases, there have been considerable delays in its adoption. In other cases, national monopolies have been drastically reduced or have even disappeared, as is for the now extinct British Rail (Ruiz-Rúa and Palacín, 2013).

Other interesting measurement attempts include Boston Consulting Group's Rail Performance Index (Duranton et al., 2015), which assessed the performance of Europe's railways based on intensity of use, quality of service and safety using data sourced from the international union of railways (UIC).

Satisfaction can potentially be affected by the introduction of private operators and competition.

Comparisons using these types of indexes have been sporadically attempted. Most recently, Fraszczyk et al. (2016) performed a comparative assessment of statistical data in a number of selected European countries, including the UK, to explore the level of their performance when compared to the European average. Specifically, the authors looked at the level of gross domestic product (GPD), the ranking of countries using the LIB index and the European Rail Performance Index. Their assessment concluded that the railway system is not performing as well as it could be. Instead, data suggests that increasing passenger demand is being met with an apparent reduction in the numbers of larger capacity vehicles, favouring the concentration of services on high demand routes rather than more rural/secondary ones which is putting significant capacity constraints on the network. All of which influence satisfaction levels.

5 Public opinion and other aspects

5.1 Introduction

The NRPS survey sketches a picture of what passengers experience while using the system. However, there is a wider portrait of the railways in the public eye involving users and non-users. This wider image shapes the public perception of what the railways are and how they perform. Negative stories are routinely picked up by media and given prominence while positive experiences hardly make the news, let alone the front pages. While it is right to tell these negative stories, this seems at odds with high satisfaction levels of over 80% consistently being given to the UK railways.

In an attempt to cast some light on this apparent discrepancy, a consultation process using a small but targeted number of semi-structured interviews has been carried out. These were designed to seek an insider view into this issue from key senior members of the British rail industry. This process has, in turn, lead to an expansion of the literature review and resulted in increased assessment into the subject. Overall, the outcomes of this process have highlighted that the most likely factors causing this incongruity are trust and advocacy. The former is closely related to passenger perceptions while the latter is associated with general public sentiment.

5.2 Public opinion advocacy

A recent study by the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) provides a good example of the effects and possible drivers of public opinion. In September 2016 the RDG launched a new campaign “Britain Runs on Rail”[1] (Rail Delivery Group, 2016a) to highlight the crucial role that railways play in British life (Rail Delivery Group, 2016b). This nationwide multi-media campaign started with a digital inventory, press, poster and in-journey communications, followed by a more recent (March 2017) TV and digital audio-visual component.

A revamp of the brand identity included, as key feature, an update of the original 1965 British Rail logo (Fig. 9) to reflect modern aspects of the railway.

Fig 9. Revamped logo as part of the campaign (source: RDG)

As part of this process, it is common to assess the impact that this sort of exercise has. This consisted, amongst other things, of weekly interviews with the general public (rail users and non-users alike) for a period of six months, including before and after the actual campaign was launched. The main objective of this assessment was to gauge the fluctuations in favourability over time towards the rail industry as a way to better understand the general public sentiment. The analysis shows that during a particular period of campaign burst, the percentage of positive response towards the railway increased for the population sample that was already favourable as well as those who were showing a neutral feeling. Furthermore, the proportion of those individuals that were unfavourable towards the railways was reduced during the campaign burst. It is also worth mentioning that the campaign bursts were done in two waves, one heavier than the other, and that the results were responsive to the intensity of the communication i.e. the variation in sentiment was accentuated depending on whether there was heavy or light coverage. The following graph (Fig. 10) summarises this process.

