



PASSENGERS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND  
SATISFACTION WITH LONG-DISTANCE COACH  
LINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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MTHI YOLOKAZI

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PASSENGERS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION  
WITH LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY  
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In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification at another University.



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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Nosakhele Mthi and Mkhumbuzeni Wellington Mthi, my sister Noneka Vovo, and my lovely husband Thembani Matika for their encouragement and support throughout the period of the study.

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## ABSTRACT

The transportation industry makes a significant contribution to the economy of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), national investment and employment, and plays an essential role in people's daily lives. Within the transportation industry, this study specifically focused on long-distance coach liners. Long-distance coach liners add significant value to South Africa's economy. However, no research focusing specifically on passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa exists. Thus, the study aims to fill this void by investigating passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa.

The five dimensions of an experience, namely aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency were identified as potential dimensions of measuring passengers' experience within a long-distance coach liner context to achieve the aim of the study. The study employed convenience and snowballing sampling to identify potential respondents. Primary data was collected utilising an online survey, SurveyMonkey, and 399 useable responses were received.

To strengthen the validity of this study, inferential statistics were used to examine exploratory factor analysis to find latent factors. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was executed on the 44 items intended to measure the independent and dependent variables. The EFA was executed on the correlation matrix between the items. Five factors were extracted for the independent factors and one factor extracted as a dependent factor. A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated for each factor to estimate the internal consistency of each of the items. The identified factors, with their respective items, were found to be reliable. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the mean score of selected profile variables (age, occupation, travel purpose and frequency with which respondents had travelled by long-distance coach liner) and the study's identified factors. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the influence or predictive effect that one or more (independent) variables has concerning the other (dependent) variable. In the current study, multiple regression analysis was utilised to examine the influence of the independent factors on the dependent variable.

The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between factors such as aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency and passengers' satisfaction. This implies that all the independent factors influence passengers' satisfaction. However, only two factors namely efficiency ( $\beta=0.455$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and peace of mind ( $\beta=0.552$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) were found to be significant predictors of passengers' satisfaction. This implies that when efficiency and peace of mind are improved, customer satisfaction will also increase. Based on the findings of the study, valuable recommendations were highlighted in Chapter 6 of the study.

The study will make important contributions. Firstly, the findings will assist long-distance coach liner businesses to improve their competitive position by enhancing the experiences and satisfaction that they offer to passengers. Secondly, the study contributes to the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction within the transportation industry in South Africa. Thirdly, the empirical results will serve as a foundation for future research.

**KEYWORDS:**

- Long-distance coach liner
- Passengers' experience
- Passengers' satisfaction
- South Africa
- Transportation



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

By contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), attracting investment, creating jobs and improving people's quality of life, the transportation industry plays a significant role in the nation's economy (Aidoo, Agyemang, Monkah & Afukaar 2013:6; Dube & Ann-Frempong 2016:5). Furthermore, the transport sector has a significant impact on the social development and human welfare or well-being of the community because of its intensive impact on alleviation in poverty by improving the quality of life or economic conditions, social and environmental isolation, integrates the manufacturing and agriculture sectors and provides access to education, medical and other infrastructural facilities (Mthimkulu 2017:805; Govender 2014:302; Potgieter 2016:1; Shange 2017:46). In the last few decades, the transportation sector has emerged as one of the more universal and complex global economic sectors; it is an essential element of national and international commerce, serving as a conduit for transport of goods and people (Duval 2007: 56; Lubbe & Vermooten 2021:3). The transport sector also plays a significant role in the expansion of both international and domestic tourism with air travel enabling a comfortable long-haul transition from tourist originating regions to global destinations and road-infrastructure, enhancing the accessibility of tourists to regions located in different parts of a country (Lubbe & Vermooten 2021:3).

According to the Labour Annual Report (Sta SA 2016:12), the transport sector is the largest employer, making a more valuable contribution than other sectors, such as mining and agriculture. Transport was among 10 industries (such as finance, mining and trade making, storage and communication, manufacturing industry) that recorded positive gains in the economy of South Africa in the first quarter of 2021 (Stats SA 2021:1). According to Stats SA (2021:1) in the first quarter of 2021, the transport, storage and communication industry increased at a rate of 4.8%, contributing 0.4% to the GDP. Transport was one of the sectors that was negatively affected by the international pandemic while other sectors recorded employment gains. The sectors that showed substantial losses include construction (58 000), followed by transport (39 000), community and social services (25 000), and trade (5 000). South Africa's GDP in December 2020 increased sharply by 66.1% due to lockdown restrictions being

lifted. During this period, an intensive increase in economic activity was recorded in the land transport and communication services (Stats SA 2021:1). There is therefore a need to maintain and improve the existing transportation and build new infrastructures to maintain and improve national wealth.

In the annual report of the Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) (2016:3), it was highlighted that the transport sector made a notable contribution to the Skills Development Levy. The report reflects that the transportation sector holds the potential to improve labour conditions by providing reasonable wages and working conditions for the sector's employees, including other sectors that depend on it for their output (Thomas 2016:352). Furthermore, approximately 11% of South Africa's GDP is directly or indirectly generated through the transport sector; thus, emphasising its vital impact on economic development (Potgieter 2016:1; TETA 2016:5, TETA 2021:17). According to the Monakali (2015:6), the transport sector in South Africa has created a total of 137 887 jobs throughout the nine provinces in the country. South Africa's economy experienced challenges due to the impact of the national pandemic, COVID-19 and lockdown over the last number of months (South African Market Insight 2020:1).

Transport is a system that carries people or goods from one place to another and it is classified into private and public passenger transportation, which includes road, rail, air and sea transport (Winkler, Borchers, Hughes, Visagie & Heinrich 2006:30). Private transport is a mode of transport in which people do not usually share the transport with a large number of people, or may only share trips with the driver, friends, family or colleagues and it includes private cars, motorbikes and bicycles (SAHO 2018:1). Public transportation, on the other hand, is responsible for connecting cargo and people between smaller settlements, secondary towns to and from the economic hubs (National Planning Commission 2012:185).

During the 1970's, road transport became the most patronised mode of transport (Potgieter 2016:2), as according to Ismail (2018:56), road transportation enjoys better operational perceptions over the rail mode of transport. The latter could be because transportation by road reduces environmental and social problems associated with citizens' mobility (pollution, traffic congestion, noise) (De Oña, Lopez & De Los 2014:460). Roads provide a pivotal contribution to economic development and growth and bring important social and economic benefits (Malkoc 2015:1). Roads are very

important in connecting people, places and businesses together (Adepoju 2021:50) and are viewed as critical infrastructure for sustainable development (Adebambo & Onifade 2019:1). Road transportation has therefore become in high demand by passengers due to its adaptability and convenience, and flexibility in terms of changes in route and service frequencies (Ismail 2018:56). In the Living Conditions' Survey (LCS 2014/2015), Shange (2017:12) reported that most South African citizens spend their income on transportation which results in transport being the second-largest expenditure category at an estimated R280 billion, or 16.3% of total household consumption expenditure (Stats SA 2018:1). In a study by Jennings (2015:767), it was found that approximately half of urban households spend more than 20% of their income on transportation.

Considering the preceding discussions, it can be argued that the transport sector is one of the most valuable assets in which a country needs to invest. Understanding the determinants of passengers' experience and satisfaction is therefore important – not only to assist transport companies to produce customer-need based services. improve their services and policies (Gao, Rasoul, Timmermans & Wang 2017:2), but also to improve transport system and policies in South. As road transportation consists of various modes, including bicycles, minibuses, buses, taxis, cars, and trucks which several people share (Mthimkulu 2017:805; Thomas 2016:353), it was important to focus on the research context of this study. For the study, the selected mode of transport is buses, specifically long-distance coach liners.

In 1930, the government intervened to restructure the fragmented transport network dominated by the private sector in South Africa (Shange (2017:12). The long-distance coach liner services emerged, starting from luxury tourism and long-distance to regional and locally subsidised and non-subsidised commuter services. Since 1979, Long-distance passenger transport service has established an extensive network of routes connecting major cities in seven countries across southern Africa, and it continues to be South Africa's leading coach transport (Intercape 2018:1).

Dash and Samanataray (2018:106) posit that travelling is no longer only about the journey, but also about the experience resulting from the interaction among personal, social and environmental factors. Experience is thus a dynamic process, involving the experience before, during and after the visit (Sheng & Cheng 2012:54). A traveller's

experience is shaped by the passenger's opinion of the essential functions (transportation) and sensory stimulation which include the attraction of the transportation mode buildings, the 'smell' on the bus, and general condition of the bus (Sheng & Cheng 2012:53). Mao and Lyu (2017:4) concur that passengers are increasingly looking for meaningful, memorable, personal, and unique experiences during their trips.

Passengers are thus no longer merely interested in reaching their destination; passengers are in search of unique experiences (Forno & Garibaldi 2015:203). Hence, passengers are more knowledgeable, more mindful; and increasingly seek exceptional value for their money and time. The latter also applies to the mode of transport selected for the journey as features and benefits of the mode of transport are highly valued and prioritised by passengers. Guttentag (2015:1198) states that passengers nowadays look for amusement, leisure and fun beyond the usual experience; they show great appreciation for what seems to be authentic (Forno & Garibaldi 2015:205). Factors such as the driver's behaviour, lights and entertainment (for example music, movies and free Wi-Fi), and the physical look or cleanliness on the bus, all affect the likelihood to positively influence the passengers' experience (Mao & Lyu 2017:5). Additionally, authentic and individually tailored passenger services, such as individual air vents and reading lights, might create unique personal experiences for passengers (Mao & Lyu 2017:2).

Satisfaction is the customers' overall experience of a service that matches or exceeds customer expectations (Van Lierop, Badami and El-Geneidy 2018:53). The satisfaction of a long-distance coach liner passenger is determined by how a passenger experiences the trip. Thus, as passengers have different needs and priorities (Abenzoza, Cats & Susilo 2017:1; Breschi 2021:1), it is vital to create unique personal experiences during a trip. Providing a positive passenger experience may lead to customer satisfaction, and eventually improve the competitiveness of the industry.

In a study by Ahmadpour, Lindgaard, Robert and Pownall (2014:13); Mouwen (2016: 15) which focuses on the transportation sector, respondents agree that overall satisfaction is determined by expectations and perceptions about the service and by perceived performance and satisfaction that drive purchase intentions and purchases. Therefore, if the performance of the service exceeds customer expectations, they are

likely to be satisfied. Based on the foregoing, this study investigates passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa.

## 1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The development of an effective and efficient transportation system is crucial to the economic and social growth of South Africa, as well as influencing relationships between different countries while moving people and goods more efficiently. It is essential for national development and contributing factor for positioning the country as an attractive destination for investment and tourism (South Africa Yearbook 2012/2013:622). Despite acknowledging the latter, the road transport sector in South Africa has been criticised for its inefficiencies and not being sufficiently customer-focused, demand, and development-driven (Passenger Transport 2013:8). Furthermore, passengers demand a satisfactory experience but the road transport system in South Africa still lacks in terms of reliability, predictability, comfort, and safety (Passenger Transport 2013:8).

The challenges highlighted are also found with respect to long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Such challenges include bus strikes, safety, cleanliness, accidents or crashes and competition among bus operators. Additional challenges with respect to long-distance coach liners include late arrivals of buses at points of departure and destinations, and poor services by most of the coach liners (Intercape 2018:1). Passenger concerns include uncomfortable seats, non-functional entertainment facilities, non-functional-toilet facilities in the buses, and dysfunctional air conditioning (Intercape 2018:1).

These challenges and complaints have the potential of negatively influencing the reputation of the long-distance coach liner industry and can lead to passengers switching to other modes of transport. Despite the sector's huge contribution to GDP and development, research focusing specifically on passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa is practically non-existent. Thus, the current study aims to fill this void.



### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study seeks to address the following research question, namely *what are passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa?*

### 1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Understanding the determinants of passengers' experience and satisfaction would allow coach liners' management to concentrate on factors that ensure passengers' experiences lead to satisfaction, which could result in positive behavioural intention. To retain existing passengers and attract passengers from private and other transportation modes, long-distance coach liner management should make proactive efforts to understand what leads to a satisfactory experience. The findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on road transportation, passengers' experience, and passengers' satisfaction.

### 1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To address the research question of the study, the following objectives were formulated:

- Undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a particular focus on long-distance coach liners.
- Study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof in the road transport industry.
- Investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to long-distance coach liners.
- Conduct an empirical investigation to measure passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa.
- Based on the results of the empirical investigation, highlight theoretical and practical implications to management of long-distance coach liner operators in South Africa.

## 1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW, CONCEPTUALISATION AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

This section will provide a brief background of bus transportation in South Africa and review existing literature on passengers' experience and passengers' satisfaction. Furthermore, a hypothesised model with hypotheses is presented. Finally, key concepts in the study are also clarified.

### 1.6.1 Background of bus transportation in South Africa

Researchers in the field of transportation, such as Aidoo et al (2013:6) and Passenger Focus (2013:1), agree that public bus transport plays a societal role in both rural and urban communities as it improves access to workplaces and services infrastructure while also reducing travel expenses. Bus transport in South Africa contributes to the economic and social development of the country (Lubbe & Vermooten 2021:58). According to SABOA (2019:1), the bus and coach industry in South Africa provides mobility to millions of citizens daily, who are dependent on public transport. Bus industry refers to all road passenger transportation services provided by minibuses and buses (as defined in the National Land Transport Transition Act). Further, one can distinguish between long-distance bus services, tour and charter bus services, cross-border bus services, intercity bus services, school/learner bus services, contract bus services, special-hire or private-hire bus services, and subsidised bus services (TETA on move 2020:5).

South Africa's public transport sector benefits middle-class commuters and metro commuters more than working-class commuters and commuters traveling in rural and urban areas (Gedye 2020:1). To this extent, policymakers utilised bus transportation to provide reduced-cost mobility (subsidised services) to communities (Walters 2013:34). In the National Household Travel Safety Survey (NHTS), Walters (2013:35) reported that bus services are relatively more accessible, flexible and affordable than rail services, and theorists in bus transportation literature put forward that bus services are cheaper and more flexible, can serve a greater area, and can therefore potentially attract greater total patronage than rail, particularly in areas with dispersed destinations (Aidoo et al 2013:6; Mtwini 2017:818).

Numerous studies in the field of transportation have also reported that bus transportation is the most widely used mode of transportation compared with any other transport mode and became popular as a cost-effective alternative to far more expensive urban rail alternatives.

The bus transportation sector in South Africa is highly developed and intensely competitive (Walter 2014:1). Buses can operate as intra-city or intercity transportation. Intra-city bus transportation operates within a particular city (Walters 2018:10), while intercity buses are buses that operate and travel between cities. Intercity buses can also offer international services, non-subsidised facilities and are market-driven (Walters 2018:10), thus competing for customers. Long-distance coach liners which are the focus of this study, can be classified as intercity buses as they travel between cities. Long-distance coach liners are characterised by unique services such as luxury travel with service, entertainment and refreshments, air conditioning facilities, ability to carry freight, and route specification (Walters 2018:10).

Despite the vital role that the bus transportation industry plays in South Africa, the service provided remains frequently insufficient to meet the demands of passengers (Passenger Transport 2013:8). Bus transportation faces many challenges including lack of funding for road-based public transport, organized labor opposition to competitive tenders, slow progress in developing/revising integrated transportation plans, and institutional complications between the national, provincial, and local governments (Walters 2013:35). The transportation literature seems to indicate that passengers tend to prefer private cars due to the lack of satisfaction they derive from public transportation (Walters 2013:35).

#### 1.6.2 Passengers' experience

An extensive literature review on passengers' experience is provided in Chapter 3 of this study. This section provides a brief overview of what passenger experience involves and dimensions utilised to measure passenger experience. Prayag, Hosany, Musikat, and Chiappa (2017:44) describe experience as a post-consumption evaluation of whether the consumer's expectations are met. Passenger experience is a blend of individual elements that come together and may involve the consumer's emotional, physical and intellectual feelings (Dash & Samantaray 2018:105; Walls 2013:182. Various studies (Abenoza, Cats & Susilo 2017:65; Astrom 2017:25; Islam,

Mohammed, Chowdhury, Sarker & Ahmed 2014:34) emphasise the need for creating a memorable passenger experience. An experience that is memorable is one that is emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually stimulating that evokes sentimental value and emotional attachment (Engelbrecht 2011:13). It is therefore important for long-distance coach liners to be cognitive of the dimensions that will lead to passenger satisfaction. To measure passengers' experience in this study, five experience dimensions were identified from studies by Amoah, Radder and van Eyk (2016:490); Chen and Chen (2010:29); and Hosany and Witham (2010:355). These authors found aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value, and efficiency as dimensions of experience.

*Aesthetics* is conceptualised as the consumer's perception or interpretation of the physical or virtual environment (Chen & Chen 2010:29; Hosany & Witham 2010:355; Joubert 2018:48; Liu, Huang & Li 2018:440). Various aspects of the physical environment are classified according to their spatial layout, functionality, signs, symbols, and artefacts (Amoah, Radder, Van Eyk 2016: 421) which can stimulate many emotions in customers associated with pleasure (feeling good/happy), arousal (for example, excited or active) and dominance (control/importance) (Han & Hyun 2018:107). In the transport industry, the physical environment of the bus determines passengers' attitudes, future intentions and willingness; and changes both emotions and customers' behaviour (Han & Hyun 2018:107). Several studies (Carteni & Henke 2017:2259; Chen & Chen 2010:29; Hosany & Witham 2010:355) recognise the role of aesthetics in influencing consumer behaviour, decision-making and services evaluations. Based on these studies, aesthetics significantly influences customer experience and has the greatest impact on satisfaction (Kastenholz, Carneiro, Marques & Loureiro 2018:192).

*Entertainment* typically occurs when people actively or passively observe others' activities and/or performances (Radder & Han 2015:457). Entertainment experience is a concept that includes activities that are created by stimulating or promoting a pleasant, interesting and fun state, and passive absorption of experience through the senses, as when watching a performance (Hwang & Yoo 2021:48). Entertainment could be a combination of immersion and passive participation (Hosany & Witham 2010:354; Radder & Han 2015:457). According to Pasch, Bianchi-Berthouze, van Dijk & Nijholt (2009:171) "immersion is a term used widely to describe the user experience

in an entertainment context”. It is a metaphor that arises from the physical experience of a submerged body of water (Agrawal, Simon, Bech, Bærentsen & Forchhammer 2019:2; Flynn 2014:20; McMahan 2003:5; Murray 2017:9). It is “becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself, such as when playing a virtual game” (Qu 2017:12). If people are deeply immersed in experience activities and show a passive level of participation, they will be able to experience aesthetic experiences (Hwang & Yoo 2021:48).

Immersion refers to the state of being deeply engaged or involved (Agrawal et al 2019:2; McMahan 2003:5; Murray 2017:9). Agrawal et al (2019:2) state that “immersion is a psychological concept which influences an individual’s attention; it has been argued that immersion is purely an objective property of the technology or the system which facilitates an experience”. The internal state of being is a result of sustained relationships with the world, which are experienced by individuals (Shearing & Sedgman 2018:291) while participation relates to being involved in the event, to have tasks and to share and take over responsibility.

Passengers have different needs and preferences, therefore entertainment schedules should be intentionally created to appeal to, for example various age groups and disabilities, from young children to senior passengers, disabled passengers to passengers without disabilities (Hosany & Witham 2010:354). Music is frequently considered important to passengers as it influences and stimulates behaviour, involvement, consumption, emotions, moods, pleasure and a sense of identity (Astrom 2017:128). In addition, music has an influence on the travellers’ perceptions, such as their attention and the processing of visual stimuli (Astrom 2017:128). Entertainment such as watching movies and listening to music during a trip tends to be passive and involves more absorption than immersion (Sipe & Testa 2018:182). Entertainment has a considerable influence on passengers’ satisfaction, and it plays an important role in enhancing transport passengers’ satisfaction. Therefore, if long-distance coach liner operators can provide entertainment programmes that are differentiated and not easily imitated, passengers are more likely to enjoy those programmes (Sipe & Testa 2018:182). Ahmadpour et al (2014:2) describe *peace of mind* as “a mental state of being in peace and harmony without experiencing any disruptions”. Peace of mind can also be referred to as being in control, for example, having the freedom to perform desired tasks (e.g., using personal lights to read during the trip) and having a sense of

privacy (no intrusions by neighbours) (Ahmadpour et al 2014:11). Chen and Chen (2010:29) state that peace of mind represents physical and psychological safety, security, and privacy. Safety can be described as protection of people against unexpected results of an involuntary nature (Ahokas 2017:10). In a study conducted by Govender (2014:309), safety was researched from three angles, namely safety of passengers, safety of drivers and safety of buses. Passengers' safety is concerned with whether they might be involved in an accident due to their use of a particular transportation mode, the condition of the vehicle, or the driving behavior while traveling (Govender 2014:309). Ahokas (2017:10) describes security as "protection of an individual, location or reputation from harm that is caused by a person or an object". Hence, passengers are in search of safe and security in the mode of transportation (Ahokas 2017:10). It is important that passengers feel secure at the waiting environment, during a trip and at the destination (Govender 2014:309). Privacy stimulates human dignity and other values such as freedom from public interruption and intrusion (Surbhi 2018:1). The term privacy is derived from the word private, which means the role of the public is limited, therefore a person whose privacy is protected from public attention is considered private (Surbhi 2018:1). Although ensuring privacy in the transport industry can be difficult, it is important that management of long-distance coach liner companies should strive to ensure that the privacy of each individual traveller is respected. For instance, providing a wide space between seats for the passenger to pass without disturbing others can allow passengers to enjoy privacy (Ahmadpour et al 2014:12). Passengers can feel prepared if their seats include compartments for storing personal belongings, thus creating peace of mind (Ahmadpour et al 2014:12).

A further dimension identified to measure passenger experience was *economic value*. According to Khan and Kadir (2011:4089), value can be described in terms of benefits received and sacrifice made by passengers. In this study, sacrifices of passengers may include time, effort and money paid in exchange for the benefits received. Benefits include value for money, service convenience, reasonable price, or discount (Amoah, Radder & van Eyk 2017:295). Pekka, Peter & Heikki (2013:66) describe economic value as "the customers' assessment of a comparison between monetary and non-monetary prices". Price in monetary terms reflects the money value the consumer pays for the product/services, while price in non-monetary terms refers to sacrifices made

by the customer, such as time and travel costs. These factors both influence the passengers' experience and relating satisfaction with the experience. Price is the amount of money that customers give up obtaining products or services (Kotler & Armstrong 2015:51). Thus, the price is an important factor that customers consider when formulating their perceptions of the performance of a service (Amoah et al 2016: 424). Furthermore, price is the primary influence on the purchase decision and has a positive impact on customer satisfaction (Pandya 2014:56). Most customers believe that higher costs signify higher quality, whereas a lower price may indicate poor service (Amoah et al 2016:424). Passengers may appreciate a reasonably priced long-distance coach liner that provides good value for money in the transportation sector.

*Efficiency* constitutes the final dimension identified to measure passenger experience in the current study. Amoah et al (2016:424) efficiency can be defined as the process of performing a task promptly and efficiently without wasting time, energy and resources. From the less sophisticated lens, efficiency is doing things right (Drucker 2017:1). Customers' judgments of efficiency are based on what they have received (services) relate to what they have given up (money, time, and effort) (Amoah et al 2016:424). It is important for long-distance coach liners to operate efficiently (Van Jaarsveld 2012:2), because bus delays have a negative impact on passengers (Passenger Focus 2013:48). The main factors governing travel efficiency include reliability, effectiveness of operation and services (Passenger Focus 2013:47). Customers demand dependable service, which implies that it is delivered on time, in the same manner each time, and without faults (Lekhelebana 2013:37). Sam, Hamidu and Daniels (2018:27) conceptualise reliability as the ability of the public bus transport operators to perform the services adequately. Effectiveness relates to service punctuality in terms of arrival and departing times (exactly at the time stated) (Chen & Chen 2010:29). It is, therefore, essential for the drivers to inform passengers about any changes in the arrival and departure times in the event of emergencies. Focusing on road maintenance will benefit people, road users, taxpayers, and road owners by not just conserving current assets but also minimizing future costs. This would keep these assets from degrading in value if timely investments are made (Malkoc 2015:1). With this in mind, to achieve efficient services, the services must be reliable, the service provider must strive to meet or exceed the passenger's expectations and they must stick to what the service promises to do for customers. The identified dimensions of

passengers' experience (aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value, and efficiency) are discussed in Chapter 3. The next section will discuss passengers' satisfaction.

### 1.6.3 Passenger's satisfaction

Given that customers have expectations of the product or services prior to their purchase, they evaluate the product or the service's performance based on their expectations (Amoah et al 2017:424). Several authors conceptualise satisfaction as the degree to which the level of fulfilment of these expectations could be perceived as pleasant or unpleasant (Khan & Kadir 2011: 4089; Islam et al 2014:34; Khan & Kadir 2011:4089; Qu 2017:7). "Pleasant" it means that the service has fulfilled its promises while "unpleasant" is when the service or product has not fulfilled its expectation to the customers.

Authors on satisfaction agree that satisfied customers have a high likelihood to be loyal to the product or service and are less sensitive to high prices or price changes and tend to be less influenced by competitors, whereas customers that are dissatisfied are more likely to switch to a competitor (Kassim 2007: 438; Liu et al 2018:438; Prayag et al 2017:43). Additionally, satisfied consumers can be expected spread positive word of mouth about their favourable experiences, whereas dissatisfied customers are likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth advertising for the organisation (Bediova & Ryglova 2015:500; Kassim 2007: 438; Mishra 2014:230). Satisfied customers have the potential to uplift the business to higher levels by influencing others to buy the product or services, whereas dissatisfied customers can damage a company's image and reputation. Therefore, to avoid the latter, organisations need to ensure that the customer's expectations are met or exceeded. As bus transportation is in high demand, long-distance coach liner companies need to provide frequent services, especially during peak periods. Customer dissatisfaction is caused by long wait times, a failure to convey information about possible delays, and a lack of a safe and comfortable waiting atmosphere. Islam et al (2014:34) and Klein (2016:2492) believe that internal factors can have a significant impact on transit ridership, with travel time, speed, frequency, and reliability having a bigger impact than tariffs, amenities, or safety. Vehicle safety, facility cleanliness, and complaint handling are all factors that have an impact on customer satisfaction (Hadiuzzman, Das, Hasnat, Hossain & Musabbir, 2017:259).



Long-distance coach liners need to focus on the passengers' needs and identify challenges or shortcomings faced by passengers because passenger satisfaction is vital for the organisation itself (Islam et al 2014:35). Furthermore, passengers' positive experience may have a positive influence on their satisfaction with long-distance coach liners (Kang, Lee & Namkung 2018: 798). In context of the current study, passenger' satisfaction refers to passengers' overall satisfaction based on the experience they received on the long-distance coach liner.

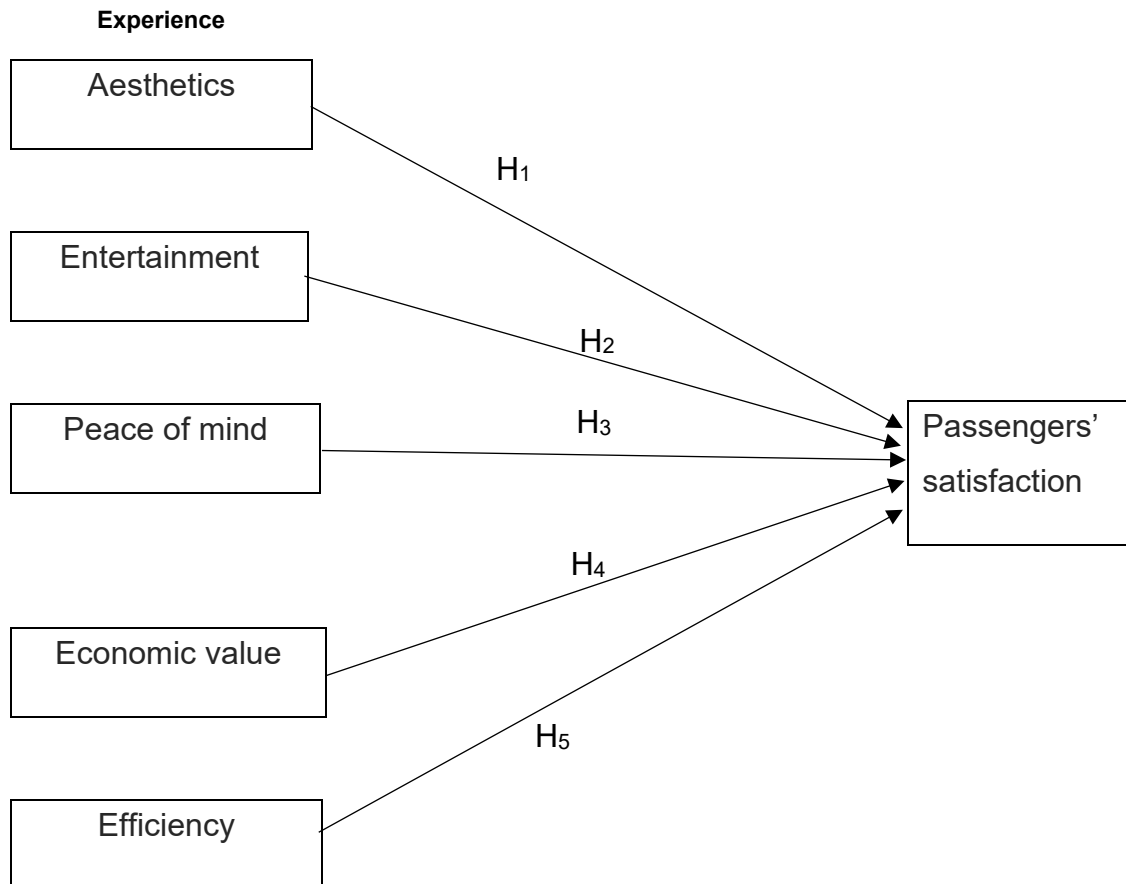
#### 1.7 PROPOSED HYPOTHETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Based on the preceding discussions the following hypothetical framework is proposed for the study.

FIGURE 1.1

PROPOSED HYPOTHETICAL FRAMEWORK OF DIMENSIONS OF  
PASSENGERS' EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

**Dimensions of Passengers'**



Source: Researcher's own compilation based on Amoah et al (2016:490); Chen & Chen (2010:29); Hosany & Witham (2010:355)

## 1.8 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the hypothetical framework (see Figure 1.1) and the objectives of the study, five research hypotheses were formulated.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between aesthetics and passengers' satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between entertainment and passengers' satisfaction.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between peace of mind and passengers' satisfaction.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between economic value and passengers' satisfaction.

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a significant relationship between efficiency and passengers' satisfaction.

## 1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

For the current study, four concepts are clarified as these concepts will be used frequently in the entire study. These concepts are transportation sector, long-distance coach liners, passengers' experience and passengers' satisfaction.

### 1.9.1 Transportation sector

Transportation is a system that moves goods or people from one place to another with the help of a vehicle (Basalamah, Syahnur, Ashoer & Bahari 2020:137). Furthermore, it encompasses several industries, including air freight, logistics, airlines, maritime, road and rail transportation, as well as infrastructure (Bit pipe 2021; Dube & Ann-frempong 2016:1). The definition of this sector includes the provision of passenger or freight transport, by rail, road, water or air and associated activities such as terminal and parking facilities, and cargo handling (Dube & Ann-frempong 2016:1).

### 1.9.2 Long-distance coach liners

A coach is a private form of transportation that travels on routes determined by the riders or trip organisers (DeLoatch 2021:1). Coaches are commonly utilized for private transportation and long-distance travel where convenience and comfort are important. Some intercity coach services like Greyhound travel along fixed routes and are open to the public via a ticketing system. Although the schedules of coach buses vary, most coaches do not make more stops than necessary since many are traveling long distances (DeLoatch 2021:1).

For the purpose of the study, the selected long-distance coach liners include Citiliner, City to City, Greyhound, Eldo Coaches, Intercap, Protours, Mega Bus and travel between South African provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Free State, Northwest, Western Cape, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape.

### 1.9.3 Passengers' experience

Sirajudeen and Senthilkumar (2019:230) described a passenger as any person who travels in a vehicle but bears little or no responsibility for the tasks required for that vehicle to arrive at its destination. Experiences arise by experiencing, going through, or living through events that give sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relate to values (Jain, Aagja & Bagdare 2017:648). Engelbrecht (2011:13) defines passengers' experiences as the overall impression, understanding, rating, and meaning that visitor attaches to the encounter with a specific place, event, holiday or activity.

### 1.9.4 Passengers' satisfaction

According to Cook, Yale and Marqua (2010:28), satisfaction is determined by measuring the expected perception of a product or service and the actual quality experienced by the customer. Islam et al (2014:34) describe satisfaction as an experience of fulfilment of an expected outcome. Abenoza et al (2017:65) define passengers' satisfaction as the overall level of fulfilment of the traveller's expectations, the completion and fulfilment of needs and the outcome of cumulative and single experiences. Gao et al (2017:1) describe travel satisfaction as people's evaluation of transport services and their expectations during the travel. The current study will adopt the definition by Ako-Nai (2011:17) who states that travellers' satisfaction is "the measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customers' expectations.

## 1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Researchers such as Shange (2017:12) and Skorobogatova and Kuzmina-Merlino (2017:319) believe that a progressive transport system is essential to the development of a region. Moreover, is important to the development of a country due to its importance in sustaining economic success. An effective transport system builds networks among nations, and this makes it easier for commuters to travel to work and their families. As the transportation sector contributes significantly to the economy of the country (Mthimkulu 2017:805; Govender 2014:302; Potgieter 2016:1; Shange 2017:46), creating positive passengers' experiences that ensure satisfaction is important to attract an increasing number of passengers and ensure competitiveness

in the industry. The research study will contribute to the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction within the transportation sector. The proposed hypothetical framework and empirical results will also serve as a foundation for future research. In terms of its practical significance, the study will assist industry practitioners in the transportation sector to enhance passengers' experiences and satisfaction. In addition, understanding passengers' experience and satisfaction within long-distance coach liners will assist to reduce the challenges facing the industry, which will in turn strengthen the competitiveness of long-distance coach liners in the transportation industry.

## 1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section the goal is to explain how the research was executed using appropriate methods.

### 1.11.1 Research paradigm

Eusafzai (2014:177) define a research paradigm as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research. In the current study, a positivist paradigm method was used to allow for use of quantitative statistical techniques in the analysis of the data. Poudel (2013:33) states that quantitative research methods deal mainly with different types of surveys, which are considered as an appropriate approach in collecting numerical data. Therefore, adopting the positivistic paradigm allowed the researcher to reach a conclusion on the data from statistical tests.

### 1.11.2 Research design

Research design is a structure that specifies how the research is to be carried out (Jaideep 2021:1). It serves as a bridge between the researcher's objectives and what is necessary to realise these objectives to arrive at a solution to the problem (Collis & Hussey 2003:113; Struwig & Stead 2007:44; Wiid & Diggines 2013:55). There are various types of research designs, for example, explanatory, exploratory and descriptive. For the purposes of the current study, the descriptive design was used.

### 1.11.3 Data collection method

The study aims to investigate perceived passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. To address the research, aim and objectives, the researcher collected information from secondary and primary sources. Secondary data refers to information that is already in the public domain and has been gathered by someone else (Shange 2017:17). Secondary data for this study were obtained from accredited academic journals, textbooks and previous studies on the transport sector written by experts (Shange 2017:17; Struwig & Stead 2007:81). Persaud & Salkind (2012:2) described primary data source as an original data source, that is, one in which the data are collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research purpose or project. Primary data for the study were collected via an online survey (QuestionPro) to passengers of long-distance coach liners.

### 1.11.4 Questionnaire design

Questionnaire design involves developing wording that is clear, unambiguous, and permits respondents to answer the question that is asked (Drennan 2003:58). The questionnaires for this study consisted of the following three sections. Section A contained the cover letter accompanying the questionnaire. Section B comprised of several statements relating to the five dimensions of an experience. Questions for this section were prepared based on the consulted literature. For the purpose of the study, a 5-point Likert-type scale question ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used to capture the passengers' level of agreement with the statements related to their experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners. Section C of the questionnaire was used to generate the profile of the respondents such as gender, age, country of permanent residence, current occupation, purpose of travel of the most recent trip on a long-distance coach liner and frequency of travel on a long-distance coach liner. Dichotomous type questioning was used in Section C.

### 1.11.5 Pre-testing the questionnaire

Hilton (2017:2) describes pretesting as a method of checking that questions measure what they intended to measure and are understood by those individuals who are likely to respond to them. Before pretesting the questionnaire, the draft of the questionnaire was submitted to three subject experts (one expert in the field of logistics and

transportation and two experts in the field of marketing and experience marketing) at a public university in South Africa to review the content and relevance of the questions/statements in a South African context. Their input was incorporated in the final questionnaire design. A pilot questionnaire was presented to a small group of 20 respondents and analysed by a statistician. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.70 and above indicating that the items were internally reliable. However, the confirmatory factor analysis could not adequately capture the factor structure for aesthetics. Therefore, most items initially included in the draft questionnaire were deleted from the aesthetics dimension with items 2, 4, 7 and 8 remaining. The factor analysis for aesthetics was only performed on the four items and the results improved.

#### 1.11.6 Sample selection

An early study by Bineham (2006:5) sample was conceptualised as a set of individuals or objects collected or selected from a statistical population by a defined procedure. The study employed non-probability sampling to select the target respondents. The respondents were recruited using convenience sampling and snowballing. Potential respondents who were willing and available to participate were asked to complete the questionnaire via the online survey. Snowballing was extensively used as potential respondents were requested to share the online questionnaire with their friends, families, and colleagues.

#### 1.11.7 Target population

Kadam and Bhalerao (2010:1) define a population as the complete set of people and the target population as a subset of individuals with specific clinical and demographic characteristics at whom a research study is targeted. For this study, the target population surveyed to address the question and attain the aims and objectives of this study includes long-distance coach liner passengers, who are 18 years of age or older. Respondents of the study were recruited online from March 2020 to September 2020.

#### 1.11.8 Sample size

Sci (2012:186) state that sample size is determined according to the purpose of the research and the level of confidence and statistical precision required. Furthermore, the sample size is also influenced by the basic characteristics of the target population, the objectives of the research, data analysis and non-response factors (Struwig &

Stead 2007:118). Based on the recommendation by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012:139), a sample size of 400 long-distance coach liner passengers were determined suitable for the study. Of the 409 questionnaires received, only 399 usable questionnaires were included in the data analysis as the remaining ten respondents did not meet the selection requirements.

#### 1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

As suggested by several authors (Leedy & Ormrod 2015:164; Meyer 2008:92), the data collected was coded, edited, captured, and prepared for further statistical analysis. IBM statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to perform the data analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated on the data set. The descriptive component included the mean, median and standard deviation, while inferential statistics involved examining the internal consistency of the measuring items (in the form of Cronbach's alpha), exploratory factor analyses (to examine the latent factors), correlation analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and hypothesis testing (multiple regression analysis).

#### 1.13 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Poudel (2013:41) defines validity as an extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under considerations. As mentioned earlier, three subject experts reviewed the initial questionnaire to ensure content validity. EFA was performed to extract the latent factors in the data set. This assisted to ensure construct validity.

A research study's reliability is related to the credibility of the research findings and the accuracy of the results is related to credibility (Collis & Hussey 2003:48). For reliability assessment, the data were examined with Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above was regarded as sufficient evidence of internal reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994:32).

#### 1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Elliott, Aitken and Chaboyer (2012:1) recommend that ethical permission is essential before undertaking any study. In the proposed study, permission was obtained from the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences Ethics Committee at Nelson Mandela



University prior to data collection. In addition, every effort was made to ensure that respondents were aware that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any stage, and that confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. In addition, individual consent was sought prior to the data collection.

#### 1.15 DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research was limited to passengers of long-distance coach liners in South Africa only. The research did not collect data from the entire population, and therefore caution should be exercised in generalising the findings.

#### 1.16 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The study will be presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 described the background of the study, stated the aim and objectives of the study, and provided the review of relevant literature, significance of the research and the research design and data collection and analysis processes. Chapter 2 will provide background knowledge into road transportation in South Africa, while chapter 3 will discuss the theoretical concepts of passengers' experience and passengers' satisfaction. Chapter 4 will render a discussion of the research methodology, including the research design, paradigm, data collection methods and techniques, questionnaire design and data analysis process. Chapter 5 will present the findings resulting from the empirical study. Chapter 6 will present a synopsis of the study and offer conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### ROAD TRANSPORTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As indicated in Chapter 1, this study aimed to investigate passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. To achieve the aim of the study, several objectives were formulated. This chapter aims to respond to the first objective, namely, *to undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a particular focus on long-distance coach liners*. This chapter is structured as follows. First, an overview of literature on road transportation in South Africa is provided. This is followed by an exposition of types of road transportation in South Africa. Thereafter, a discussion of bus transportation in South Africa is offered, followed by the factors affecting bus transportation. The final section will present the summary of the chapter.

#### 2.2 OVERVIEW OF ROAD TRANSPORTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Transport has become an essential part of daily life in South Africa, and it makes an extensive contribution to the economy of the country (Stats SA 2019:1). The road transport sector is the leading mode of motorised transportation in African countries (Mihlfeld & Associates 2018:1). It is believed to account for 80% of the goods and traffic flows, and 90% of passenger traffic on the continent (Ayichew 2016:10). These statistics suggest that African countries depend fundamentally on road transport to fulfil the growing demands in the transport sector (Ayichew 2016:10).

The public road network is South Africa's leading public asset and connects cargo and people between smaller settlements, secondary towns and the economic hubs (National Planning Commission 2012:185). Among Africa's road networks, South Africa has the longest (Klopper 2011:59), with a total road network of about 747 000 km (Brand South Africa 2017:1). To facilitate intra-regional trade and economic development, good road networks are critical, as is the ability to transport goods efficiently and effectively from areas of production to areas of consumption (Vilakazi & Paelo 2017:1). Road transportation includes rental cars, buses, and freight transport vehicles. South Africa's Road transportation sector is regulated and monitored by a policy framework. From 1994, South Africa's policy framework on road transportation

needed to accommodate all users in the newly democratic country (Monakali 2015:61). The White Paper transport policies were introduced in 1996 with the key focus to guide all transport-related development, planning and legislation (Luke & Heyns 2013:2). This policy includes infrastructure, operations and control. The policy framework on road transportation also ensures that there is a road network that links transport and settlement development. As a result, public transport would increase more than use of private transportation to achieve a ratio of 80:20 between public and private transport (Chapter 8: Passenger Transport 2013: 2).

The Department of Transport (DoT) guides a variety of public transportation decision-making (Button, Vega, & Nijkamp 2010:311). The White Paper has tasked to collaborate with the Department of Transport (DoT) in promoting safe, reliable, effective, efficient, coordinated, integrated, and environmentally friendly land passenger transport in South Africa's urban and rural areas (Button et al 2010:311). Furthermore, DoT provides efficient and accessible road transportation by ensuring it is managed in an accountable manner (Luke & Heyns 2013:2). In addition to efficient public transport, DoT include ways to maximize the use of resources allocated to this industry. This would reduce the travelling time of passengers, encourage spatial development and transport policies to acquire further support.

In South Africa, the road transport sector is governed by several entities, namely the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), the Urban Transport Fund (UTF), Ports Regulator of South Africa, Cross-Border Road Transport Agency, Road Accident Fund, Road Traffic Infringement Agency and the National Transport Master Plan (Potgieter 2016:21; Schoeman (2013:8); South African Government (2019:1).

These entities and their purposes are tabulated below (Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1

ROAD TRANSPORT ENTITIES

<b>Entities of Road transport</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Definitions/ descriptions/purpose</b>
South African National Roads Agency limited	SANRAL	SANRAL designs, finances, operates, maintains and rehabilitates the country's national toll and non-toll roads.
Cross-Border Road Transport Agency	CBRTA	The Cross-Border Road Transport Agency (CBRTA) is tasked with advising the Minister of Transportation on cross-border road transport policy, as well as regulating access to the cross-border road transport market for freight and passengers.
Road Accident Fund	RAF	RAF's mandate is to compensate South African road users for losses or damages caused by negligent driving of motor vehicles within the borders of South Africa.
Road Traffic Infringement Agency	RTIA	RTIA promotes road traffic quality by providing a scheme to discourage road traffic violations, by assisting in the prosecution of such violations, and by implementing a point-demerit system to deter such violations.
Road Traffic Management Corporation	RTMC	The RTMC is responsible for coordinating road-traffic management across the three spheres of government.
National Transport Master Plan	(NAPMAP)	NATMAP (2050) was approved by the South African government in 2011 with the goal of ensuring that by 2050, transportation development will meet the needs of freight and passenger customers; transportation operations and infrastructure will be accessible, affordable, safe, frequent, high quality, reliable, efficient, and seamless.

Source: Researcher's own compilation based on official guide to South Africa 2017/18:1; South African Government (2019:1).

## 2.3 TYPES OF ROAD TRANSPORTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are various ways to travel by road, from private transportation such as cars, bicycles, and motorcycles to public transportation such as buses and coaches (Stainton 2020:1). Road transport exists in all parts of the world, involving the use of motor vehicles (cars, lorries, buses, bicycles, and trucks). There are various types of roads according to size and functions, some roads are tarred while others are not. The best of these roads are the modern roads which connect major towns. Although road transport is more flexible, relatively cheaper, and faster when compared with other modes of transportation. Road transport has a high capacity for carrying goods over short distances, maintenance is one of the major shortcomings of this mode of transport (Nanzip 2020:1).