[1] http://www.britainrunsonrail.co.uk

% Favourability over time towards the rail industry (monthly rolling)

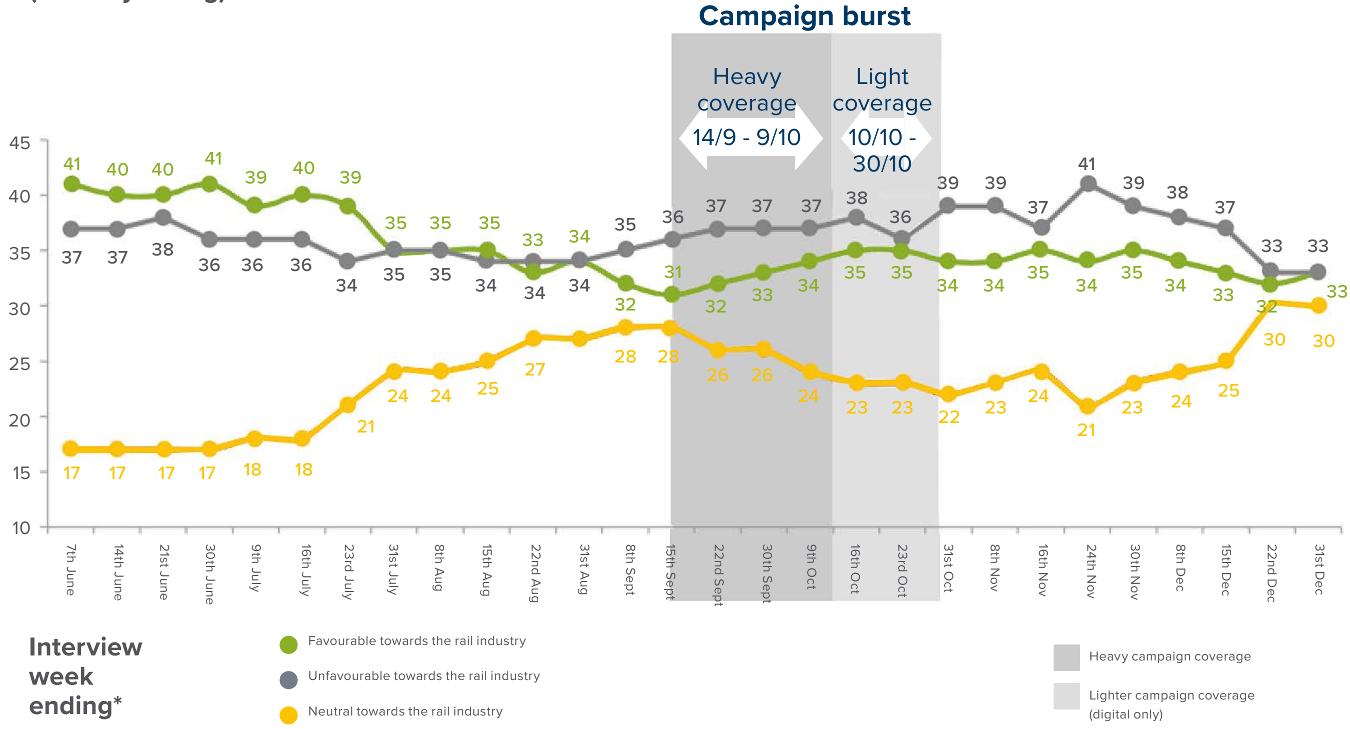


Fig 10. Assessment of public sentiment following a promotional campaign for Britain's railways (source: RDG)

5.3
Public opinion trust

In 2014 Transport Focus commissioned qualitative and quantitative studies to better understand those areas where passenger relationship with the rail industry is low and to propose possible actions to improve it. At the heart of this relationship, as with any relationship, is trust. Brands tend to understand this and aim at building affinity and trust. Those who succeed in doing so (e.g. Apple) do it by delivering not only against rational expectations but also by engaging at the emotional level (Transport Focus, 2014a). This combination of rational and emotional benefits is a requirement to build such relationship with the customer, in this case, the passenger. The process starts with practical factors (e.g. value for money) but it is the more emotional benefits (e.g. feeling in control) that can build trust. The following diagram (Fig. 11) represents the key aspects of this process and how it is built.