This study mainly focused on bus transportation, for the purpose of the study. The following section will discuss bus transportation and types of bus services and differentiate between private and public bus transportation.

## 2.4 BUS TRANSPORTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Several scholars in transportation literature (Govender 2014:31; Vuchic 2017:7 have defined a bus as a road-based public transport vehicle that can transport more than 18 passengers for a trip of 24 km or less for different travel purposes. Cervero (2013:3) define a bus as “a rubber-tyred vehicle of varying sizes, operating on a variety of routes and service configurations”. Sirajudeen and Senthilkumar (2019:230) define a bus as “a large motor vehicle which consists of a long body, equipped with seats or benches for passengers, usually operating as part of scheduled service”.

Bus transportation was introduced in South Africa in the 1930s (Dickson 2016:1), and in 1980, the Southern African Bus Operators' Association (SABOA) was established and registered as a non-profit organisation. SABOA was tasked with the goal of transforming and sustaining the bus and coach business in South Africa (SABOA 2019:1). The South African bus passenger transportation system was designed for the daily transportation of people to and from the workplace (Saferspaces 2019:1). As South Africans have become more mobile and more dependent on transport (Venter 2019:30); buses are a critical element of public transportation. The development of bus transportation among public and private providers can create a competitive

environment, whilst passengers can gain benefits such as competitive pricing and improved services (Suwan & Saosaovaphak 2012:10).

Demand for the use of a bus is increasing rapidly and passengers are increasingly in search of safety, convenience, and efficiency of the bus system (Ma, Weng, Wang, Alivanistos & Lin 2020:2). Increasing capacity of the bus transport, improving bus design and streamlining the fare system, can develop bus transport services and improve their services quality (Alam, Nixon & Zhang 2018:818; Borozenets 2020:49). Complications involving bus services include infrequent bus service during off-peak hours, unavailability of routes resulting in commuters walking long distances or using another mode of transport to get to their destination (Mtwini 2017:22). For the average commuter, these challenges translate to longer travel time which has a significant impact on their transport costs (Mtwini 2017:23). Other challenges include high occupancy of bus vehicle lanes and high density of bus stations during rush hours and the high frequency of traffic accidents (Ma et al 2020:2).

A study by Isnaini (2020:5) classified buses into three types, namely big, simple and small bus. The big bus is a bus equipped with 35 to 105 seats excluding the seat of the driver and without the carriage of goods (Ponrahono, Bachok, Ibrahim & Osman 2016: 838). The simple bus is a bus equipped with 24 seats excluding the driver's area and without freight services. The small bus is a bus equipped with 9 to 20 seats excluding the seat of the driver and without carriage of goods. The main factors used in assessing the level of bus transport services are divided into elements that affect service users such as operating speed, trust and safety; elements of quality of service, which includes comfort, passenger perception, beauty and cleanness, and fares that must be paid by the user for the service (Isnaini 2020:4; Ponrahono et al 2016: 838).

Buses are flexible in terms of time and costs, relatively more accessible than any other mode of transport (Freitas 2013:372). Bus transport provides access to railway stations, connects locations such as public services with residential areas or shopping centres, improves circulation within areas such as university campuses or shopping districts or connects a particular destination, such as a business, to a rail terminal (Button et al 2010:54; Freitas 2013:372). Bus transportation accounts for a major share of the total vehicle trips made in South Africa, with bus trips varying from city to city and carrying large numbers of passengers (Suman, Bolia & Tiwari 2017:56). It is well-

known for delivering fast and comfortable services (Loyola, Shiftan, Aviram & Monterde-i-Bort 2019:2; Mackie, Laird & Johnson 2012:17; Robert 2013:1; Walters 2008:2). In the study by George (2011:91), the following advantages of bus transport on major routes were highlighted.

- The bus and coach networks are more intense than the rail network, offering a larger destination network.
  - Schedule, cost of travel and frequency of the service are set; therefore, planning can be done efficiently.
  - The journey can provide spectacular sights from the coach-liner.
  - Passengers can have social interactions with one another.
  - The physiological impacts of driving on roadways, such as stress, are avoided.
- Furthermore, Freitas (2013:380) and Jensen (2015:5) discuss features that are inherent to the provision of bus transportation that make it different from that of traditional products. These features include the following.

- Each trip can be thought of as a unique service (heterogeneity), influenced by a variety of factors such as weather, traffic, vehicle condition, and the number of passengers, making it difficult or impossible to discover and remedy errors and problems before they affect the user.
- Each journey is unique in time and space; it cannot be stored or transferred. Passengers who do not board on time may not be able to board later. If there is no demand, however, empty bus capacity is wasted, and the corporation misses out on the opportunity to generate value from these assets (services are perishable).
- Bus transportation services are offered and consumed collectively, and clients do not always share the same profile, tastes, or thoughts.
- Payment is usually made before the service is provided, making it difficult for the customer to cancel the service.

Bus services have expanded into the new townships that have emerged since 1994 (Ehrenreich 2018:10). According to Stats SA (2014:1), 20% of households in South Africa have at least one member making use of bus services. Additionally, the South African Traffic Report states that in 2010 there was an increase in the demand for buses, which accounted for 4.23% of the increase in demand for buses in South Africa (Road Traffic Management 2011). This implies that bus patronage is continuously increasing. Similarly, in most countries, buses are viewed as the most sustainable

source of transportation to the public (Charbatzadeh, Ojiako, Chipulu & Marshall 2016:3). Bus transportation in South Africa is classified into public and private. In the following sections, these two classifications are elaborated on.

#### 2.4.1 Public and private bus transportation

In South Africa, the funding, accessibility and availability discrepancies between private and public transit are all significant. Private transportation is established and sponsored by private enterprise, whereas public transit is subsidised by the government (Petersen 2021:1). For travellers, choosing between private and public transportation often involves considering travel budgets, travel plans and the safety of each option (Petersen 2021:1). In the next sub-section, public bus transportation is unpacked.

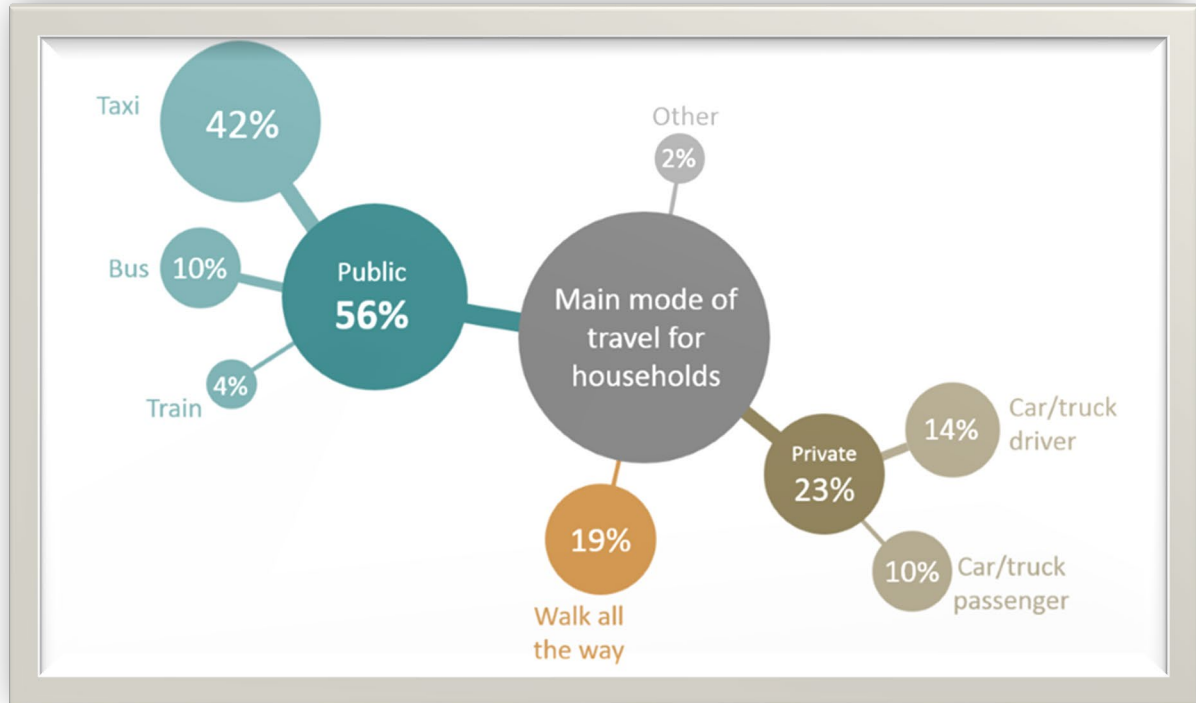
##### 2.4.1.1 Public bus transportation

Isnaini (2020:4) conceptualise public bus transport refers as a public service vehicle used to transport commuters who pay an amount of money (bus fares) for the trip. Public transport is the backbone of integrated mobility, but it needs to adapt to changing consumer expectations (Lampinen 2019:1). In South Africa, nearly 40% of workers use public transport as their main mode of work travel, the total of public transport trips per weekday stands at 5.4 billion with 68% made by taxi, 20% by bus and 13% by train (Keller 2018:1). Buses are viewed as the most economic and efficient mode of urban public transport throughout the world (Karim & Fouad 2017:154). Therefore, without buses, road congestion would increase, and city centre accessibility would decrease (Mackie et al 2012:17). Figure 2.1 illustrates the number of people using different modes of transport in South Africa.



FIGURE 2.1

## MAIN MODE OF TRAVEL FOR HOUSEHOLDS



Source: Stats SA (2019:1)

As indicated in Figure 2.1 bus transportation is the second largest mode of public transportation that is habitually used in South Africa. This confirms the contention of Freitas (2013:380), Loyola et al (2019:2) and Walters (2018:20) that the public bus service is the second mode of public transport that is used in South Africa. Moreover, public bus transportation offers numerous advantages, such as improving the quality of life in communities across the country by providing safe, efficient, and economic transportation services, easing traffic congestion, saving money, and creating job opportunities (Jakarta & Zurich 2013: 7; Tran & Kliener 2005:154; Walters 2018:2). It is argued that the provision of efficient and more convenient public transport would allow existing roads to be used more efficiently (Ramos, Vicente, Passos, Costa & Reis 2019:3).

In an attempt to make it more attractive, greener and competitive, several countries invest heavily in the public transport system than private cars (Ramos et al 2019:3). Buses used in public transport are owned and maintained independently or by public

bodies such as local governments, municipalities and private companies either for social or profit-making purposes (Isnaini 2020:4). Public bus transport in South Africa is a regulated industry. There are several government agencies concerned with the development of this industry and the provision of quality service to the general public (Khumalo 2019:1). Most public-sector bus services have increasingly been plagued by a combination of challenges such as rising costs, shortages of spare parts and poor maintenance, irregular services, overstaffing, the high level of corruption, low staff morale, and absenteeism (Simon 1996:111). However, public transport seems to play a vital role when no other alternatives are available or when the system is well organised with a high frequency of traffic service and dense network of stops (Button et al 2010:10). Implementing programs aimed at promoting public transportation use necessitates a thorough understanding of travel patterns. This has an impact on passenger attitudes, expectations, and needs, as well as the perception of the current quality of public transportation (Khumalo 2019:2).

Since public bus transport managers try to provide efficient services - not necessarily intended to make a profit - government entities can set schedules and routes to suit any agenda (Vague 2017:1). There is an urgent need to focus on the quality of the services and standard of services provided in the transport system in South Africa. Moreover, Govender (2014:101) states that public bus transport must be differentiated from other modes of transport, such as private vehicles, by providing better and more superior services than those offered by the other modes, and by making the commuters aware that the service is being provided without compromising either convenience or comfort. Passengers using public transportation suffer the repercussions of poor service quality, and their assessment of service quality is crucial (Ramos, Vicente, Passos, Costa. & Reis 2019:2), it is important to search for ways to improve the quality of the service for passengers through infrastructure, equipment, scheduling and vehicle/network status information (Oransirikul et al 2019:25). The actual and perceived quality of the service can, for example, be improved when passengers are guaranteed a seat and the real-time information to passengers about the potential availability of seats influences service quality (Oransirikul et al 2019:25). The next subsection highlights private bus transportation.

#### 2.4.1.2 Private bus transportation

Private bus transport is privately owned by individuals or private companies. Therefore, it requires the owners to operate profitably, or the company will fail and cease to provide a service (Vague 2017:1). Most studies in transportation have shown that private bus operations (both urban and rural) provide more efficient and sometimes cheaper services with quicker turnarounds than public transport (Vague 2017:1). The company controls the schedule and route of their vehicles to maximise the sustainability of the service. Private bus transportation in South Africa includes urban buses, regional buses, and intercity coaches (Van de Velde 2009:4). Private buses frequently travel national intercity and cross-country routes as well as offering charter services. Although there are different privately-owned bus transport services in South Africa, as stated in Chapter 1, the focus of this study is on long-distance coach liners. These coaches will be briefly discussed in the next paragraphs.

#### 2.4.1.3 Long-distance coach liner

Long-distance coach liner travel is referred to as long periods of travel between points, with few or no stops (Potgieter 2016:7). Long-distance coach services, also called the express bus or interurban coaches, cater for transport needs outside urban areas, usually from city to city. In the context of the current study, long-distance coach liners as a means of passenger transport are responsible for linking transportation to the major cities such as Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Durban, and cities in other provinces in South Africa (Klopper 2011:59).

Van de Velde (2009:4) further describes long-distance coach liner bus transportation as services that cross the borders of regional transport authorities where distance is often the main criterion applicable to long-distance coach services. Furthermore, long-distance coach service operations are different from other bus transport services, as the services are intended to run faster than normal bus services because of the good vehicle condition and are extensively used for long journeys, using the fastest route to reach a destination (Rohani, Wijeyesekera & Karim 2013:169; Van de Velde 2009:4).

Long-distance coach liners play a vital role in the transportation sector, particularly in the passenger segment (Klopper 2011:59). Furthermore, they help solve traffic problems created by excessive use of private motor vehicles in recent years (e.g.,

pollution and traffic jams (Klopper 2011:60). Long-distance coach liners have operated on a commercial basis in the sense that subsidisation by the government is almost non-existent (Van de Velde 2009:4) and provide reliable, safe, comfortable and better-integrated transport, proving to be more cost-effective compared with using a private car (Klopper 2011:59).

Long-distance coach liner services primarily serve trip patterns that have common starting points and destinations. They do not make as many stops as normal bus services and ensure shorter travel time between destinations and levels of service (Rohani et al 2013:168). These coach services are popular for private travel such as holiday travel during big celebrations of holidays. Augustin, Gerike, Sanchez & Ayala (2014: 246) maintains that long-distance coach liner services are extremely energy efficient types of transportation, with lower energy usage per passenger per kilometer than most other modes of transportation, depending on the number of people transported.

There are various long-distance coach liners that operate in South Africa (DoT 2010:16), some of these coaches are briefly discussed as follows:

- Greyhound

Greyhound was introduced in South Africa in 1984 (Greyhound 2013:1). Greyhound transported 804 293 people over a total of 25 million kilometers of road in 2018, covering the whole southern African region (Greyhound 2018:1). Greyhound buses carried passengers from Johannesburg to Cape Town, Durban to Pretoria, the Cape to Harare, Kwazulu-Natal to Maputo, and the Transkei Hills to the Free State's golden fields via most villages and towns (Greyhound 2018:1). Greyhound ceased operations in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, employees were all laid off, contributing to South Africa's rising unemployment rate (Daniel 2021:1).

- Intercape

Intercape is the leading intercity passenger transport operating in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique (Intercape 2018:1). Intercape was introduced in Cape Town, South Africa in 1979 (Intercape 2018:1). Initially, the company merely provided a shuttle service between the airport and the city center of Cape Town. Intercape filed for and received intercity licences for passenger travel between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in 1986 (Intercape 2018:1). Its goal is

to keep Intercape as the preferred intercity transport operator in Southern Africa (Intercape 2018:1). It strives to assist in the building of a stable, peaceful, democratic, and law-abiding society in which it can survive in the future through profitable trading and serving as a change agent. Intercape's mission is to provide safe, dependable and affordable intercity road-passenger transport in southern Africa (Intercape 2018:1). Intercape strive to meet the changing needs of passengers with integrity, efficiency and professionalism (Intercape 2018:1).

- Mega Bus

Mega Bus specializes in delivering passenger transportation and logistics solutions to a variety of corporate sectors, while also providing a cost-effective and safe travel experience to the market (Mega Bus 2019:1). Mega Bus serves a wide range of clients, including government commuter contracts, light and heavy businesses, scholar services, and unique ad hoc employment, in addition to the mining industry (Mega Bus 2019:1). Strategic partnerships and long-term relationships are the cornerstones of its success. Mega Bus is committed to a clean, safe and healthy environment for its employees, contractors, customers and surrounding communities (Mega Bus 2019:1).

- Eldo Coaches

Eldo Coaches has been providing inner-city and charter services since 1956 (South Africa To 2018:1). This intercity service uses Pretoria as the base and provides bus services to Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, East London, Harrismith, King Williamstown, Pietermaritzburg, and Queenstown (South Africa To 2018:1). Eldo Coaches is a fully accredited company that has been in the industry for decades. Originally a family business, Eldo Coaches has grown and diversified over the years, and currently has more than 70 luxury vehicles in its fleet (Eldo 2018:1). Perceived as an industry expert, Eldo Coaches has an impressive, diverse and carefully selected fleet. Eldo Coaches prides itself as "going beyond the call of duty" and strives to guarantee safety for passengers (Eldo 2018:1). The company has a specialized workshop with experts with many years of expertise and facilities that are perfectly equipped to undertake frequent and thorough checks to keep its coaches in good working order (Eldo 2018:1).

- Protours

Protours is a sophisticated ground transportation company that offers first-class coach charter services to sites around Southern Africa. It is a reputable, well-respected, and well-known coach charter company that offers a diverse range of services with dedication and competence (Protours 2021:1). Moreover, it strives to deliver a high quality, flexible and personalised service to its clients with a standardised vehicle fleet and has established long and sustainable relationships with major international tourism leaders and role players by providing them with a safe, affordable and reliable service (Protours 2019:1). Striving to be a world-class coach charter service, Protours prides itself on excellence and efficiency of service in both the local and international overland public travel markets (Protours 2019:1). Its vision is to maintain its position as one of the leading luxury coach charter companies in southern Africa. This is based on the quality, innovation and efficiency of its products and services, which comply with international standards (Protours 2019:1).

- Citiliner

Citiliner is a branch of Greyhound that commenced operation in 2005. It had only one goal: to make bus travel in South Africa and its neighbouring countries the cheapest on the continent (JustGO 2021:1). After a few years, Citiliner had established itself as the cheapest, most comfortable and safest bus service in southern Africa, transporting half a million people per year over eight million kilometres throughout the country's provinces (JustGO 2021:1). Citiliner has grown from eight coaches in 2005 to 36 coaches in 2019 (JustGO 2021:1) and the service offering appeals to a broad target audience. The emphasis has always been on safety and comfort at very low fares but never compromising on quality (JustGO 2021:1). Greyhound shut down operation in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Daniel 2021:1).

- Translux

Translux is one of South Africa's largest bus companies, with routes to all of the country's major towns as well as neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi (JustGO 2021a:1). Translux offers passengers on-board entertainment, reclining seats and onboard toilet facilities. Translux also looks after the budget traveller wanting to buy bus tickets (JustGO 2021a:1).

In terms of route network, Translux has established itself as a significant inter-city operator. It operates luxury inter-city coach routes connecting South Africa's major cities. (Translux 2021:1). Translux has double and single decker luxury coaches in its fleet, which are designed and built to world standards (Translux 2021:1). They are all equipped with the onboard facilities, namely audio and visual entertainment, reclining seats, air conditioning, reading lights, heaters and on-board toilet facilities (Translux 2021:1).

- City to City

City to City offers semi-luxury, no-frill domestic and regional coach trips (South Africa Travel Online 2020:1). Large cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, and Cape Town, as well as numerous smaller towns in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Kwa-zulu Natal, Free State, Northwest, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and Gauteng, are covered by the City to City network. Southern Africa destinations include services to Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho and Zambia (JustGO 2021:1). City to City is a brand name used for luxury coach operations of Autopax Passenger Services (Pty) Ltd. Transnet's subsidiary Autopax is a completely owned subsidiary of Transnet (which is owned by the South African government). Autopax Passenger Services is a member of SABOA (Southern African Bus Operators Association) (South Africa To 2020:1).

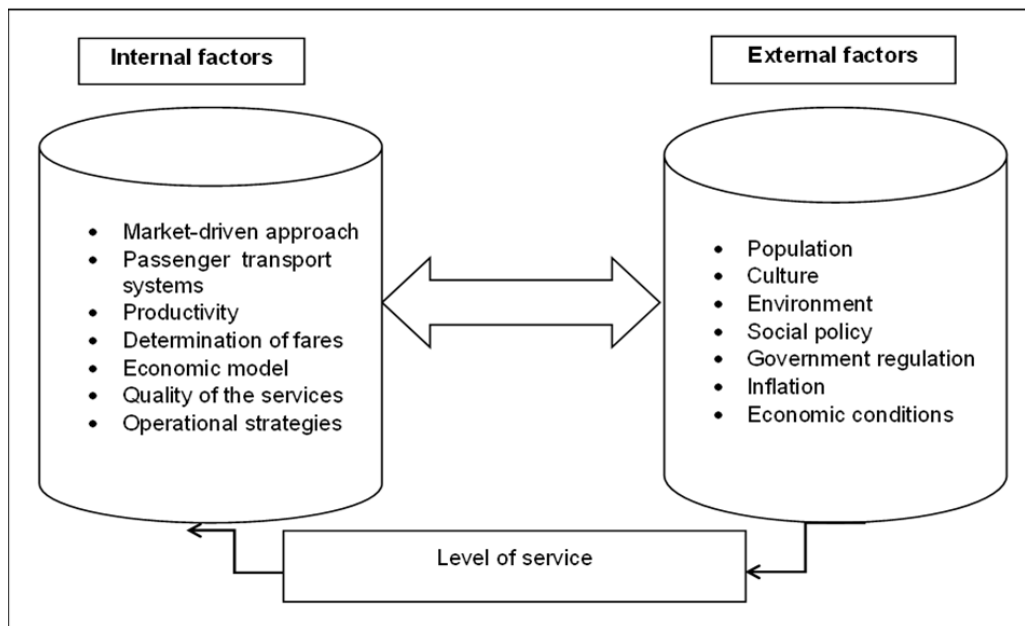
The success of bus transportation in South Africa is affected by pertinent factors, some within the control of management and others beyond management's control. The next section discusses the factors affecting bus transportation.

## 2.5 FACTORS AFFECTING BUS TRANSPORTATION

The success of bus transportation depends on various factors. Figure 2.2 summarises internal and external factors affecting the success of bus operation services.

FIGURE 2.2

### INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE LEVELS OF BUS TRANSPORTATION



Source: Adapted from Govender (2014:306)

The two categories of factors affecting the service levels bus transportation, namely external and internal factors, are explained in the following subsections.

### 2.5.1 Internal factors

Internal factors are factoring that transport systems can adjust and control such as fares, operating hours, headways, and quality of services offered (Alam et al 2018:818; Rohani et al 2013:170). The increasing fuel prices lead to an increase in bus fares (BusinessTech 2022:1). However, increase in fuel prices have no effect on passenger numbers because passengers prefer to travel by bus due to its convenience (operating hours) and flexibility. The quality of service provided is related to how well bus drivers and service providers treat their passengers, as well as how quickly they respond to customer inquiries and meet their needs.



Internal determinants assess the effects of service decisions made by transit agencies on ridership (Alam et al 2018:818). These factors indicate a necessity of planning and revision of policy that will mainly focus on improving internal factors. Understanding these internal factors will help the transport system to improve. As indicated in Figure 2.2 above, the internal factors that influence the success of a bus operation include a market-driven approach, passenger transport systems, productivity, determination of fares, economic model, quality of service and operational strategies (Govender 2014:306). These factors affect the level of service and are expected to be managed within the confines and objectives of the respective bus operators to ensure the sustainability of the business.

Another internal factor is service atmosphere, defined as 'physical environment', which refers to the physical aspects of the environment which can be controlled by service providers. Service atmosphere has become a critical factor in customer satisfaction, in revenue-increasing efforts and in maintaining market share (Nguyen-Phuoc, Su, Nguyen, Vo, Tran & Johnson 2022:163). Service atmosphere is formed by a number of elements such as external variables, interior variables, layout and design variables, decoration variables and human variables (Nguyen-Phuoc et al 2022:163).

### 2.5.2 External factors

External factors are factors that the bus operators have no direct control or influence over (Govender 2014:306; Rohani et al 2013:170). These factors include population, culture, environment, social policy, government regulations, inflation and economic conditions (Alam et al 2018:818; Govender 2014:306; Rohani et al 2013:170). Environment pollution may have a negative impact on passengers' comfort (e.g. chest distress, headache and cough) or temporary state of mind (e.g. irritable, scared and nervous) (Zang et al 2020:84). The rising petrol price in South Africa is likely to put upward pressure on key sectors of the economy, including transportation, driving up food costs and general inflation (BusinessTech 2022:1). Inflation is projected at 4.8% in 2022 and 4.4% in 2023 (BusinessTech 2022:1). Investing in economical bus service systems and increasing bus ridership are recognised as appropriate policies for transportation authorities to deal with air pollution, traffic congestion and social imbalance (Nguyen-Phuoc et al 2022: 162).

External determinants are the most significant indicators of travel mode choice (Alam et al 2018:818). Moreover, despite having no control over these factors, they impact the level of service and may easily result in an inefficient public transport system or scheduling of service (Govender 2014:306; Kim & Schonfeld 2014:77; Rohani et al 2013:168).

## 2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on road transportation in South Africa. An overview of road transport was discussed and a background on bus transportation provided. Bus transportation is the second largest mode of public transportation that is habitually used in South Africa because of its flexibility in terms of time and costs, relatively more accessibility and convenience. It is critical to have a good, efficient, and effective transportation system to encourage people to utilize buses. Road transport in South Africa is governed by many entities, namely the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), the Urban Transport Fund (UTF), Ports Regulator of South Africa, Cross-Border Road Transport Agency, Road Accident Fund, Road Traffic Infringement Agency and the National Transport Master Plan (DoT 2019; Potgieter 2016:21); South African Government 2019:1).

This chapter noted that bus transportation in South Africa is classified into two types, namely public and private bus transportation. In South Africa the differences between private and public transportation are significant and include funding, accessibility and availability. Public transportation is funded, at least in part, through government subsidy while private transportation is established and funded through private enterprise (Petersen 2021:1). Since the focus of this study was on long-distance coach liners, a discussion of this sector was provided. A brief discussion of long-distance coach liners operating in South Africa was offered, focusing on Citiliner, city to city, Eldo Coaches, Greyhound, Intercape, Mega Bus and Translux.

Internal factors that affect bus transportation include fares, operating hours, headways and quality of service and external factors include population, culture, environment, social policy, government regulations, inflation and economic conditions. These factors were listed. The next chapter will provide literature on passengers' experiences and satisfaction.

## CHAPTER 3

### PASSENGER EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 elaborated on road transportation and presented a discussion of the background of the industry in South Africa. The chapter further discussed public and private bus transportation, specifically focussing on long-distance coach liners. In addition, Chapter 2 identified the factors that affect bus transportation in South Africa. Chapter 3 seeks to address the second objective of the study, namely, to *study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof in the road transport industry*. This chapter commences with a discussion on theoretical perspectives of the study, followed by dimensions of experience namely, aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency. Thereafter, literature on passenger satisfaction is presented, followed by the proposed framework of the study. The final section provides a summary of the chapter.

#### 3.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Organisations are required to create positive experiences for customers at every touchpoint of the operation (Ali et al 2018:2; Kim, Ham, Moon, Chua & Han 2019:77). Organisations need to continuously attract more customers and retain existing ones which in turn helps increase the client base and grow the business (Georgiadis, Politis, Papaioannou 2014:84). Consequently, an organisation's ability to manage the customer's experiential environment is a crucial factor in its survival and competitive advantage (Chepur and Bellamkonda 2019:1; Gentle, Spiller & Noci 2007:395; Rather 2020:15). Hence, organisations are increasingly trying to differentiate themselves from their competitors based on customising their products and services and delivering them to customers in a unique way (Smit & Melissen 2018:2). Competing in a global market has grown increasingly difficult, establishing a durable competitive advantage has become essential. Competing in a global market has become increasingly challenging, therefore, the creation of sustainable competitive advantage is a necessity (Gentle et al 2007:395). This study is grounded in the theories of customer experience and consumer-buying behaviour. The literature on these theories are provided below.

### 3.2.1 Customer experience

Over the past decade, much research, for example by Gentle et al (2007:395), Milman and Tasci (2018:386) and Pine and Gilmore (2014:24), has emphasised creating customer experience as the most important area that organisations should focus on. This focus on the customer experience as the centre of service provision is classified by Lim & Kim (2018:143) as experience-centric service delivery, in which customers encounter emotionally appealing experiences and activities that result from indistinct memories. In the study conducted by Afshar (2017:1), customer experience is seen as the key to sustainable differentiation and the new battlefield for competitive battles. For this reason, customer experience has grown in significance in all industries that aiming for competitive advantage.

Customer experience is an interaction between a client and a product, a company, or part of its organisation that results in a reaction (Gentle et al 2007:395). It is an intimate experience that requires the customer's participation on multiple levels. Therefore, it becomes a personal experience, involving the customer at different levels - rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual (Gentle et al 2007:395). The definition of customer experience has been discussed by several academics in the field of business, marketing, tourism and hospitality.

Early authors such as Meyer and Schwager (2007:118), as well as later authors, such as Carreira et al (2013:233) and Chepur and Bellamkonda (2019:1) define customer experience as “the internal and subjective response that customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company”. Customers usually initiate direct contact during the process of buying, using, and servicing (Meyer & Schwager 2007:31). Indirect contact often takes the form of word-of-mouth recommendations or criticisms, advertisements, or news reports and reviews about a company's products, services, or brands (Meyer & Schwager 2007:31).

Lui et al 2018:412 define customer experience as “multidimensional construct consisting of sensory, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational components”. Business leaders, researchers and marketing practitioners agree that customer experience is central to firm competitiveness (Becker & Jaakhola 2020:631). Moreover, researchers such as Ali et al (2018:2) and Becker and Jaakhola (2020:631) conceptualise customer experience as a psychological construct, involving a holistic

and subjective response resulting from customer contact with the service provider, which might involve both cognition and perception (Ali et al 2018:2). In the theory of *experience economy*, Pine and Gilmore (2014:24) define experience as how commercial offerings engage customers in memorable ways. Staging of such experiences creates a new source of value that results in the development of economic value (Kim et al 2019:171).

Hsieh, Guo and Luo (2017:1396), as well as Smit and Melissen (2018:31), identify different types of experiences such as sensory experiences, feel experiences, thinking experiences, action experiences and relate experiences. Sensory experience appeals to consumers' senses of vision, hearing, smell and touch, pleasure, happiness and satisfaction, each with its inherent structure and processes (Hsieh et al 2017:1396; Milman & Tasci 2018:386). Feel experiences appeal to customers' internal feelings and emotions and their impact which takes place during the consumption process, and think experiences appeal to the intellect, aiming at creating cognitive, problem-solving experiences that engage consumers imaginatively (Milman & Tasci 2018:386). Act experiences aim to affect body experiences, lifestyles and interactions (Milman & Tasci 2018:386). Lastly, relate experiences include aspects of sense, feel, think, and act, and expand beyond the individual's personal feelings, adding experiences that relate to the individual, to the customer's idyllic self, and other people, institutions or cultures (Milman & Tasci 2018:386).

Several studies have concluded that customers are no longer looking only for solutions in products or services, they rather look for affective memories to create a holistic personal experience that dazzles their senses, engages them personally, touches their hearts, and stimulates their minds, while indulging in fantasies, feelings and fun (Ali, Hussain & Omar 2016:28; Hosany & Witham 2010:37). In the study by Chepur and Bellamkonda (2019:1), a holistic customer experience is classified into five strategic types of experiences. These include sensory experiences (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell), affective experiences (inner feelings and emotions), creative cognitive experiences (thinking and conscious process), physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (product attributes or consumption/use attributes), and social-identity experiences (result from relating to a reference group or culture). Affective memory is defined as the memory of the feeling or emotion associated with an event. Therefore, it is important to note that it is the memory of an experience that determines whether

the consumer repeats, recommends, or talks positively about it because future intentions are based on a memory of past experiences (Flacandji & Krey 2020:280).

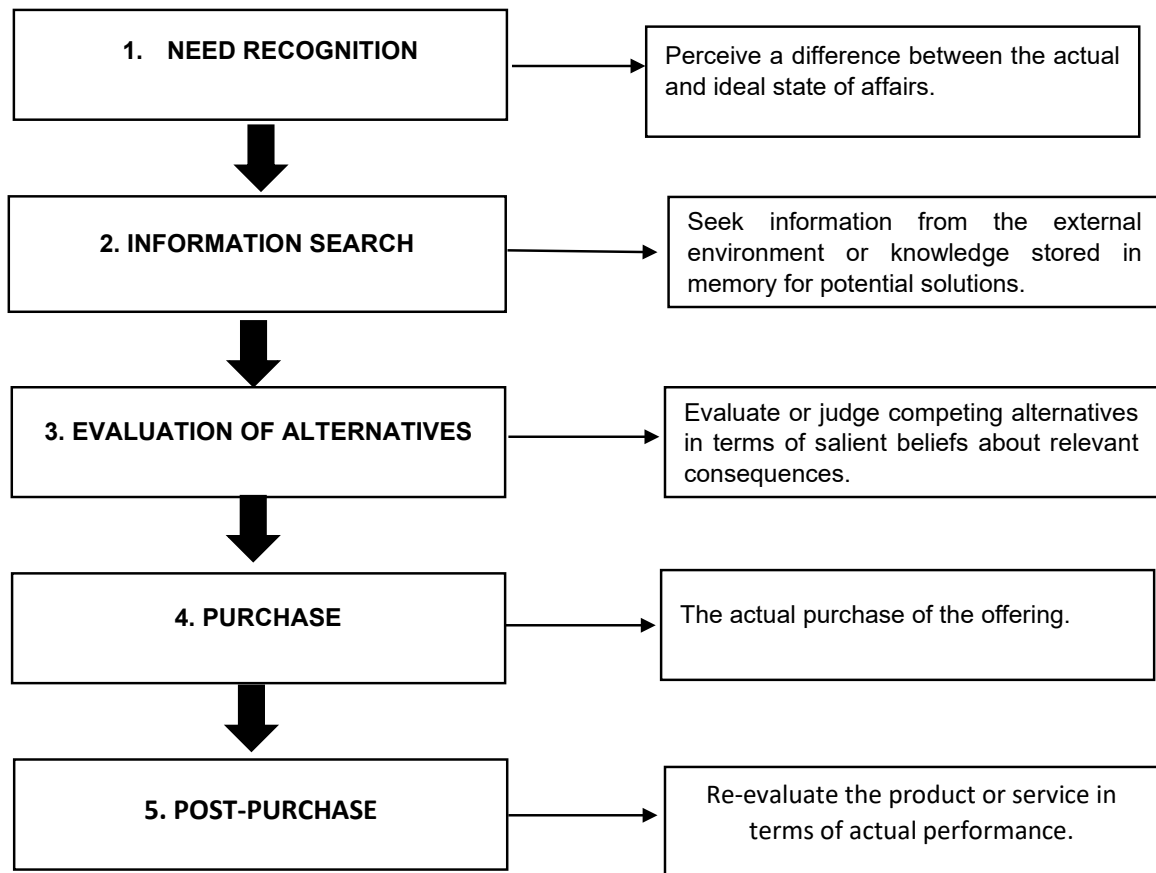
The passenger's travelling experience encompasses aspects that the transportation provider does not control directly. This in addition to all moments of contact with the transportation service. The consumer-buying behaviour forming the second theory guiding this study is also unpacked. A good customer experience includes any point where a customer comes into contact with a business, product, or service, which will increase the likelihood that they will buy the products and services, since the ultimate goal of customers is to have a good experience (Esmaeilpour & Mohseni 2019:19). Consumer behavioral experience is one aspect of customer experience. Behavioral studies of consumers consider the consumer's experience with a brand, product or service to be an important factor (Bapat 2017: 638). Hearing stimuli, for example, stimulates purchasers' emotion and feelings through the effect of sound on feelings, mood, and behavior, as well as more comfort and convenience when purchasing in a retail location and hearing sound or music during the purchasing process (Esmaeilpour & Mohseni 2019:22).

### 3.2.2 Consumer-buying behaviour

It has been observed by several authors that customers are attracted to the benefits that a product or service offers (Ali, Kim, Li & Jeon 2018:2; Kim et al 2019:77; Rather 2020:15). Many studies in consumer and marketing research have established that the overall perception of an experience is formed during the consumer's search for products, purchase, and after-sales phases and may involve service channels (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello 2009:52; Carreira et al 2013:233; Chepur & Bellamkonda 2019:1; Hsieh et al 2017:1395). Figure 3.1 depicts a five-stage model of the consumer buying process, which includes five actions that customers take while purchasing a product or service. During this process customers are interacting with the organisation through many touchpoints in multiple channels and media (Chepur & Bellamkonda 2019:1). Thus, it is vital that academics and practitioners understand the customer experience and customer purchase journey over time.

FIGURE 3.1

## THE CONSUMER-BUYING PROCESS



Source: Researcher's own construction based on Stankevich (2017:9)

The consumer-buying process illustrated in Figure 3.1 above will be discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2.2.1 Need recognition

Need recognition is the stage where the buyer acknowledges the problem or the need to buy something and actively seeks solutions (Carrier 2020:1). These moments are impacted by the existence/creation of a desired (preferred) state, the availability of knowledge about the new status, related/complementary products for the product that may create a need, and incentives that drive customer behaviour (Stankevich 2017:10). Marketers can also assist customers in identifying the need/problem or conditions that lead to a desire/need (Stankevich 2017:10). With transportation, passengers may recognise the need to travel, for example to visit their family and

friends, shopping or attend conferences or educational events outside their town or city.

#### 3.2.2.2 Information search

After need recognition, customers start searching for the product or service. Passengers of the long-distance coach liner may search for information on websites or ask their friends, families and colleagues for recommendations. When they experience difficulties in finding relevant information, they lose interest, and probably buy from another competitor. Consumers need reliable and relevant information throughout the information search stage so that they may make well-informed decisions (Gensler, Verhoef & Böhm 2012:989). In this stage customers usually seek both internal and external information to decide what they want (Gensler et al 2012:989). An internal information search consists of utilising information from memory, such as past experiences with the product or service. An external information search includes asking friends and family about their experiences with acquiring a new product or service. Marketing-controlled sources, such as banners, television commercials and pamphlets, are another example of an external information source (Stankevich 2017:10). One can therefore argue that internal information search is primary whereas external information search is secondary (Gensler et al 2012:989).

#### 3.2.2.3 Evaluation of alternatives

Evaluation of alternatives is the stage where customers evaluate their options based on the recommendation or information collected from different organisation websites or social platforms and internal information retrieved (Carrier 2020:1). Consumer purchasing behavior, such as purchase timing, product brand, quantity, and brand switching, is influenced by sales promotions (Shamout 2016:77). After the customer has gathered all the information, the decision to purchase the product or service is largely influenced by friend, family or colleague recommendations (Qazzafi 2019:131). In this stage, the customer is ready to make a purchase.

#### 3.2.2.4 Purchase

The factors that influence the buying decision include price, quality, previous experience, convenience and risk (Gensler et al 2012:989). During the purchase stage, customers want to get the best deal on the goods they want (Gensler et al 2012:989).



When the product or service has matched or exceeds customer expectations, customers tend to be satisfied (Beneke, Hayworth, Hobson & Mia 2012:28). This stage involves the actual purchase of the offering.

#### 3.2.2.5 Post-purchase

As highlighted in Figure 3.1, the post-purchase stage of *the consumer-buying process* involves re-evaluating the product or service in terms of actual performance. Post-purchase customer experience includes the activities, messages and brand interactions that a customer experiences after purchasing a product or service. For example, the CRM management could find out if the passengers arrived safely and whether the experience was satisfactory. The consumer may repurchase or abandon the product based on their perceived satisfaction or discontent (MBA Brief 2021:1). If a buyer experiences post-purchase dissonance and regrets their decision, it could be because of (MBA Brief 2021:1):

- Large number of alternatives.
- The qualities of the other alternatives are superior
- It was a difficult buying decision.
- The product's ability to execute or the risk it poses
- A substantial financial investment in the product; or
- The product's deterioration.

The five steps of the consumer-buying behaviour process namely need recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase, were briefly described in the preceding section. The following section will delve into the motivation for relying on customer experience and consumer behaviour theories.

### 3.3 MOTIVATION FOR RELYING ON CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CONSUMER-BUYING BEHAVIOUR THEORIES

A passenger of a long-distance coach liner could be viewed as a customer of a service being offered, and therefore the theory on 'customer experience' applies to passengers of long-distance coach liners. The customer experience occurs before, during and after consumption. In the context of transportation, it implies that the travel experience is formed by passengers' interactions with and on the vehicle(s), the service provider(s), and other aspects in the moments beyond the actual trip (Carreira, Patricio and Jorge

2014:36). As a positive customer experience is considered central to the service provider, it is important that transport operators focus on aspects such as the sensory design of the vehicle's physical environment and the interaction of customers with service employees through all service encounters (Carreira et al 2014:36). As the transport industry becomes more service-oriented, it has become a priority to offer a more interactive experience (Carreira et al 2013:233). A study by Bordagaray, Dell'olio, Ibeas and Cecin (2014:705) put forward the idea that transportation is not only related to time and costs, but also to other features (such as branding, interior, exterior, bus environment and facilities) that affect perceived travelling experience. Therefore, understanding the need to create a pleasant passenger experience will assist managers to effectively plan transportation policy, vehicle design, and service management (Carreira et al 2013:233).

A broader understanding of customer experience and consumer-buying behaviour can provide useful insights into transport providers so that they can enhance customer loyalty and their own competitive advantage (Carreira et al 2013:234). Consumer behaviour is heavily influenced by the advancement of digital technologies, social and cultural changes, and the influence of those closest to them (Basalamah et al 2020:134). As briefly discussed in the previous chapter, external factors affecting the consumer-buying decision include population, culture, environment, social policy, government regulations, inflation and economic conditions in the context of bus transportation.

For the current study, the passenger experience is defined as a comprehensive individual response resulting from the passengers' interactions with all aspects of their experience. These interactions include tangible factors, multi-channel services, or other passengers, and across all moments of the transportation delivery process. In acknowledging the multidimensional nature of an experience and to identify the dimensions of an experience relevant to this study, the next section will focus on the dimensions of an experience.

### 3.4 DIMENSIONS OF AN EXPERIENCE

Several authors such as Ali et al (2018:2), Amoah et al (2016:421), Islam et al (2014:35), Lin, Yeh and Hsu (2014:24), Pearce, Zaidel, Vartanina, Leder, Chatterjee and Nadal (2016:265) and Rather (2020:15) have identified different dimensions in

various contexts of experience with little or any agreement on the exact dimensions that make up customer experience. Examples of dimensions of experience documented by these authors include attractiveness, enjoyment, excitement, pleasantness, relaxation, playfulness, aesthetics, peace of mind, customer return on investment, service excellence, efficiency, economic value, shopping enjoyment, visual appeal, entertainment and service excellence. For this study, five dimensions, namely aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency, have been selected. These dimensions of experience were selected because they were identified by other authors to influence passengers' buying decisions and passenger satisfaction (Kirillova, Fu, Lehto & Cai 2014:283; Pearce et al 2016:265; Smit & Melissen 2018:33), which addresses the research question of this study.

These dimensions of experience are explored in the next subsections.

#### 3.4.1 Aesthetics

It has been acknowledged that aesthetic experience affects customer satisfaction (Hwang & Yoo 2021:48). Clayton (2012:1), Kirillova et al (2014:283) and Yi and Kang (2019:409) observed across a variety of service settings that customer experience is inevitably influenced by the surrounding aesthetic cues. Kirillova et al (2014:283) also found that aesthetics affects perceived experience, satisfaction and patronage intentions. Aesthetic experience is essential in gaining buyers' attention, communicating information and providing aesthetic pleasure to both sellers and users. Concluding from the above information, it thus implies that aesthetics has a role in the assessment of overall experience (Kirillova et al 2014:283).

Researchers such as Fiore (2010:4) and Markovic (2012:1) define the concept of aesthetic experience as an appreciation of formal, expressive or symbolic qualities of the product, service or environment that result in pleasure or satisfaction. It is a special state of mind that is different from everyday experience, a special kind of subject-object relationship in which a particular object strongly engages the subject's mind, shadowing all other surrounding objects and events (Markovic 2012:1). Kim et al (2019:171) an aesthetic experience is defined as an environment in which people feel immersed, such as visiting an art gallery or admiring the interior of an exotic restaurant. It is an important dimension where the customer passively participates and immerses in the experience (Ali et al 2016:28). Through aesthetics experience, people feel part

of the event and thus feel immersed, while they make no impact on the event itself (Kim et al 2019:171).

In the field of transportation, Van der Waerden, Couwenberg and Wets (2018:530) put forward that aesthetic experience could be associated with various components such as design and colour, and the configuration (location of components) of the interior of the bus. In the study by Shen, Feng, Li & Hu (2016: 2), it was discovered that bus passengers are willing to pay more to experience better service, including onboard comfort. Aesthetic experiences are presented in the literature as passive immersion in the experience economy. Examples of aesthetic experience include a beautiful arrangement of historical relics in a museum (Ali et al 2016:28), while in a transportation environment it could refer to the bus used to render the service (Islam et al 2014:35).