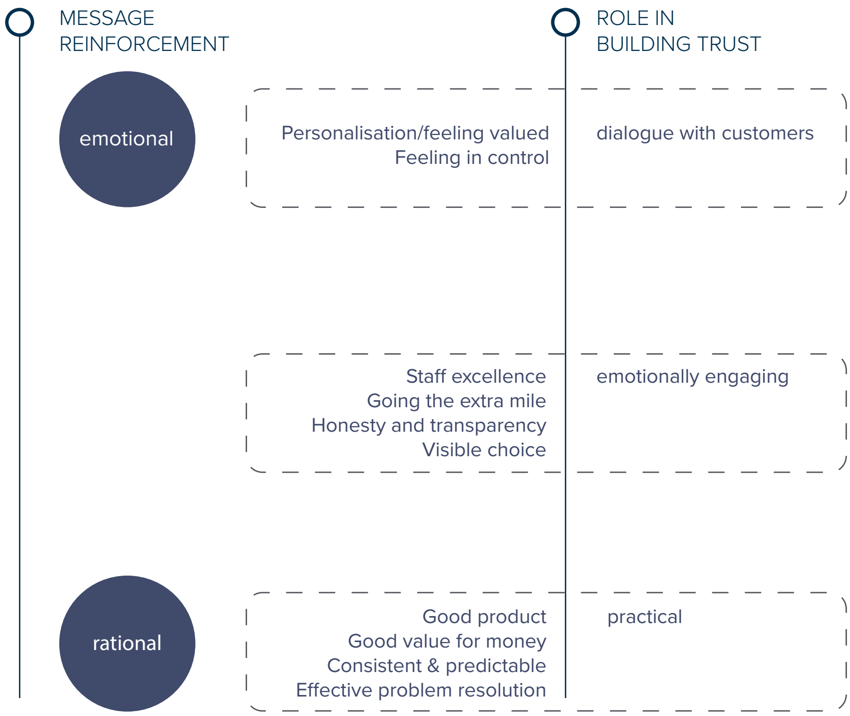


Fig 11. Affinity and trust building process. Adapted from (Transport Focus, 2014a)

Assessing this key aspect of trust in the relationship between passengers and the railway is not reflected in the NRPS, which focuses instead on individual journeys (Transport Focus, 2014a). In addition, there are multiple facets to this relationship as there is no one single railway but instead a collection of train operating companies which differ in the level of service provided. Also, different types of passenger e.g. commuter, leisure, have varying levels of expectation from the railway service they receive, which in turn shapes their relationship.

Statistical evidence suggests that there is a strong correlation (85%) between last journey satisfaction and trust, which is far more dominant than that with traditional indicators such as punctuality (medium correlation, 65%) and performance (weak, 38%) (Transport Focus, 2014b). Key aspects considered to be the essential building blocks of trusts are: trust in service (e.g. day to day delivery), trust in relationship (e.g. engagement and emotional factors) and trust in judgement (e.g. integrity and reputation). The following table summarises some of these aspects in relation to trust.

	Aspect	Effects in overall trust if not addressed
Trust in Service	Punctuality/reliability	Downward
	Value for money	
	Good at resolving problems	
	Helpful staff on trains	
	Helpful staff at stations	
Trust in relationship	Truthful in what they say	Sideways
	Act with honesty and integrity	
	Build long-term relationships	
	Treat customers fairly	
	Communicate well with customers	
Trust in Judgement	High principles	Upwards
	Do the right thing even when no one is looking	
	Good reputation	
	Progressive in developing services	
	Show leadership in the industry	

Table 3. Summary of drivers shaping the three components of trust. Adapted from (Transport Focus, 2014b)

To this extent, Van Hagen and Bron (2014) proposed a hierarchy of passenger needs for the railway suggesting that measures related to service ("dissatisfiers") needed to be addressed first as these acted as main drivers for dissatisfaction.