Aesthetics comprises both tangible and intangible elements (Smit & Melissen 2018:330). Tangibles refer to the physical characteristics of the service provider such as the building, equipment, furnishing, staff and visual communication (Smit & Melissen 2018:330) while the intangible aspect of aesthetics captures the intrinsic value component. In the context of long-distance coach liners, aesthetic experience is associated with tangible and intangible aspects of the coach liner. Such tangibles include seats, bus stop equipment, as well as signs, symbols and artefacts, whereas intangible aspects may include the smell on the bus, the temperature on the bus, lighting and appearance (Ali et al 2018:2).

Furthermore, the study by Pearce et al (2016:269) found that aesthetics has definite dimensions. Firstly, aesthetic experience has an evaluative dimension in the sense that it involves the evaluation of an object. Secondly, it has an affective dimension as it is subjectively felt and savoured, drawing one's attention. Finally, aesthetics has a semantic dimension which makes the experience for the traveller more meaningful and not just a mere sensation.

Van der Waerden et al's (2018:529) study on travellers' preferences, identified that negative opinions regarding bus services such as that the bus seats are too cramped, the buses are too crowded, the buses are dirty, the buses look old and shabby, and the buses are too noisy negatively affect the aesthetic experience of the passenger. Moreover, in the context of long-distance coach liners, for instance sleep liner coaches,

aesthetics may encompass comfortable sleeper seats as well as extra legroom with a leg rest, air conditioning, an on-board toilet and washing facilities, which enable passengers to sleep through the trip and arrive fresh at their destination. Greyhound Dreamliner, for example, includes amenities like luxurious reclining seats, charging outlets for personal devices, and individual air conditioning, allowing passengers to keep as warm or cool as they want throughout the journey (Greyhound 2017:1). The Eldo coach liner also has reclining seats fitted with seat belts, individual air vents, reading lights, armrests and tray tables, and an emergency toilet has been fitted on each bus (Eldo 2018:1).

Other elements that contribute to aesthetic experience include the physical environment of the bus (e.g., lights and colours) (Ali & Amin 2014:254). The physical environment also includes the outward appearance where the service is provided, for instance, its overall layout, design and decoration (Ali et al 2018:2). Furthermore, Ali and Amin (2014:254) state that customers have expectations regarding the physical environment of a service setting and once these expectations are met, customers are likely to be satisfied (Ali & Amin 2014:254). For example, each seat could be provided with a tray table and reading light configuration mounted to the back of the seat directly in front (Millar & Moran 1990:270). The importance of creating an attractive physical environment has gained growing attention among scholars as it is a key factor for attracting and satisfying customers in the transport industry (Ali & Amin 2014:254). Therefore, the physical environment plays a critical role in differentiating service firms and influencing the nature of customer experiences (Ali & Amin 2014:254).

Another aspect that has a major influence on aesthetic experience is the waiting environment (e.g., offices for embarkment and disembarking). Amenities such as shelters, benches, vending machines, trash receptacles, lighting and phone booths in the waiting environment, have a significant influence on passengers' perceived experience of bus service and their overall satisfaction (Pruyn & Smidts 1998:322). Lighting and colours, forming part of aesthetics, significantly influence passenger experience (Astom 2017:128; Pruyn & Smidts 1998:323).

Aesthetic aspects are important in the selection and purchasing process; they influence the perception of the quality of a product or service and affect ultimate satisfaction (Breiby & Slatten 2018:2; Fiore 2010:4). For instance, a pleasing store

design enhances perceptions of the product, which in turn increases store patronage intentions such as willingness to return to the store (Fiore 2010:4). In the context of this study, aesthetic design and ambience of a physical environment might attract customers and directly affect their satisfaction levels (Ali & Amin 2014:254; Carreira et al 2014:1; Ugo 2014:5). Van Lierop et al (2018:62) and Ugo (2014:5) state that on-board experience is based on the level of overall comfort that travellers experience while on the transport vehicle, for instance, the comfort of the seats which helps travellers to relax. In the field of transportation, these factors were found to be important factors that affect passengers' experience (Ali et al 2018:2).

### 3.4.2 Entertainment

Most authors are confident that entertainment directly influences satisfaction (Akbari & Wagner 2021:249; Elmaslhara & Soares 2019:94; Hwang & Yoo 2021:48). Entertainment relates to personal experience where the customers are only 'passively' involved (Musa, Najmin, Thirumoorthi & Taha 2017:108). The customer passively participates in the production of the entertainment; however, their mind is actively involved as they enjoy the performances or events (Wessh 2018:1). The entertainment dimension thus includes events that people enjoy and where they feel entertained, such as watching a baseball game or attending an opera concert (Kim et al 2019:171). The five senses such as sight, sound, touch, taste and smell are all relevant and varied means of creating a rich and entertaining environment that captures and holds the client's attention (Alford Media 2018:1; Milman & Tasci 2018:386). Lighting effects are the foundations for appealing to the sense of sight as lighting creates ambience, displays video content and can be used to highlight design elements or styling pieces to build a favourable visual experience (Encore 2018:1).

In the transport sector, entertainment involves activities performed during the actual trip, such as reading, using the vehicle's sound system, watching movies, or using for example, wireless internet access (Carreira 2014:39). Entertainment may be provided by the passengers themselves or by the operator, for example through viewing performances during the journey or on-board video equipment (Schiefelbusch 2015:53). Entertainment consumption can be intrinsically appealing because it makes the individual feel better immediately in terms of regulating mood and arousal (Bartsch Schneider 2014: 374). However, entertainment consumption can also serve to

stimulate rewarding affective and cognitive experiences that contribute to emotional well-being in more complex and sustainable ways, to foster a sense of insight, meaning and social connectedness (Bartsch Schneider 2014: 374).

In the study by Clayton (2012:1), it was found that entertainment activities, such as reading or listening to music during the trip, could lead to a more enjoyable journey experience. Sound such as music is important in influencing entertainment experiences. Music is used in everyday life for numerous purposes, one of the most important of which is the regulation of moods and emotions (Schafer, Zimmermann & Sedlmeier 2014:1). Researchers have observed that the tempo, volume, style, complexity and familiarity of the background music impact people's responses to the service or experience (Yi & Kang 2019:409). Music is among the factors that influence entertainment experience. Music also builds and enhances people's perceptions and attitude and affects customers' intensity of feelings of satisfaction and pleasure. Background music can lead to specific emotions, beliefs and physiological changes and can also reduce stress and anxiety (Liu, Huang & Li 2018:17). Enjoyable music can increase the potential of impulse purchase (Yi & Kang 2019:409). Passengers can determine their experiences of time by engaging in different activities using mobile technologies on a journey (Clayton 2012:3).

Millar and Moran (1990:270) discusses the boredom that passengers experience during intercity or long-distance trips due to the lack of entertainment. He ascribes this to the inability of the service provider to provide entertainment due to the unsuitable interior bus configuration. A functional video display screen that is positioned in the forward interior of the bus behind the driver's compartment to allow the display of movies or television programmes can contribute to entertainment experience (Millar & Moran 1990:271). It is expected that long-distance coach liners in South Africa provide an entertainment experience such as audio and visual entertainment for the passengers to enjoy the trip. In times where the use of technology is increasing, many people carry smartphones that are capable of WIFI-communication. WIFI communication keeps passengers entertained while they are waiting for the bus or during the trip (Oransirikul et al 2019:25). Greyhound launched its Dreamliner in 2017, which has features such as an on-board entertainment system and Wi-Fi (Greyhound 2017:1). For example, in April 2018, Eldo Coaches introduced a new fleet of buses built to their specifications and fitted with a few luxuries, including audio and visual

entertainment (Eldo 2018:1). A study by Astrom (2017:128) found that when passengers feel indulged by such services, they have a high likelihood to be satisfied.

### 3.4.3 Peace of mind

Peace of mind has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction (Ainsworth & Foster 2016:29). The concept of peace refers to calm or quietness, a time when there is no conflict or disorder (Chester 2019:1). It is a confidence in the service provider and perceived expertise of the provider (Ainsworth & Foster 2016:29). Several scholars such as Chester (2019:1), Clayton (2012:1) and Liu (2020:19), in the bus transportation literature, found that bus passengers desire a relaxing, switched-off, and calm experience during the trip. Hence Clayton (2012:3) considers travel time as a benefit to passengers in some circumstances. For instance, having travel time often provides the traveller with an opportunity to relax and switch off (during a busy routine). Datu, Valdez and King (2018:1904) conceptualise peace of mind as a form of affective well-being that is characterised by feelings of internal peace and harmony. Internal peace is also known as the inner peace of the soul (Sudhamma 2012:27). Internal peace is thus a state of serenity and calmness of mind that arises due to having no sufferings or mental disturbances such as feelings of worry, anxiety, greed, hatred, ill-will, delusion and/or other defilements (Sudhamma 2012:27). On the other hand, external peace is a normal state of society, nations and the world, resulting in the peaceful and happy co-existence of people as well as nature (Sudhamma 2012:27). Inner peace (peace of mind or inner calmness) also refers to a state of being mentally and spiritually at peace, with enough knowledge and understanding to keep oneself strong in the face of discord or stress (Chester 2019:1; Johnson 2013:9).

Within the tourism context, peace of mind is defined as tourists' emotional responses to their favourite social-psychological behaviours (Liu 2020:19). In the field of transportation, peace of mind is associated with psychological comfort and relaxation (Schiefelbusch 2015:53). Psychological comfort and relaxation refer to the ability to use the service without the need to perform any duties with confidence and free from interferences that create stress, for instance, in cases of crowding, the dominant behaviour of other passengers or feeling disoriented (Schiefelbusch 2015:53). Three factors have been found to affect peace of mind. These factors include safety, security and privacy (Amoah et al 2016:30).



Safety is viewed as an important factor in the transportation sector (Carreira 2014:39). It is also one of the main deciding factors that convince passengers to use private transport (Mohammadi, Amador-Jimenez & Nasiri 2020:1). Safety in bus transportation relates to the passengers' physical well-being, involving the easy and efficient use of the seatbelts, adequate vehicle or road maintenance, and driver alertness (Carreira 2014:39). Much of the literature on transportation emphasises the safety of passengers as the most important factor that affects passenger experience (Abenzoza, Cats & Susilo 2019:2; Carreira 2014:39; Govender 2014:308). The safety of the service may also be linked to the number of accidents involving a transport mode, the condition of the vehicles, driving behaviour and not obeying the rules of the road (Monakali 2015:86). Furthermore, Govender (2014:308) acknowledges that service safety needs to be viewed from three equally important angles, namely the safety of passengers, the safety of drivers and the safety of buses. To achieve a high degree of safety, all three of the aforementioned areas must work together smoothly and efficiently. In the context of this study, the safety of passengers onboard and the place where passengers embark and disembark are the areas that need to be considered when analysing the safety of long-distance coach passengers. Other factors affecting safety of passengers include the vehicle conditions such as lack of maintenance, worn tyres, fake parts to minimise cost, and age of the vehicles (Govender 2014:309).

The second factor that influences peace of mind is security. Security refers to the protection from crime on buses and in waiting rooms (Jackson, Lubbe & Lombard 2018:19; Salonen 2018:106). Furthermore, the security also involves the provision of services that are free of incidents which might compromise the financial and physical wellbeing of passengers (e.g., robberies and assaults) (Freitas 2013:381). Salonen (2018:106) describes in-vehicle security as related to disruptive behaviour that increases the possibility of becoming a victim of crime inside a vehicle. Fear of crime and a perceived sense of being insecure has the potential to discourage individuals from using bus transport (Salonen 2018:106). De Aquino, de Souza, da Silva, Jerônimo and De Melo (2018:40) describe security as the ability to serve the customers reliably and confidentially. Security focuses on the order in public spaces at bus stations and boarding or alighting security and disruptive behaviour on the bus (Shen, Xiao & Wang 2016:24). This means freedom from danger, risks or doubt. In line with

this, a study by Salonen (2018:106) found that feeling safe and secure in private transport is positively related to the frequency of private transport use.

Lastly, privacy is a third factor influencing peace of mind. Privacy involves the provision of services that value the personal aspects (confidentiality) of the passengers (Freitas 2013:381). For example, providing a personal territory or 'personal space' in the bus can enhance the privacy of passengers. Bus transport companies can respond to this by providing differentiated seating arrangements (Schiefelbusch 2015:54).

Previous studies have established that peace of mind has a significant influence on passenger experience. A study by Mkwanazi, Mbohwa and Nemarumane (2015:1763) found that safety and security have a great impact on passenger experience as when passengers feel safe during the trip, they are likely to be satisfied.

#### 3.4.4 Economic value

Customers are on the lookout for benefits that the product or service offers (Leduc 2021:1). Economic value can be described as a measure of the benefit from a good or service relative to the cost (Banton 2019:1). Economic value thus represents the maximum amount of money that a customer is willing and able to pay for a good or service (Investopedia 2019:1). Litman (2013:1) describes the concept of economic value as the degree to which consumer benefits exceed the costs of purchasing the product or service. In exchange for their money, time and effort, customers expect to obtain value for access to goods, labour, professional skills, facilities, networks and systems, despite not normally taking ownership of any of the physical elements involved (Freitas 2013:380). Generally, customers evaluate what a company offers to them based on objective performance measures such as quality and price, and subjective measures such as how the experience makes them feel.

Most challenges that passengers experience is referred to as costs (Litman & Doherty 2009:2). In bus transportation, passenger costs include travelling costs, time, bus fares and any other costs suffered because of choosing the mode of transport (Karim & Fouad 2019:57; Litman & Burwell 2006:335; Litman & Doherty 2009:2). A study by Cirillo, Eboli and Mazzulla (2011:217) discovered that these costs affect the choice of selecting the mode of transportation and behaviour of passengers.

In the buying decision process during the information search, consumers investigate all costs and benefits before making major purchase decisions (refer to Figure 3.1) (Kotler & Armstrong 2015:88). In the studies by Litman and Doherty (2009:2) and Pandya (2014:56), price was found to be an important factor in customer satisfaction and is one of the primary influences on the purchase decision. For instance, a change in fuel prices, parking fees and transport fares affect consumers' travel decisions (Litman & Doherty 2009:2). Perceived price, which refers to the price, as encoded by the consumer, can also affect consumers' transportation choices (Gensler et al 2012:989). The higher the perceived price in transportation, the less likely consumers are to choose that transportation mode.

Furthermore, Litman and Doherty (2009:2) state that price refers to perceived internal-variable cost, that is, the incremental costs that a user bears for consuming a good. It is the amount of money that customers give up obtaining a product or service (Han & Ryu 2009:491; Kotler & Armstrong 2016:51). Furthermore, customers tend to use price as a cue in evaluating their alternatives with a product or service and in shaping their attitude toward a provider (Han & Ryu 2009:491).

Price in transport includes any amount of money paid by passengers or commuters, for example, bus fares. It is the price that consumers are willing to pay for the product and the perceived price of the product (Fiore 2010:4). Fares are fundamental to the operation of bus transportation. Specifically, a change in fare for a transport mode can lead to a passenger switching to a competitor (Gagnepain, Ivaldi & Vibes 2011:10). When fares do not restrict persons who require transportation, they are deemed reasonable (Freitas 2013:382).

Pricing in bus transportation is important as it affects the affordability of the service. Govender (2014:311) states that it is essential that the correct balance is established between service and fares charged. According to Govender (2014:311), service affordability involves value for money and thus includes fares charged by the private transport modes. The concept of affordability refers to the extent to which the financial cost of journeys puts an individual or household in the position of having to make sacrifices to travel, or the extent to which they can afford to travel when they want to (Govender 2014:311).

Value for money is based not only on the minimum purchase price (economy) but also on the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the purchase (Olatunji, Olawumi & Awodele 2017:54). Therefore, clients can attest to value for money when they feel that they have received a service that was worth the price that they paid (Olatunji et al 2017:54). Value for money can be defined as the most advantageous combination of cost, quality and sustainability to meet customer requirements (Olatunji et al 2017:54). Customers perceiving a higher level of value for money are more likely to be satisfied with their consumption experience, and satisfied customers are more likely to have positive comments and a greater willingness to repurchase (Penyalver, Turro & Williamson 2019:238). Value for money has a strong connection with customer satisfaction.

Garcia, Colon, Galves-Ruiz and Bernal (2016:1146) identify service convenience as an important factor that influences economic value. Service convenience includes the availability and quality of the information regarding the provider of service; benefits of convenience; limited effort to experience the basics that the service has to offer; the convenience of the transaction as it relates to time and the effort it takes to fulfil the transaction; and convenience after the services have been received (Garcia et al 2016:1146). From the foregoing, it can be understood that service convenience could influence value from service through non-monetary sacrifices understood as time and effort as perceived by the client about the purchase and utilisation of a service (García-Fernández, Gálvez-Ruiz, Velez-Colon & Bernal-Garcia 2016:1147).

Economic value has a significant influence on passenger satisfaction (Cirillo et al 2011:217; Han & Ryu 2009:491; Litman & Doherty 2009:2). It was noted from the preceding discussion that customers look for economic value when they consider buying a product or service. They first envisage the benefits that a product or service offers before they make a purchase decision. When the product or service offers the benefits they expected, at a price they think is reasonable, they tend to be satisfied.

### 3.4.5 Efficiency

Efficiency is viewed as an important dimension in bus transportation as it deals with the ability to avoid wasting materials, energy, efforts and time in doing something or in producing the desired result (Gager 2021:1). In a recent study by Kang, Meng and Zhou (2020:200), punctuality was found to be a direct criterion for passengers to

evaluate transport services. Delays in bus services and uncertain bus times negatively impact efficiency and may reduce the usage of the bus (Kang et al 2020:200).

Public and private transport organisations are concerned about maximising the efficiency of their operations, as the efficiency of public and private transport is essential to people's daily life (Carvalho, Syguiy, & Silva 2015:43). The efficiency of transport operators is intricately linked to the quality of passenger service (Borozenets 2020:50). Previous research, such as Carvalho et al (2015:43), Govender (2014:304), and Loyola et al (2019:2), concur with Freitas (2013:304) that service should be delivered effectively and fully match the needs of the customer. Diab, Badami and El-Geneidy (2015:2) believe that transport agencies are responsible for providing an efficient, productive and reliable service to consumers, and to do so, an efficient bus transport system must be competitive, and at the same time, be attractive for users, given that their physical experiences and psychological reactions are significantly influenced by the design and operation of the bus (Hernandez & Monzon 2016:219). Transport costs can be reduced with a well-run transportation system. As a result, this promotes growth, trade, and higher productivity, either directly or indirectly (Ayichew 2016:17). Several studies, such as those by Govender (2014:304), Loyola et al (2019:2) and Monakali (2015:33), found various attributes to measure efficient private transportation. In the context of long-distance coach liners, it is argued that these attributes will assist in propelling an efficient transport system. These attributes include reliability and maintenance.

Reliability is an important attribute of influencing efficiency. Cirillo et al (2011:217) describe transport service reliability as the ability of the transport system to adhere to the schedule and consistent travel time. According to Diab et al (2015:2), reliability can be defined as the availability and stability of transport service attributes at certain locations, affecting people's and operators' decision-making. Service reliability refers to the ability to perform the service dependably and accurately in terms of service punctuality, adherence to the timetable, including arrival at the destination, length of the journey and communications, and adherence to scheduled routes (Carrion & Levinson 2012:721; Cirillo et al 2011:217; Govender 2014:304; Islam et al 2014:35).

Hwang and Zhao (2010:96) maintain that reliable service performance is a customer expectation and means that the service is accomplished on time, in the same manner

and without errors every time. The main manifestations of public transport reliability are long waiting times due to late arrivals of buses which lead to late departures (Paulley et al 2006:301). Punctuality is a factor in ensuring efficient services. According to Loyola et al (2019:2), travel time is defined as the period needed to traverse a route between origin and destination. Travel time can also be defined as the amount of time it takes for a person to move between two unique spatial positions (Carrion & Levinson 2012:721).

Time also refers to the origin and destination-based access to public or private transport (Monakali 2015:32). Origin-based access refers to the distance between a person's residence and the nearest public or private transport stop, while destination-based access refers to the distance between the location of travel, which may be a mall or school, and a public transport stop (Monakali 2015:32). A passenger should not be made to wait longer than 10 minutes after a scheduled time has lapsed to board any mode of public or private transport (Monakali 2015:32). Customers do not like to wait for the service; hence waiting time appears to be a strong determinant of overall satisfaction (Pruyn & Smidts 1998:322). Passengers perceive the service as reliable when it decreases their efforts to access the service and has short and consistent travel times, and arrives on schedule, resulting in short waiting times (Fan, Guthrie & Levinson 2016:252). Waiting time in transport travel is often perceived negatively when passengers view waiting for transport vehicles to arrive, as being significantly longer than they expected (Fan et al 2016:252). Negative perceptions of waiting time have negative implications for passengers' overall attitudes about their selection of transport mode (Fan et al 2016:252). As customer satisfaction with the service will be affected by the perception of waiting time, a public or private transport system needs to ensure that it is efficient in getting people from where they currently are to the choice of their destination in a reasonable amount of time (Van Lierop et al 2018:60). Authors in the field of transportation (Cirillo et al 2011:217; Diab et al 2015:2; El-Geneidy et al 2007:88) argue that public or private transport patronage growth can result from service reliability improvements, whereas it can decrease due to unreliable services.

Numerous authors (Carvalho et al 2015:43; Fan et al 2016:252; Litman & Doherty 2009:2; Mulley, Clifton, Balbontin & Ma 2017:112; Passenger Focus 2013:1) emphasise the need for providing information before and during travel to ensure efficient services. These scholars suggest that bus operators or agencies need to

provide accurate and comprehensive information regarding bus times, possible delays or when bus disruptions occur. According to the Consumer Act, Act 68 of 2008, consumers have the right to be informed (RSA 2011:1). Hence, customers need to be educated and informed about the product or service, policies and procedures that they encounter when dealing with a specific company (Ugo 2014:5).

The timetable is an important factor affecting efficiency from the customer's point of view (Loyola et al 2019:2). Moreover, it is known that the timetable structure has a significant impact on passenger route choice behaviour (Leng & Corman 2020: 215). Timetables are important in the scheduling process because the distribution of information to passengers is critical to the successful operation of public or private transport services, and in maintaining and stimulating demand (Leng & Corman 2020: 215). In the past, the formal provision of public or private transport information relied on word of mouth from employees and printed timetables in the form of leaflets, timetable books or posters at bus stops (Mulley et al 2017:112). With technological advancement, operators are now able to provide platforms such as computer digital created applications that provide real-time official timetable information (Mulley et al 2017:112).

Digital technologies are frequently utilised to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of traditional public services (such as education, health care and transportation) (OECD 2016:7). Even long-distance coach liners use digital technologies such as internet access to make services convenient. Passengers can buy tickets online, review valuable information about the ticketing process, travel routes and other valuable information. Examples of such digital technologies include broadband internet access, smart mobile phones and personal computers (Velaga, Beecroft, Nelson, Corsar. & Edwards 2012:21). Transport telematics, which includes a variety of advanced computer, ICT, navigation, positioning systems, and digital technologies, can increase the efficiency and service quality of transportation systems. Technology has a positive impact on public transportation (Velaga et al 2012:21). Real-time bus arrival information at bus stops, intelligent public transportation systems (such as electronic fare collecting and automated vehicle scheduling), and shared flexible transportation management are just a few examples (such as dial-a-ride share taxi services).

Another important attribute of efficient public or private transportation is the ease of use. The actual design of the transport infrastructure improves the efficiency of public or private transport, as this affects how people access public or private transport, and this is very important in creating an inclusive mode of transportation (Monakali 2015:47). There is a need to ensure ease of access for all users, including disabled passengers. Access may be through ramps or electronic lifts provided for the special needs of passengers to ensure that everyone can use public or private transport.

Maintenance must take place to protect and provide an efficient and safe transport system (Department of Transport 2017:46). Maintenance can be described as the necessary action taken to repair, construct or upgrade the vehicle to prevent it from damage to enhance smooth drives and reduce negative consequence such as accidents and wear and tear of vehicles (Adepoju 2021:51). The challenge is to keep both public and private transport systems well maintained to avoid problems that will affect the perceptions attached to public transport and, thus, how many people feel it is an unreliable mode of transportation. For an efficient public transport system to be established, there needs to be constant maintenance and upgrades that will facilitate the demands on public transport with no breakdown or malfunction in the process (Litman 2021:7). Maintenance includes exterior and interior maintenance of the vehicles, stations and stops. A well-maintained bus also makes people feel comfortable and encourages private vehicle users to use this mode of transportation (Litman 2021:8). Efficiency is important to passenger satisfaction. When the service is offered in a manner that is efficient and meets customer expectations, customers have a high likelihood of being satisfied.

The previous section discussed literature on passenger experiences, and the dimensions of experience, namely aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency. The next section discusses passenger satisfaction.

### 3.5 PASSENGER SATISFACTION

Customer happiness has been a major metric in the field of marketing for both scholars and practitioners in recent decades. Customer pleasure, in the end, leads to increased customer loyalty and profitability (Akbari & Wagner 2021:248). Nguyen (2019:10) views passenger satisfaction as one of the most significant and primary factors of the survival of the business. Improving experience to increase customer satisfaction might



be the key to encourage the use of bus services. Understanding customer satisfaction has been a research focus of scholars and practitioners for many years (de Aquino et al 2018:177; Shin & Elliott 2001:10). The research topic stems from the widely held belief that a firm must satisfy customers to be successful and profitable (Shin & Elliott 2001:10). Anh, Diem, Cam and Viet (2020:534) believe that customer satisfaction is intricately linked to the attitude of a customer which is expected to predict repurchase intentions. Thus, the success of a firm is largely dependent on enhancing customer satisfaction and encouraging future patronisation (Bae, Slevitch & Tomas 2018:3).

The concept of satisfaction has been described differently by many authors. Freitas (2013:380) conceptualises satisfaction as an attitude-like judgement following a purchase act or a series of consumer product interactions. It is an overall affective response before and after the experience (Shen et al 2016:22). Satisfaction is therefore a post-activity that measures the internal state of the customer's feelings about past purchases and experiences of shopping (Ali et al 2018:2; Quan, Chi, Nhung, Ngan & Phong 2020:66), and it is viewed as critical for customer behaviours such as loyalty and other consumer reactions (Palawatta 2015:16).

Scholars such as Quan et al (2020:66) and Ratanavarahaa, Jomnonkwaoa, Khampirat, Watthanaklang and Iamtrakul (2016:117) describe satisfaction as an individual's feeling derived from a comparison between perceived service and the expected service. A large body of literature has investigated customer satisfaction as an important strategic metric on which the success of an organisation is built (Ali et al 2018:2; Freitas 2013:380; Shen et al 2016:22). As satisfaction is viewed as the key to customer retention, service providers in every organisation strive for customer satisfaction because of its impact on their performance and profits (Ali et al 2016:27).

Travel represents a major source of positive emotions, such as pleasure, escapism and relaxation, and a satisfying travel experience significantly contributes to a passenger's perception of well-being which, in turn, generates positive future behaviour (Hwang 2021:47). Generally, when passengers' expectations are met, passenger satisfaction is ensured, and the overall evaluation is likely to be highly positive (Kang 2020:3). Nowadays, customers have more choices than in the past and they have become more knowledgeable (Szwarc 2005:11); they obtain more experience, are more selective and demanding, and have more alternatives to choose

from (Muthee 2017:1). Hence, they increasingly expect high levels of service and satisfaction, resulting in businesses having to continuously be creative and provide high levels of customer service to satisfy customer needs (De Meyer & Mostert 2011:80). When passengers are satisfied with long-distance travel experiences, they have a high likelihood to repeat the purchase or recommend the long-distance coach liner to their friends, colleagues and family.

In the study by Nguyen (2019:10), it was found that pickpockets, jostling, impolite staff or poor facilities intensely affect the passenger's perception or feeling of dissatisfaction, and thus the passengers can use the better alternative vehicles. Verbich and El-Geneidy (2016:64) highlight that satisfaction with transport depends on many different components, such as safety, courteous staff, punctuality and reliable services. These elements emphasize the need of assessing consumer satisfaction for public and private transportation services (Freitas 2013:380). It is important that transport operators must understand aspects leading to passengers' satisfaction within the transport system in a specific context Verbich & El-Geneidy 2016:64).

Kumar, Anand and Srivastava (2016:83) maintain that satisfaction of passengers is an important concept, which is not only accepted as a measure of demand for the product or services being offered by firms but also drives the competitiveness of the firm. For instance, research has shown that reliability (being on time) is a decisive factor influencing customer satisfaction (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479). Likewise, attributes such as frequency and comfort are also highly valued by consumers and are regarded as being key elements of consumer satisfaction (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479). Other attributes found to have a major positive impact on consumer satisfaction are travel time and fare level (price) (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479). Travel time influences transport satisfaction; longer travel time results in lower satisfaction. Similarly, crowded or unreliable services and long waiting times often make customers feel less satisfied. Aspects related to vehicle conditions (for instance cleanliness) lead to user satisfaction (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479). It is important to understand that different user segments evaluate the same service differently and their satisfaction is influenced by different service attributes (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479). The needs, beliefs and expectations of users will vary significantly between different segments of the market (Beirao & Cabral 2007:479).

Research on transportation, specifically on passenger satisfaction, has been evaluated based on passengers' cognitive expectations and perceptions of core transportation attributes such as comfort or safety (Carreira 2014:36). In the study conducted by Verbich and El-Geneidy (2016:65) regarding satisfaction with bus transport, an attempt has been made to determine attributes that lead to bus transport passenger satisfaction. Such attributes were found to include information on service timeliness, cleanliness, predictability or reliability, and personal safety (Verbich & El-Geneidy 2016:65). Additionally, transportation research shows that satisfying the passenger's needs include paying attention to security, punctuality, travel time, comfort and time availability (Misiurski 2015:471). Therefore, to gain a competitive edge, transport operators need to deliver satisfactory services to meet the needs of passengers. Several researchers share a similar perspective that satisfying customers is the goal of every business due to its potential impact on repeated purchasing behaviour and profits (Ali & Amin 2014:253).

### 3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a literature review on customers' experiences, providing the motivation for relying on customer experience and consumer-buying behaviour theories and satisfaction. It was noted that organisations need to continuously attract more customers and retain existing ones which in turn helps increase the client base and grow the business (Georgiouds et al 2014:84). Customers have positive or negative experiences at each stage of the consumer buying process, including need awareness, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase. Consumer behaviour is the process that consumers experience when they make purchases, and it involves factors that influence their decision (Stankevich 2017:9). Therefore, a good knowledge of customer behaviour is critical. Improving experience to increase customer satisfaction might be the key to encourage the use of bus services.

There is evidence, for instance, that aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency dimensions of experience influence a passenger's satisfaction. These five dimensions were sourced from the literature to measure passengers' experience, discussed and applied in the context of this study. In the context of bus transportation, aesthetics includes the design and colour, and the configuration (location of components) of the interior of the bus. Entertainment

activities encompass reading or listening to music, watching television or video, and provision of WI-FI facilities to aid in internet browsing. Peace of mind in the transportation industry encapsulates safety, security and privacy. It was put forward that customers are in search of benefits when they buy services, therefore price, value for money and services were identified as factors that affect economic value. Efficiency factors that influence experience in the bus transportation include reliability and maintenance.

Lastly, this chapter provided an understanding of passenger satisfaction and found passenger satisfaction as one of the most significant and primary factors of the survival of the business. Improving experience to increase customer satisfaction might be the key to encourage the use of bus services. The research methodology of this study is discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 of this study explored the literature on passengers' experience with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Chapter 3 further discussed the dimensions of passengers' experience selected for the current study, namely aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency. This was followed by a discussion on passengers' satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. This chapter aims to address the third objective, namely, *to investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to road transportation*. The chapter discusses the research methodology applied in this study and sets the procedure used to collect, analyse and report the data. The chapter commences with an introduction and recap of the research objectives of the study. This is followed by a discussion of the research methodology, where focus is placed on research paradigm, research design, data collection and sampling of the study. Thereafter, the discussion on data analysis and the approaches implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the study is explained and the ethical considerations relevant to the study are provided. The final section of the chapter provides a summary of key elements discussed in this chapter.

#### 4.2 RECAP OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

It is necessary to reflect on the research objectives set in Chapter 1 of the study to provide a thorough overview of the research technique used in the study. The current study is guided by the following research objectives.

- Undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a particular focus on long-distance coach liners.
- Study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof in the road transport industry.

- Investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to long-distance coach liners.
- Conduct an empirical investigation to measure passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa.
- Based on the results of the empirical investigation, highlight theoretical and practical implications to management of long-distance coach liner operators in South Africa.

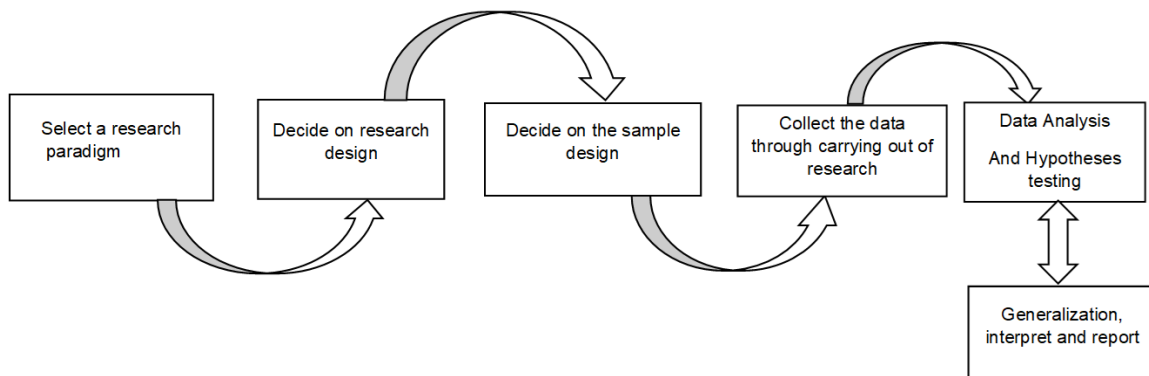
In the following section, the research methodology with specific emphasis on the research process that guide the flow of the chapter are discussed.

#### 4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

According to Kilani and Kobziev (2016:1) and Rehman and Alharthi (2016:52), research methodology is “useful to establish the structure of research, such as strategy, approach, research philosophy and components of the methodology”. Goundar (2013:9) defines research methodology as “a procedure or technique used to identify, select, process and analyse information about a topic”. Furthermore, research methodology seeks to inform how data was collected or generated and how it was analysed (Goundar 2013:9). The method used must be compatible with the research problem to get accurate and realistic results (Kilani & Kobziev 2016:1). Moreover, research methodology stipulates the principles for organising, planning, designing and conducting good research (Qwabe 2019:60). Therefore, thoughtful consideration of the research methodology is important to attain and clarify the main research aims (Kilani & Kobziev 2016:2). The choice of methodology is determined by a combination of several factors as well as a systematic research process (Mishra & Alok 2017:5). The research process illustrated in Figure 4.1 was used to guide the flow of the chapter.

FIGURE 4.1

## FLOW CHART OF RESEARCH PROCESS



Source: Adapted from Mishra & Alok (2017:5)

#### 4.3.1 Research paradigm

Patel (2015:1) describe research paradigm as “the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed”. The research paradigm provides the foundation of the data collection process and data analysis (Ayaba 2020: 32). There are three main research paradigms often considered by researchers. These are interpretivism, critical realism and the positivism paradigm.

Interpretivism assumes reality is highly subjective, influenced by the perceptions of individuals (Andrew 2017:52; Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:35; Rehman & Alharthi 2016:57). The objective of this paradigm is not to discover the universal, context and value-free knowledge and truth but to try to understand the interpretations of individuals about the social phenomena they interact with (Rehman & Alharthi 2016:57). With this in mind, there will always be a gap between the data collected and the reality that the data is supposed to represent. Qualitative research methods are the most utilised approach regarding this paradigm. Qualitative research is a highly subjective research discipline, designed to look beyond the percentages to gain an understanding of feelings, impressions and viewpoints (Goundar 2013:43). Qualitative research has notable strengths, these include flexibility, highly focused and designed to be completed quickly. Because the results are seen or heard first-hand, readers relate to the findings

easily (Goundar 2013:43). Although good qualitative research has many strengths, it is difficult to apply conventional standards of reliability and validity, the time required for data collection, analysis and interpretation are lengthy, and issues of anonymity and confidentiality present problems when selecting findings (Goundar 2013:43).

The critical realism paradigm argues that reality exists independent of the observer, but also recognises the possibility of the researcher's own beliefs and values affecting what is being observed (Rehman & Alharthi 2016:53). The mixed method is often used by researchers who rely on the critical realism paradigm. The mixed method combines both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study (Watkins & Gioia 2015:2). Both the interpretivist and critical realism paradigms were not considered for the present study.

Authors such as Aliyu, Bello, Kasim and Martin (2014:81) and Dreyer (2019:31) describe the positivistic paradigm "as an approach that is entrenched on the ontological principle and doctrine that truth and reality are free and independent of the viewer and observer". The ontological principle asserts that the nature of people's beliefs is built on objective reality (Rehman & Alharthi 2016:52). The positivistic paradigm rests on the assumption that social reality is singular and objective and is not affected by the act of investigating it or the opinions and feelings of the investigator (Dreyer 2019:31). Quantitative research is built on an approach involving the use of statistics to test theories by examining the relationships between dependent and independent variables (Creswell 2014:1). The quantitative data that positivist researchers use to answer research questions and formulate theories can be collected through experiments or less rigorous quasi-experiments, standardised tests and large- or small-scale surveys using closed-ended questionnaires (Rehman & Alharthi 2016:54).

Babbie (2013:1) and Muijs (2010:1) state that quantitative research deals with numbers, logic and an objective stance. Moreover, it focuses on numeric and unchanging data and detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning (Babbie 2013:1; Muijs 2010:1). Quantitative research focuses on objectivity and is appropriate when there is a possibility of collecting quantifiable measures of variables and inferences from samples of a population (Queiros, Faria & Almeida 2017:370). Quantitative research adopts structured procedures and formal instruments for data collection (Queiros et al 2017:370).



Upon a review of the objectives and the research question for the current study, and considering the advantages associated with the paradigm, the positivistic paradigm was deemed appropriate for the current study. The positivist paradigm was selected because of its suitability for use of a quantitative method that requires statistical analysis (Patel 2015:27). Moreover, it allowed the researcher to take an objective stance in interpreting the research results. Furthermore, the positivistic paradigm utilising the quantitative approach was adopted for the current study because it is more structured than qualitative research, making it easy to measure and analyse the responses from the targeted sample (Wiid & Diggins 2013:87). Consequently, in the quantitative research method, a greater number of people can be included in one sample because of the degree of structure of this method.

As illustrated in the research process in Figure 4.1, the choice of a research paradigm also guides the selection of the most suitable research design. The next section provides a discussion on the types of research designs considered for the current study.

#### 4.3.2 Research design

According to Weil (2017:6) research design acts “as a plan that outlines the methods and procedures which will be used to collect and analyse the required data”. De Vaus (2001:1) state that the function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained assists the researcher to successfully address the research problem as logically and as unambiguously as possible. Kilani and Kobziev (2016:7) put forward that the research design aims to give a better understanding of the structure of the research such as data collection and analysis. A research design is described as the master plan or the roadmap that guides the entire research process (Wiid & Diggins 2013:54). There are three major types of research design, namely exploratory, causal and descriptive research designs (Wiid & Diggins 2013:55).

The exploratory research design considers the research area in detail intending to discover essential features or meanings of an unknown area (Wiid & Diggins 2013:87). Exploratory research designs are used to uncover information about a subject that appears to be under-researched (Leavy 2017:5). Wiid and Diggins (2013:55) put forward that the objectives of an exploratory study are to serve as a preliminary study before a more structured survey of the phenomena; explain central

concepts and constructs; determine priorities for further research; and develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon. Exploratory researchers often adopt a thorough literature search, experience surveys, focus groups and case studies as data collection tools (Patel 2015:27).

Causal research, on the other hand, is conducted to disclose the cause and effect between dependent and independent variables (Wiid & Diggines 2013:57). A research study would use a causal research design if the study aimed to investigate a causal relationship between two events (Berndt & Petzer 2011:32). This type of research would indicate whether a change in one variable would result in a change in another variable (Abubakar 2014: 138). Laboratory and field experiments are commonly used to conduct causal research. The exploratory and causal research design were viewed unsuitable for the current study, as they would not address the research objectives.

Finally, descriptive studies are concerned with existing conditions or relationships, prevailing practices, current beliefs about a topic, point of views or attitudes, existing processes and their effects as well as the developing trends (Arora & Mahankale 2013:57). Wiid and Diggines (2013:57) define a descriptive study as a statistical method used to identify patterns or tendencies. Considering the objectives guiding this study, the descriptive research design was chosen. This was done to guide the research project because the design helps to describe the research domain, market characteristics or functions accurately and thoroughly. In the current study, a descriptive research design was able to accurately and thoroughly describe the views and experiences of passengers who had used long-distance coach liners. The descriptive research design further enabled the researcher to capture the views of passengers in terms of their satisfaction with the long-distance coach liners used. Descriptive research portrays an accurate profile of a person, events or situations (Lelissa 2017:71). This research design offered the benefit to determine the profile of respondents and how these profiles influence the identified dimensions of passengers' experience and satisfaction. The next section provides a detailed description of how the data was collected.

#### 4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

A data collection is the process by which information is gathered to answer evaluative questions that the researcher has identified in the study (Belisario, Huckvale, Saje, Pornick & Morrison 2015:3; Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera & Martimianakis 2016:263). The methodology and analytical approach used in a study determine how the information should be collected and what explanations this information can generate (Bell, Bryman & Harley 2018:11; Paradis et al 2016:263). Therefore, the data collection method used can affect the accuracy and usefulness of the research study (Kabir 2016:206).

There are different data sources that can be employed to achieve research objectives. Data can either be obtained from secondary or primary sources of information (Wiid & Diggines 2013:74,85). Secondary data already exist and can be collected from the internet, journals, books and newspapers (Wiid & Diggines 2013:74) whereas primary data is where researchers collect data from respondents for a specific study (Wiid & Diggines (2013:85). Both secondary and primary data were utilised in the current study. A detailed explanation of secondary and primary data and how they were applied in the current study are provided in the subsequent sections.

##### 4.4.1 Secondary data collection method

The body of knowledge that has been built up over time due to the combined contributions of numerous researchers and scholars is referred to as literature (Crous 2018:56). Such literature can be sourced from textbooks, published censuses or other statistical data, databases, journal articles, government statistics, industry associations, trade publications, company websites, market research reports, conference papers, films, presentations and lectures, archived resources, legislation, websites, theses, diaries, newspapers or government reports. Quantitative secondary data may also be collected, as with official statistics, such as league tables (Crous 2018:56; Kabir 2016:206; Thompson 2017:1; Wolf 2016:1). A thorough literature study was undertaken to identify the characteristics of passengers' experience and satisfaction to satisfy the research objectives.

The secondary data for this study was collected from accredited journal articles, books, company websites and general websites. The most noticeable advantages of using

the secondary data collection method are its cost-effectiveness (Alchemer 2021:1; Chen & Phillips 2014:347; Foley 2018:1), availability and accessibility (Prudal 2013:1). Although there is no previous research that deals specifically with the long-distance coach industry in South Africa, there are numerous scholars or studies in the field of transportation in South Africa that made a great contribution to the study. As stated previously, the largest literature was obtained from accredited journal articles, general websites, e-books and NMU libraries. It was free of charge to obtain secondary data for the study. References to secondary sources were only included in the literature review chapters. The secondary data collected for the study are presented in Chapters 2 and 3 and helped with answering the research objectives listed below.

- Undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a focus on long-distance coach liners.
- Study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof within the long-distance coach liner industry.
- Investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to long-distance coach liners.

#### 4.4.2 Primary data collection method

Primary data is the original data that researchers collect for a specific purpose (Foley 2018:1). Purdal (2013:1) puts forward that in primary data collection, specific data are collected that are vital to the study; the quality of the data is assured; and, if necessary, additional data may be obtained during the study. The secondary data obtained from the literature review of the previous scholars, journal articles and e-books was not sufficient to draw a meaningful conclusion, and thereafter primary data was collected to enable the researcher to answer the research question, test hypotheses, evaluate outcomes and draw meaningful conclusions to achieve the objectives of the study.

Although person-administered questionnaires were initially considered in the study, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distance measures enforced by the South African government, this approach of collecting data was discarded. After evaluation of available data collection techniques, an online survey was deemed to be very cost-

effective to collect the data, and very fast to reach the respondents. Therefore, an online survey was selected to collect the data.

A survey is a method of collecting primary data from a sample to generalize its results to the whole population (Blackstone 2012:7; Crous 2018:56; Queiros et al 2017:377). Surveys are known to be cost-effective, generalisable, reliable and versatile (Bush 2016:6).

Blackstone (2012:7) conceptualise a survey method “as a useful technique when a researcher aims to describe or explain the features of a very large group or groups”. Furthermore, it is an important quantitative technique, since it allows acquiring information about a phenomenon, by constructing questions reflecting the opinions, perceptions, and behaviors of a group of individuals (Gurbus 2017:142). There are several advantages to conducting surveys, including their high representativeness of the entire population and their low cost compared to alternatives (Mathers, Fox & Hunn 2009:9; Queiros et al 2017:377).

An online survey accessible through a provided link (SurveyMonkey) was utilised to obtain the primary data for the study. Emails and social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter) were used to circulate the link. There were no technical issues found in accessing the link, all invited respondents were able to access the link. In this study, by conducting the online survey, we were able to collect data from targeted respondents (Blackstone 2012:7).