The assessment by the transport watchdog (Transport Focus, 2014b) has indicated that there is indeed low trust in the service delivered by the UK's operating companies. A significant number are perceived as failing to deliver these basic functional aspects which are related with the factors analysed in the NRPS. Therefore, addressing these is suggested as a priority before trust can be truly built.

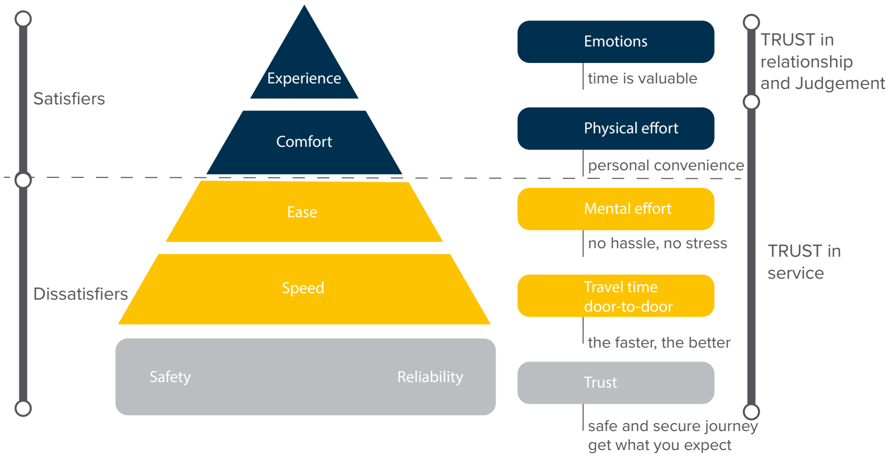


Fig 12. Hierarchy of passenger needs. Adapted from (Van Hagen and Bron, 2014)

6 Conclusions

This report has provided a brief overview of how passenger satisfaction is measured in Britain and elsewhere, highlighting the main aspects that are placing UK passengers amongst the most satisfied in Europe.

Overall satisfaction levels in the UK obtained using the twice-a-year national rail passenger survey (NRPS) have been steadily stable at an 80-84% bracket for the 2011-17 period (twelve surveys). Similarly, the UK is ranked in the top three European countries in thirteen out of fifteen aspects related with railway satisfaction. Clearly, indicators show that the UK is doing something right. However, these sort of indicators are limited and not always provide a true picture of the wider issues associated with the emotional connection (or lack of) experienced by passengers. A recent report from the House of Commons Transport Committee (2016) acknowledges that "The NRPS is well-established and methodologically sound but it could and should be improved to more accurately reflect the everyday experience of passengers." The same report goes on to indicate that "the current public performance measure (PPM)[2] does not reflect real passenger experience, and produces perverse incentives [...] this is unacceptable and must stop."

The UK is ranked in the top three European countries in thirteen out of fifteen aspects related with railway satisfaction.

This document also touches upon other indicators that might have a relevance in the way satisfaction is driven e.g. levels of liberalisation. A small consultation has been carried out to discern how, despite the high satisfaction levels, there is discrepancy with the way the railways are perceived in the public eye.

As such, the NRPS high satisfaction levels are not surprising as they tend to account for feelings and opinions towards the most immediate journey and do not focus on the relationship/ trust which is a long term aspect. The discrepancy can further be understood when considering that public opinion includes non-rail users which have a view that is not rational but emotional, i.e. linked to trust. The data shown by the RDG study of the on-going promotional campaign demonstrates that public sentiment is intrinsically linked to the emotional aspects towards railways and these, in turn are a question of trust. Operators that do not stop at just delivering the rational aspects of the service e.g. value for money, punctuality but go beyond to address those emotional aspects that build relationships are expected to excel.

[2] PPM—Public Performance Measure, a headline measure of Train Operating Company performance. PPM measures the percentage of trains arriving at their destination within five minutes of schedule (for regional and commuter trains) or 10 minutes of schedule (for longer distance trains).

7 References

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