According to Bhat (2019:1) “an online survey is a set of structured questions that the respondent completes over the internet, generally through filling out a form”. Nowadays most of the daily activities take place online where individuals express thoughts, intentions and opinions about events happening in their real world. Online familiarity has now opened opportunities for scholars (Baltar & Brunet 2012:57). Technological advancements provide social researchers with numerous opportunities for conducting surveys on the web (Babbie 2013:268). Additionally, they allow the capture the distinct and nuanced experiences of populations and subpopulations in new, innovative ways (McInroy 2016:83). Hence, the online survey is now being widely used to reach respondents since internet access is almost everywhere (Bhat 2019:1). Statistics show that there were 33.42 million internet users in South Africa in 2020 (Johnson 2021:1). The online survey method was selected for the following reasons listed below.

- The interactive nature of the internet allows for greater flexibility in questionnaire design without the involvement of interviewers, effectively eliminating interviewer bias concerns (Chang & Vowles 2013:122).
- Online surveys are frequently inexpensive because most costs associated with web-based surveys, such as hosting, programming, software and other Internet- and computer-related expenses associated with web-based surveys are less expensive compared with other primary survey methods (Chang & Vowles 2013:122).
- Online surveys provide respondents with time and space flexibility that allows them more time to consider and respond to requests for information (Creswell 2016:403).
- It is very effective for hard-to-reach respondents (due to practical constraints, disability, language or communication or cultural barriers) (Creswell 2016:403).
- Respondents can be reached from anywhere on the planet if they have access to the internet (Chang & Vowles 2013:122).
- The response rate is faster, particularly compared to traditional mail (Bryman 2006:235).
- The system can be programmed to automatically download responses into a database, therefore eliminating the coding of many questionnaires (Tan & Lurong 2020:666).
- It is flexible to apply the questionnaire in different formats or have many versions according to the characteristics of the respondents (for example, language) (Baltar & Brunet 2012:62).
- Online surveys can include all kinds of questions (for example dichotomous, multiple choice, scaled and open-ended questions (Baltar & Brunet 2012:62).

SurveyMonkey was chosen as the online survey instrument for this research. SurveyMonkey is a web tool that enables the researcher to launch several survey projects on the web (Ainsworth 2019:1; CompareCom 2020:1; Wacławski 2012:477). A recent study by Chethan et al (2022:94) used SurveyMonkey as an online survey instrument to collect data with the aim to understand the perceived advantages and disadvantages of telepsychiatry practices in India. Using this online survey, the tool allowed the researcher to customise the structure of the survey based on the specific target population. Furthermore, it can analyse large amounts of data and provide in-

depth analysis utilizing its various reporting options. (CompareCom 2020:1). The other benefits of using this tool include usability (easy to use and navigate through), comprehensive feature set and security components (CompareCom 2020:1), cost-effective and time saving (Symonds 2011:438). After the questionnaire was designed using SurveyMonkey, it was distributed to respondents via social networking sites and emails. According to Baltar & Brunet (2012:62), “social networking sites are defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of contacts with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of contacts and those made with others within the system”. Social network sites have transformed the internet into an effective tool for snowballing sampling. Social network sites made it quicker and easier to reach the respondents and collect the data.

In WhatsApp, an online survey link and cover letter with details of the study were shared with a group of respondents who were asked to complete the questionnaire and pass the link to others. WhatsApp was the quickest option compared to other social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter. There were no major challenges encountered in using this social network site. The online survey was also shared on Facebook daily and, sometimes, twice a day, but it was not effective as people ignored the posts. Sending direct inboxes on Facebook was the most effective. No responses were obtained via Twitter despite all the efforts in sending out survey links.

E-mail is one of the most popular communication tools because it is fast, flexible and creates a permanent written record of topics that can be challenging or complicated to convey in person (BiteSize Bio 2019:1). One of the basic ways to distribute email surveys is to use hyperlink text to the survey URL with suitable headline (Delighted Team 2019:1; Sims 2019:13). Emailing was selected to be one of the avenues to distribute the questionnaire in this study as it is fast to reach several potential respondents. It is cost-effective and allows the researcher to include supplementary content for the survey such as images or an introductory message for context (Delighted Team 2019:1). The survey link (URL) with cover letter (see Annexure A) was emailed to the researcher’s email address list. In the cover letter, respondents were also requested to share the survey link with other potential respondents to complete the survey. All these advantages confirmed the need for an online survey in the current study.

#### 4.4.3 Data collection instrument

To measure the level of passenger experience and passenger satisfaction within the long-distance coach liner industry in South Africa, a questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data. A questionnaire is a type of research tool that consists of a set of questions and other prompts that are used to gather information from respondents (Bolarinwa 2015:13; Cheung 2014:1; Qwabe 2019:60). Questionnaires are used for gathering information about respondents' behaviours, beliefs, knowledge, attitude or opinions (Belisario et al 2015:1). Furthermore, a questionnaire is a structured method of questioning respondents that will allow data to be collected to answer specific research questions (Bell et al 2018:11; Kilani & Kobziev 2016:2). A good questionnaire assists to achieve the research objectives, provides complete and accurate information. Questionnaires can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, online, or by self-completion, and can include both closed and open-ended questions (Mathers et al 2009:44). In this study, the questionnaire, which was delivered via online surveys, was used to collect the information needed to achieve the study's objectives.

The advantage of using a questionnaire is that it is flexible in collecting data which allows the researcher to organise the questions and receive replies from respondents without talking to them separately (Kilani & Kobziev 2016:6). It is important to note that when constructing a questionnaire, attention should be given to the design, structure and measuring scale.

##### 4.4.3.1 Questionnaire design

There are a few points to consider when designing a questionnaire, namely the careful design of questions; selection of questions to address research objectives; questions must be easy and understandable; questions must clarify the purpose of the questionnaire; and take language and terminology into consideration (Kilani & Kobziev 2016:6). These criteria were carefully considered in designing the questionnaire for this study to ensure that accurate data was collected so that the result was interpretable and generalisable (Kabir 2016:207). The next section explains the questionnaire structure utilised for the study.



#### 4.4.3.2 Questionnaire structure

A structured questionnaire is a document that consists of a set of standard questions, with the exact wording and order of the questions specified and is used to collect information (Michalos 2014:1). A structured questionnaire is utilised in a quantitative method of research or a positivist research paradigm (Trueman 2015:1). Question formats that are employed when collecting data include open-ended, fill in a number, write in the text (open-ended), closed-ended, multiple-choice, scalar (Likert-type) and dichotomous (yes/no) (de Rada 2019:116). Likert scale and dichotomous questions were used in this study to collect the needed data.

The questionnaire had three sections (A, B and C). Section A included a cover letter that explained the purpose of the research, addressed ethical concerns such as the confidential and voluntary nature of the study, and included the details of both the researcher and the supervisors. The online survey questionnaire administered had two screening questions. To begin, participants in the study had to be at least 18 years old. Second, within the previous 12 months, a respondent must have taken a long-distance coach liner at least once. Aesthetics, amusement, peace of mind, efficiency, and economic worth were all mentioned in Item B of the survey. These dimensions were used to measure passenger experience (Annexure A). Section B also contained statements used to measure passenger satisfaction with a long-distance coach liner in South Africa. For each category, the passengers were asked to rate their level of experience and satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)). The Likert scale was selected because it allowed the researcher to get a deeper insight into the respondents' experience and satisfaction within long-distance coach liners. The 5-point Likert scale is also easy and very quick to complete within a short period (Kabir 2016:207). The 5-point Likert scale items were subsequently condensed to three for easy understanding and interpretation of the results.

Section C collected the respondents' profile information. Gender, age, permanent residency country, present occupation, reason of most recent trip on a long-distance coach liner, and frequency of long-distance coach travel are all factors to consider. Dichotomous questions were used to capture the profile of the respondents.

#### 4.4.3.3 Sources of scaled questions

When developing a questionnaire, researchers have an option to formulate their own questions, adopt questions from other questionnaires or adapt questions from questionnaires used in other studies (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2009:374). Annexure B shows the items which were used in the questionnaire as well as the sources (authors) from whom the items were sourced. A large number of the items in the questionnaire was adapted from previously validated studies such as Chiang (2015:15), Harlacher (2016:12) and Losby (2012:5). The sources of scaled items are listed in Annexure B.

As shown in Annexure B:

- Columns 1 and 2 respectively indicate the item number and the item.
- Column 3 indicates the context of the study; and
- Column 4 indicates the source of the items.

#### 4.4.3.4 Pilot study

A pilot study was executed to ensure face and content validity. The practice of pilot testing a study is highly recommended as an effective technique for improving validity in data collection procedures and the interpretation of findings (Hurst, Arulogam, Owolabi, Akinyeni, Uvere, Warth, & Ovbiagele :2015:4). A pilot study is a method of checking whether the questions work as intended and are understood by respondents (Hilton 2017:21). It is commonly used by researchers to reduce sampling error, increase response rates and may be a valuable method to evaluate whether a new measure performs in the field as planned (Hilton 2017:21). The questionnaire was pilot tested with 23 respondents who were conveniently selected online. A statistician determined reliability and validity of the data in the initial questionnaire. All the reliabilities were found to be acceptable and above the 0.7 thresholds. The confirmatory factor analysis for each factor structure was performed to determine the validity of each structure. The main aim for testing these structures was to test whether the regression weights in each factor were statistically significant. This indicated whether those items contributed significantly to the factor structure. The main factor structure that caused concern was aesthetics as none of those questions contributed significantly, which indicated that this factor should be reconsidered. For the aesthetics dimension, most items were deleted, with only items 2, 4, 7 and 8 remaining for the

factor structure as these questions had a higher commonality score. The factor analysis was only performed on these items and the results improved significantly.

#### 4.4.3.5 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

The trustworthiness of a research finding is mostly affected by two factors, namely validity and reliability (Collis & Hussey 2014:76). Validity is defined as the use of specific procedures to check for the accuracy of the findings (Khomari 2018:72). Validity is the extent to which a study measures what it intends to measure (Mathers et al 2009:44; Wiid & Diggines 2013:240). Validity tests are classified into two components, namely internal and external validity (Bolarinwa 2015:13). Internal validity refers to how accurately the instrument measures obtained from the research, quantify what they were designed to measure (Bolarinwa 2015:13). External validity explains how precisely the study sample's measurements describe the referred population from which the study sample was drawn (Bolarinwa 2015:13). The validity of the data set was tested using criterion, face, content, concept, convergent, and discriminant validity tests in this study.

A measure's criterion validity is an assessment of how well it agrees with a standard (an external criterion of the phenomenon being measured) (Bellamy 2015:67). According to Bellamy (2015:67), "criterion validity is assessed by statistically testing a new measurement technique against an independent criterion or standard (concurrent validity) or a future standard (predictive validity)". It correlates test results with another criterion of interest to predict future or current performance (Haradhan 2017:16). Furthermore, it deals with relationships between scale scores and some specific measurable criterion and tests how the scale differentiates individuals on a criterion it is expected to predict (Haradhan 2017:16). The correlation analysis conducted in the study assisted to confirm criterion validity of the questionnaire. The degree to which two variables are connected is measured via correlation analysis. Through this analysis, the researcher evaluated the correlation coefficient that tells how much one variable change when the other one does.

Face and content validity are achieved where a person applies a superficial and subjective assessment of whether the study or test achieves its goal of measuring what it is designed to measure (Patel 2015:1). Three experts at the Nelson Mandela University with a marketing management, experience marketing and transport and

logistics background were approached to review the questionnaire and identify items that they deemed relevant. This was undertaken to ensure face validity. The study background was provided to give the experts a brief exposition of the research and aimed to assist them in their evaluation of, and comments on the questionnaire. This was a one-page document that included the research question, research goals and objectives, and brief definitions of experience and satisfaction dimensions in the context of the study. In addition to the document mentioned above, the experts were also provided with a copy of the questionnaire to assist them with the review. The document with the questionnaire was sent to all subject experts via email. The subject experts were asked to comment on the relevance of the items (whether they measure the intended variable) and provide opinions or suggestions regarding omitted items that they believed should be included. The experts provided valuable input in terms of rewording some of the items and moving some items from the original submission to fit under specific variables that they felt would best measure the variable. Their suggestion helped to minimise cross-loadings that would have occurred in the final analysis.

Bolarinwa (2015:1) conceptualise construct validity as “the degree to which an instrument measures the trait or theoretical construct that it is intended to measure”. According to Taherdoost (2016:31), construct validity refers “to how well the researcher has translated or transformed a concept, idea or behaviour that is a construct into a functioning and operating reality”. Construct validity is comprised of two parts namely; convergent validity and discriminant validity. Construct validity is achieved using multiple sources of evidence, the establishment of a chain of evidence, and the use of experts to review questionnaire drafts (Monyane 2019:103). To ensure construct validity, this study employed multiple sources of evidence from previously validated and reliable items to measure each of the variables in the study. This was followed by determining the latent factors in each variable through exploratory factor analysis (see Section 4.8.2.2). The correlation analysis in the form of Pearson product-moment of correlation also helped ensure construct validity. The multiple statistical inferences (e.g., correlation analysis and ANOVA) and use of multiple sources of evidence to ground the variables and items in the questionnaire assisted to confirm the construct and discriminant validity (Reis & Judd 2014:18).

According to Mohajan (2017:18), “convergent validity refers to the extent to which the results of a particular test or measurement correspond to those of a previously established measurement for the same construct”. Discriminant validity ensures that there are differences in the content of measures used to measure different constructs (Voorhees, Brady & Calatone 2015:120). Zait (2011:217) state that Discriminant validity rests “on the assumption that items should correlate higher than they correlate with other items from constructs that are theoretically supposed not to correlate. In this study, discriminant validity was determined by measuring the correlation between measures. The testing of hypotheses throughout the Pearson product-moment of correlation and multiple regression analysis, and determination of average variance explained (AVE) score of each factor or construct in the study helped to establish the discriminant validity.

On the other hand, reliability refers to how constant and stable a measurement equipment or test is (Salkind 2018:105). According to Pham (2014:2) and Wiid and Diggines (2013:240), “reliability can be estimated by statistical analysis through identifying the internal consistency or correlation among the variables”. Several researchers such as Crous (2018:66), Patterson, Weaver, Fabio, Teasley, Renn, Curtis, Matthews, Kroemer, Xun, Bizhanova, Weiss, Sequeira, Coppler, Lang, & Higgins (2018:20) and Taherdoost (2016:30) conceptualised reliability as the ability of the data collection techniques employed in a study to produce dependable results.

The measure of reliability that was used for this study is called Cronbach's alpha coefficient value. A reliable Cronbach's alpha coefficient value validates that the individual items of a construct measured the same construct (concept) in the same manner (Wiid & Diggines 2013:240). Nunnally and Bernstein (1994:32) recommend that Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above is regarded as sufficient evidence of internal reliability. Cronbach's alpha values can be interpreted in the following ways (Wiid & Diggines 2013:238):

- a rating of more than 0.8 suggests a high level of trustworthiness
- acceptable reliability is defined as a number between 0.6 and 0.8; and
- a rating of less than 0.6 shows a lack of trustworthiness.

In the current study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 and above were considered internally reliable (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994:32). In the following section, sampling, the population and the target population sampled for the study will be discussed.

#### 4.5 SAMPLING

According to Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010:62); Salkind (2018:36), "a sample is a subset of the target population". It is the number (n) of observations gathered from a population that are used to make statistical inferences about the entire population (Sim 2017:1). It is impossible to study all the members of the population nor make every possible observation of them (Babbie 2013:115). Hence, researchers select a sample from the population that might be studied (Babbie 2013:115). The small group of the population that researchers select is referred to as a sample (Salkind 2018:95). Salkind (2018:36) believes that samples should be selected from populations in such a way that maximises the likelihood that the sample best represents the population. Sampling has numerous advantages, namely low cost, less time consuming, the accuracy of data is high, intensive and exhaustive data, suitable in limited resources and better rapport (Sharma 2017:1). In the next section, the population and target population for the study are discussed.

##### 4.5.1 Population and target population

An important step in the initial design of any sampling is to ensure that the nature of the population is well understood (De Smith 2018:71). Numerous researchers such as Babbie (2013:115), Banerjee and Chaudhury (2010:60), Salkind (2018:95) and Wiid and Diggins (2013:186) define a population "as a group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to generalise the results of a study". The study population is the collection of units that could be measured (De Smith 2018:71). In this study, the population consisted of South Africans and residents outside South Africa, both female and male who are 18 years and older. The target population, however, consists of passengers who have travelled by long-distance coach liners in South Africa. The respondents were invited to complete a voluntary online questionnaire, where respondents could withdraw at any stage during the questioning process without any consequences. Respondents were recruited to participate in the study through social network sites and emails.

#### 4.5.2 Sample selection

The process of selecting participants for a research study is commonly known as sampling (Blackstone 2012:7; Qwabe 2019:49; Showkat & Parveen 2017:17). The sampling method determines the generalizability of research findings to the general population (Kabir 2016:207). Selecting a sampling method requires researchers to make several decisions (Sarstedt, Bengart, Shaltoni & Lehmann 2017:2). The most crucial question is whether non-probability or probability sampling methods should be used (Sarstedt et al 2017:2).

##### 4.5.2.1 Non-probability sampling

Blackstone (2012:7) states that “non-probability sampling refers to sampling techniques for which a person’s likelihood (or events, or researcher’s focus) of being selected for membership in the sample is unknown”. Non-probability sampling is considered less expensive, less complicated and easier to apply than probability sampling (Showkat & Parveen 2017:17). Since findings obtained through this method apply mostly to the group studied, it may be wrong to extend these findings beyond that sample. The most important non-probability sampling methods are purposive sampling (also referred to as judgemental sampling), quota sampling, convenience sampling and snowballing sampling (Blackstone 2012:7; Sarstedt et al 2017:3; Showkat & Parveen 2017:17). The types of non-probability sampling are summarised in Table 4.1, after which probability sampling is discussed.

TABLE 4.1

#### TYPES OF NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

<b>Non-probability sampling</b>	<b>Definitions/descriptions</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>
Convenience Sampling	It refers to sampling that employs units or people who are readily available and willing to participate in a survey or other data collection process.	Daniels (2012:66)
Purposive Sampling	Purposive sampling involves the researcher selecting participants based on the purpose of the study.	Showkat and Parveen (2017:17)
Quota Sampling	Quota sampling requires the same proportion of units with specific characteristics as the ones in the population.	Semiz (2016:98)

Snowball Sampling	This is a sampling technique in which existing subjects refer new subjects to be recruited for a research study.	Oppong (2013:203)
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Source: Adapted from Daniels (2012:66); Oppong (2013:203); Semiz (2016:98); Showkat & Parveen (2017:17)

#### 4.5.2.2 Probability sampling

Etikan, Musa & Alkassim (2016:2) define probability sampling “as having the distinguishing characteristic that each unit in the population has a known chance of being included in the sample”. There are three characteristics that all probability sampling methods have in common. First, the sampling units (research objects) are chosen at random; second, each potential sampling unit has a known probability of being chosen for the sample that is not zero; and third, all potential samples of a given size that can be drawn from the population can be identified before the actual selection process begins (Sarstedt et al 2017:2).

A critical assumption in the probability sampling process is that the sample matches the target population’s characteristics; that is, the sample is representative (Sarstedt et al 2017:2). Assessing whether a sample is representative of the population requires comparing the sample statistics to the target population’s statistics (Sarstedt & Mooi 2014: 651). The most important probability sampling methods include simple random, stratified, systematic and cluster sampling and are generally recommended due to their ability to produce representative samples (Sarstedt et al 2017:3). Table 4.2 provides a brief explanation of the various types of probability sampling methods that are available.



TABLE 4.2

## TYPES OF PROBABILITY SAMPLING

<b>Probability sampling</b>	<b>Definition/Description</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>
Simple random sampling	Simple random sampling is a method of selecting a sample in which each element or combination of components in the population has an equal chance of being chosen for inclusion in the sample.	Showkat and Parveen (2017:17)
Stratified random sampling	Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata.	Beins (2013:126); Nikolas (2019:1)
Systematic random sampling	The sample elements are selected systematically from a comprehensive list of population elements in systematic sampling.	Wiid and Diggines (2013:195)
Cluster sampling	Cluster sampling is an effective random sampling approach in which the population is divided into clusters and then a sample is randomly taken from each cluster.	Showkat and Parveen (2017:17)

Source: Adapted from Beins (2013:126); Nikolas (2019:1); Showkat & Parveen (2017:17); Wiid & Diggines (2013:195)

For the current study, the non-probability sample in the form of convenience and snowball sampling of long-distance coach liner passengers was utilised. Using the convenience sampling method, respondents were considered based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study (Naderifar, Ghaljael & Goli 2017:2; Zhi 2014:203). The most noticeable advantage of the convenience sampling method is its cost-effectiveness. Convenience sampling is affordable, easy and the

subjects are readily available (Etikan et al 2016:2). It is necessary to describe the subjects who might be excluded during the selection process or the subjects who are overrepresented in the sample (Etikan et al 2016:2). For this study, an online survey questionnaire was used to invite the potential respondents. The respondents were invited via email and social media using Twitter, WhatsApp and Facebook based on their availability and voluntary participation in the research study. A major shortcoming of convenience sampling is that the sample cannot be categorised as being representative of a population (Ruane 2016:247).

Snowball sampling occurs when the researcher selects a sample of individuals to start the survey and then asks them for additional contacts to reach other individuals in the population of interest (Dudovskiy 2018:48). This method is applied when samples with the target characteristics are not easily accessible (Naderifar et al 2017:2). It was difficult to reach respondents through an online survey because many people viewed the online survey as a tool for scamming people (Teitcher et al 2015:17). People who have social influences such as church leaders, business managers, entrepreneurs or leaders and those with great social media followers were targeted. They were invited to participate and share the online survey with their circle. Chain referrals made a valuable contribution in reaching additional respondents. Most people make the decision based on the recommendation from other people; therefore, chain referrals enhanced the credibility of the survey.

#### 4.5.3 Sample size

To avoid wastage of scarce resources and reach more respondents than necessary, it is appropriate to determine the required sample size of the study (Smith 2017:1). An appropriate sample size assists to generalise the findings to the specific target population (Smith 2017:1). In the context of this study, a complete sample frame of passengers of long-distance coach liners does not exist. Hence, as recommended by Gay et al (2012:139) in a situation such as this, where the sample frame is unknown, but it is assumed that the target population will exceed 5 000 people, a sample size of 400 is recommended. Based on Gay et al al's (2012:139) recommendation, a sample size of 400 long-distance coach liner passengers was determined adequate for the study. However, 409 completed questionnaires were received and only 399 usable

questionnaires were included in the data analysis. Ten questionnaires were discarded because they did not meet criteria requirements.

#### 4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

After completion of the data collection phase, the researcher proceeds to the next step, namely data analysis. Data analysis refers to categorising, putting in order, manipulating and summarising data to obtain answers to the research question(s) (Babbie 2013:493; Creswell 2016:444). The main purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from the collected data and address the research objectives, based upon the data analysis (Guru 99 2020:1). This study used IBM SPSS version 26 to analyse data. Data was presented in the form of tables and graphs.

The processing stage adopted for the current study included the editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data. Captured data was then presented utilising descriptive statistics, with graphic summaries illustrating figures related to the sample. Inferential statistics were used to examine exploratory factor analysis (to find latent factors), correlation analysis, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), as well as hypothesis testing (multiple regression analysis).

##### 4.6.1 Processing of data

The data processing stage involves the screening of questionnaires. There were 10 respondents who did not qualify to participate in the study, therefore 10 questionnaires were screened. Not all questionnaires that are received contain useful information therefore the data received from questionnaires must be edited and coded (Babbie 2013:493). The raw data in this study was submitted to the statisticians for data analysis, the following steps were followed.

##### 4.6.1.1 Editing

Raw data could contain errors and should therefore be edited before being captured to ensure its quality. Editing is the process of scrutinizing all collected surveys to verify that the information is accurate, complete, and readable (Babbie 2013:493). In the current study, questionnaires were inspected for omissions and inaccuracies in the data collected. Of the 409 collected questionnaires, 10 questionnaires were excluded based on containing errors which resulted in 399 usable questionnaires.

#### 4.6.1.2 Coding

The coding procedure entails specifying the categories or classes into which the responses must be classified and assigning code numbers to each category or class (Wiid & Diggines 2013:222). The purpose of coding is to assign codes (numbers) for each category of answer (Babbie 2013:493). Firstly, each item measuring a variable was assigned a code (See Table 4.3). Thereafter, each completed questionnaire was numbered to make it easy for coding.

TABLE 4.3

#### CODES

Aesthetics	Entertainment	Peace of mind	Economic value	Efficiency	Satisfaction
AES1	ENT1	POM1	ECO1	EFF1	SAT1
AES2	ENT2	POM2	ECO2	EFF2	SAT2
AES3	ENT3	POM3	ECO3	EFF3	SAT3
AES4	ENT4	POM4	ECO4	EFF4	SAT4
AES5	ENT5	POM5	ECO5	EFF5	SAT5
	ENT6	POM6	ECO6	EFF6	SAT6
	ENT7	POM7	ECO7	EFF7	SAT7
			POM8		
			POM9		

The next section involves analysing of data; all steps and tests will be briefly discussed in the following section.

#### 4.6.2 Statistical analysis

Data must be accurately analysed so that the testing of pre-determined hypotheses can be implemented. IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to perform all the descriptive and inferential analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were performed on the data collected.

##### 4.6.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis is the first step used when analysing the collected data. Dreyer (2019:38) defines descriptive statistics as "the transformation of raw data into meaningful information that specifies a set of factors in each circumstance." To summarize the data under investigation, descriptive statistical analysis is utilized. Descriptive statistics are useful for summarizing the distribution of qualities on a single variable or the relationships between variables (Babbie 2013:493). For the descriptive statistics component of the data analysis, the central tendency of the data and measures of variability were determined in the current study.

Measures of central tendency reflect the likely or appropriate response to a question (Wiid & Diggines 2013:248). Moreover, they reduce a whole series of data to a single figure or an average (Wiid & Diggines 2013:248). The measures of central tendency used in this study are the mean, median and mode. According to Manikandan (2016:214), "the relative position of the three measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) depends on the shape of the distribution". The mean is the sum of a set of scores divided by the number of scores, or it is an average computed by summing the values of several observations and dividing by the number of observations (Babbie 2013:421; Salkind 2018:134; Wiid & Diggines 2013:248). The median is the score or the point in a distribution above which one-half of the scores lie. In other words, the median occupies the middle position when all the observations are arranged in an ascending/descending order (Manikandan 2016:214; Salkind 2018:134; Wiid & Diggines 2013:248). The mode is the value that occurs most frequently in the data (Manikandan 2016:214; Wiid & Diggines 2013:248).

Measures of variability, on the other hand, are the degrees of spread or dispersion that characterise a group of scores, or the degree to which a set of scores differs from some measure of central tendency, most often the mean (Salkind 2018:135). The standard

deviation was established in the current study to measure the variability of the data set. The standard deviation is the average difference between each of the individual scores and the mean of the group of scores (Babbie 2013:425; Salkind 2018:135). Data dispersion is used to measure the amount of variation or dispersion within a data set, and the standard deviation is the most used measure of variability (Dreyer 2019:39; Salkind 2018:135). The appropriate standard deviation values, according to Wiid and Diggines (2013:201), should not exceed 2.0.

#### 4.6.2.2 Inferential analysis

Several reasons are recommended for conducting an inferential analysis of the data collected. Firstly, inferential analysis is used to test hypotheses. Through inferential statistics, the validity of data that the conclusions of the research are based on could be determined (Babbie 2013:493). It is also concerned with the estimation of the population values and the task of interpretation of findings. Thus, the inferential analysis helps the researcher to test the hypotheses and to generalise the findings resulting from the sampled population (Babbie 2013:493). Some inferential statistics estimate the single-variable characteristics of the population; others test the statistical significance of the relationships between variables in the population (Babbie 2013:493). Inferences about some characteristic of a population indicate a confidence interval and a confidence level (Babbie 2013:493). The following inferential statistics were performed on the data set.

##### (a) Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

In the current study, EFA was used to ensure the construct validity of the instrument, to identify which items were not suitable for use in the instrument, which items were to be removed and which items belonged together in the sense that they were answered similarly and therefore measured the same dimensions. Factor analysis is a complex algebraic method for determining the general dimensions or factors that exist within a set of concrete observations (Babbie 2013:475). It operates on the notion that measurable and observable variables can be reduced to fewer latent variables that share a common variance and are unobservable; this is known as reducing dimensionality (Yong & Pearce 2013:80). According to Hadi, Abdullah and Sentosa (2016:215), EFA is a statistical procedure used to reduce many observed variables to a small number of "factors/components", reflecting that the clusters of variables are

common. EFA was used to identify the number of factors/dimensions that contribute to passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners.

(b) Pearson product moment of correlation

According to Sinsomboonthong (2013:453), Pearson's product-moment of correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ) is one of the most frequently used tools for correlation investigation. Pearson's  $r$  is a measure of the linear relationship between two interval or ratio variables and can have a value between -1 and +1 (Chee 2013:2). The advantage of using Pearson's  $r$  is that it is a way to assess the association between two variables; whether they share variance (covary), or the relationship is positive or negative, and the degree to which they correlate (Chee 2013:2). In order to examine the links and assumptions made in the suggested conceptual framework, the Pearson product-moment of correlation was used (Figure 1.1). The acceptable correlation value, according to Chee (2013:2), will be between -1 and +1. In the study, this criterion was used in the interpretation of the correlation analysis.

(c) Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also used because it is a hypothesis-testing procedure that is used to evaluate mean differences between two or more treatments (or populations) within a data set (Kenton 2021:1). It divides observed aggregate variability found within a data set into two parts: factors that are systematic and random (Kenton 2021:1). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the method of analysis in which cases under study are combined into groups representing an independent variable and then determining the extent to which the groups differ from one another (Babbie 2013:486). Following that, the degree to which the groups differ is compared to a random distribution standard (Babbie 2013:486). ANOVA was employed in this study to look at the differences between one independent variable and the dependent variable.

(d) Multiple regression analysis (MRA)

Regression is a statistical technique used to estimate the relationship between variables that have a cause and effect relationship (Uyanik & Guler 2013:234). It is used to determine the influence or predictive effect that one or more (independent) variables has concerning the other (dependent) variable (Uyanik & Guler 2013:234).

In the current study, multiple regression analysis was utilized to examine the influence of the independent factors on the dependent variable.

#### 4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Among the challenge's researchers encountered during the data collection and analysis process are ethical challenges related to participant protection from harm and disclosure of information (Creswell 2016:15). Ethics is associated with morality and concerns matters of right and wrong (Babbie 2013:32). Resnik (2015:1) defines ethics as a method, procedure or perspective for deciding how to act and for analysing complex problems and issues. Ethical considerations are important to ensure that the key components of ethics are adhered to by using set standards (Khomari 2018:72). In a research study, ethical issues can arise before conducting the study, for example, plagiarism at the beginning of the study in writing the research topic, questions and objectives, during data collection, in conducting data analysis, in reporting the data, and in publishing a study (Creswell 2016:165). Researchers should therefore be cognitive of the ethical issues relating to their study and ensure that all ethical principles are adhered to (Aluwihare-Samaranayake 2012:33).

As mentioned in Section 4.4.2, online questionnaires were used to collect the data for this study. The ease of online approaches should not permit complacency regarding rigorous ethical research (McInroy 2016:90). Respect for people encompasses the fair treatment of individuals and their data involved in the research process (McInroy 2016:90). The latter implies that the researcher must provide evidence of measures to protect participants' privacy and ensure that the consent process is communicated, including participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell & 2016:165). The questions formulated for this study were carefully designed to protect the participants' anonymity and provide confidentiality (Qwabe 2019:49) whilst still obtaining the relevant data. Sensitive questions were excluded as they could potentially evoke a counterproductive emotional reaction from the respondents and, to some extent, render the research project unsuccessful.

The following factors were also considered to ensure that the research work was ethical.



#### 4.7.1 Anonymity

The greatest strength of online surveys is anonymity (Nayak & Narayan 2019:31). As a result, online surveys may appeal to both respondents and researchers (McInroy 2016:85). Many populations might be more willing to participate online because of the relative anonymity and privacy of the context (McInroy 2016:85). To ensure anonymity and encourage participation, the online survey tool SurveyMonkey was used, and the respondent's email address and contact details can thus not be traced.

Anonymity was also considered by ensuring that the questionnaire did not request information that could readily identify participants such as name, email addresses, employer's name or address, relative's names or addresses, date, phone/fax numbers, member/ account numbers, voiceprints, fingerprints, full-face photos and comparable images (Virginia Tech 2019:1).

Virginia Tech (2019:1) proposed the following ways to ensure anonymity when conducting online surveys:

- use study codes on data documents (e.g., completed questionnaire).
- encrypt identifiable data.
- remove face sheets containing identifiers (e.g., names and addresses) from survey instruments containing data after receiving from study participants.
- limit access to identifiable information.
- securely store data documents within locked locations; and
- assign security codes to computerised records.

All the points listed above were adhered to in the current study.

#### 4.7.2 Consent

A basic standard of ethical research is that prospective respondents can make informed choices about whether or not to consent to participate in the study (Nayak & Narayan 2019:34). Informed consent means that a person knowingly, voluntarily, intelligently and clearly and manifestly, gives his consent (Fouka & Mantzorou 2019:1). All standard elements of the consent process should be adhered to in online investigations, including the provision of information about the research inquiry and clarification of the procedures in place to ensure confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

(McInroy 2016:90). The questionnaire used in this study contained a cover letter and a statement seeking consent from the respondents before commencing with data completion online. The statement emphasised that “submission of the survey implies consent for the data to be included in the study”. As stated in the questionnaire, “completing an online survey is voluntary”. This information was provided so that the respondent could make an informed decision on whether they wanted to participate or not.

#### 4.7.3 Privacy

Privacy is defined as essential to freedom of expression and democracy, and as such it has an important impact on a person’s well-being (Boerman 2018:1). Fouka and Mantzourou (2019:1) define privacy as the freedom that an individual has to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others. Invasion of privacy occurs when private information, such as beliefs, attitudes, opinions or records, is shared with others without the person’s knowledge or consent (Fouka & Mantzourou 2019:1). Respondents were informed that information will not be shared with anyone. Issues of privacy in online research are complex and multi-layered. However, the privacy of online surveys may increase deception by respondents, so it has been suggested that strategies for identifying this deception be considered (McInroy 2016:90). In this study, data collection instruments were password secured once the data was in the data file and data is only reported in a collective format.

#### 4.7.4 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria refer to the characteristics of the target population, such as age, nationality, and occupation, that the researcher will utilize to answer their study question (Hornberger & Rangu 2020:4; Patino & Ferreira 2018:84; Velasco & Salkind 2012:5). Effective inclusion criteria create the ideal pool of participants to get the most beneficial data for the study (Hornberger & Rangu 2020:3). Therefore, establishing inclusion criteria is necessary when designing high-quality research protocols (Patino & Ferreira 2018:84). Proper selection of inclusion criteria will optimise the external and internal validity of the study, improve its feasibility, lower its costs, and minimise ethical concerns; specifically, good selection criteria will ensure the homogeneity of the

sample and increase the likelihood of finding a true association between exposure/intervention and outcomes (Velasco & Salkind 2012:5).

The selection and application of inclusion criteria also will have important consequences on the assurance of ethical principles; for example, including subjects based on race, gender or age, also might imply an uneven distribution of benefits and harms, threats to the autonomy of subjects and lack of respect (Velasco & Salkind 2012:5). As indicated in Section 4.5.1, the target population of the study includes both men and women passengers of long-distance coach liners in South Africa. The age limit permitted for the study included those individuals aged 18 and above. Additionally, the respondents should have travelled on a long-distance coach liner in South Africa within the previous twelve months.

#### 4.7.5 Exclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria are defined as features of the potential study respondent who meet the inclusion criteria but present with additional characteristics that could interfere with the success of the study or increase their risk for an unfavourable outcome (Patino & Ferreira 2018:84). Common exclusion criteria include characteristics of eligible individuals that make them highly likely to be lost to follow-up, miss scheduled appointments to collect data, provide inaccurate data, that could bias the results of the study, or increase their risk for adverse events (Patino & Ferreira 2018:84). The online survey brings the new requirement for both respondents and researchers. For instance, respondents are required to have technical skills, access to the internet and necessary reading and writing competence (Creswell 2016:403). With this in mind, people who cannot read or write were automatically excluded from the study as the completion of the questionnaire was based online. Children below the age of 18 years old were also excluded. Finally, respondents who refused to give consent for the study were excluded from the study. Lastly, people who have not travelled on a long-distance coach liner within a year before data collection were also excluded.

#### 4.8 SUMMARY

The approach used to perform the research study was examined and described in this chapter. An overview of the major study paradigms was presented in this chapter. The current investigation was conducted using the positivist paradigm and a quantitative technique. The choice was made to apply statistical methods in measuring the responses obtained. Types of research design, namely exploratory, causal and descriptive research designs were then discussed. This design helps to describe the research domain, market characteristics or function accurately and thoroughly. Moreover, this chapter provided a detailed procedure of how data was collected.

The sources of data collection methods for this study included both primary and secondary data collection methods. An online questionnaire, deemed an effective to collect primary data, was designed in a simple and understandable manner to achieve the research objectives. Primary data was collected through social media platforms using an online survey. Secondary data collection included literature sourced from textbooks, published censuses or other statistical data, journal articles, government statistics, industry associations, company websites, market research reports, conference papers, archived resources, websites, thesis, dissertations, newspapers, or government reports.

Sampling is classified into two types of namely non-probability and probability sampling. The sample methods were briefly presented to gain a thorough grasp of each sampling method so that the most appropriate sampling approach for this study could be selected. The study population and sampling techniques were then described. The data analysis methodologies used in the study were also discussed in this chapter. In this investigation, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Finally, the study's ethical implications were explored. The findings of the data collected from the 399 respondents will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The methodology followed in this study was presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 explored and discussed an overview of the research paradigms, types of research design, and procedures of data collection and sampling adopted for the current study. Detailed information on data analysis and ethical considerations was also provided. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of results and aims to address the fourth research objective of the study, namely, to conduct an empirical investigation to measure passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. The analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.

This chapter commences with the response rate obtained for the study. Thereafter, a summary of the most recent type of long-distance coach liner utilised by the respondents is provided. The respondents' profile is then described, including their gender, age, permanent country of residence, occupation, travel purpose, and frequency of travel. The findings of the validity and reliability tests of the measurement instrument, correlations, ANOVA, and regression analysis are detailed, as well as descriptive statistics for scaled items relating to aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic worth, and satisfaction. The last section of the chapter presents the summary of propositions and hypotheses tested in this study followed by the summary of the chapter.

#### 5.2 RESPONSE RATE

A total of four hundred and nine (409) responses was obtained from the online surveys administered. After cleaning the data, ten questionnaires were deemed unusable, as some respondents had never travelled with a long-distance coach liner while other respondents were below 18 years of age and therefore did not qualify to participate in this research study. It was imperative that respondents had experience with long-distance coach travel and the respondents were instructed to continue only if they had travelled with any long-distance coach liner in South Africa. As a result, only 399

questionnaires were deemed suitable for this investigation. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, these questionnaires met the required inclusion criteria. This represents a response rate of 99.8%. The response rate was calculated based on the number of respondents who participated in the study, excluding those who did not meet the selection criteria. Those who did not participate were not counted. The findings reported in this chapter will be based on 399 usable questionnaires.

### 5.3 MOST RECENTLY USED LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINER

Respondents were requested to indicate which long-distance coach liner/s they had most recently used. The results in Table 5.1 show that the largest proportion of the respondents who participated in the study had most recently travelled with Intercap (39.6%) and Greyhound (24.3%). Only one respondent had most recently travelled with Mega Bus (0.2%).

TABLE 5.1

#### TYPE OF LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINER

Coach liner	Frequency	Percentage
Citiliner	23	5.8
City to City	33	8.3
Eldo coaches	48	12.0
Greyhound	97	24.3
Intercap	158	39.6
Mega Bus	1	0.2
Translux	20	5.0
Other (please specify)	19	4.8
Total	399	100

*Note: Greyhound and Citiliner closed its operations in South Africa on 14 February 2021. At the time of data collection, the company was operational and respondents' experience with these coaches were included in the analysis of this study.*

### 5.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Section C of the questionnaire was used to generate the profile of the respondents. The profile variables included the respondents' gender, age, country of permanent residence, current occupation, purpose of travel of the most recent trip on a long-

distance coach liner and frequency of travel on a long-distance coach liner. The responses to these questions are presented in Table 5.2 to Table 5.6.

#### 5.4.1 Gender distribution of respondents

The gender distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 5.2. The results indicate that of the 399 respondents, 44.6% were males and 55.4% were females. Although this percentage shows that the number of female respondents was higher than the number of male respondents, it is noted that the margin of difference between genders was not extensive and thus there would be no concern of gender bias in the report.

TABLE 5.2  
GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	178	44.6
Female	221	55.4
Total	399	100.0

#### 5.4.2 Age of the respondents

The age distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 5.3. Due to an initial low response rate observed for three age groups (46-55 years, 56-65 years, >65 years) and to obtain meaningful inferential analysis for the study, these age groups were grouped together, recoded, and termed >45 years.

TABLE 5.3  
AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	215	53.9
26-35 years	152	38.1
36-45 years	20	5.0
>45 years	12	3.0
Total	399	100.0

The results in Table 5.3 illustrate that the age group between 18-25 years was the most represented in the study (53.9%), followed by those respondents between 26-35 years of age (38.1%). Only a small proportion of the respondents was older than 45 years (3.0%). The unequal distribution between respondents younger than 45 years and those older than 45 years could be attributed to the fact that the survey was administered online, and the older generation often struggles with or rejects digital technologies even though some may have internet access.

#### 5.4.3 Country of permanent residence

The next question sought information about respondents' country of permanent residence. The results in Table 5.4 indicate that 96.5% of the respondents who completed the questionnaire were of South African origin. The data was collected in a period where there were travel restrictions in/out of SA due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most people were unable to travel because long-distance travel was restricted. This had a major impact on both SA and non-SA citizens' travelling frequency.

TABLE 5.4

#### COUNTRY OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
South Africa	385	96.5
Non-South African	14	3.5
Total	399	100.0

#### 5.4.4 Respondents' current occupation

Regarding the occupation of respondents, the results presented in Table 5.5 indicate that the largest proportion of respondents were students (42.6%), followed by 34.1% of respondents being full-time employed. Only one respondent was retired.



TABLE 5.5

## RESPONDENTS' CURRENT OCCUPATION

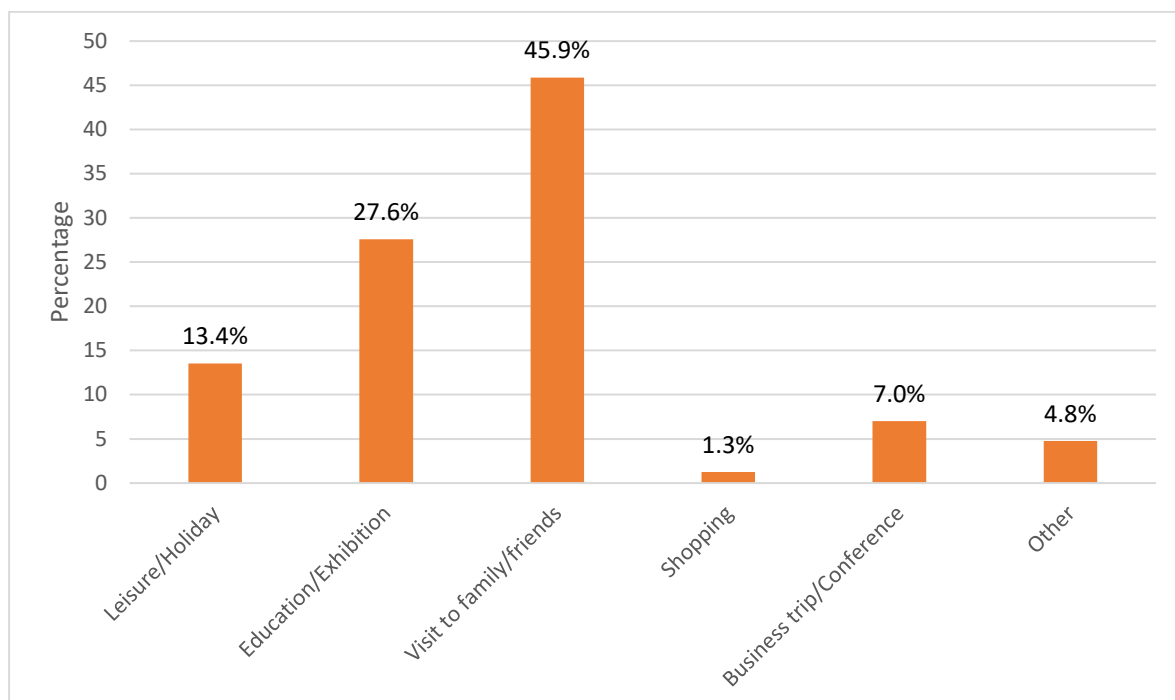
	Frequency	Percentage
Full-time employed	136	34.1
Part-time employed	39	9.8
Retired	1	0.3
Student	170	42.6
Unemployed	53	13.3
Total	399	100

## 5.4.5 Travel purpose of the most recent trip on a long-distance coach liner

In terms of the respondents' purpose of travel on the most recently used long-distance coach liner, the results in Figure 5.1 show that 45.9% of the respondents travelled to visit friends and families, 27.6% travelled for education or exhibition purposes, while 13.4% travelled for leisure and holiday purposes. Only a small percentage of the respondents travelled for shopping (1.3%).

FIGURE 5.1

## TRAVEL PURPOSE OF THE MOST RECENT TRIP ON A LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINER



The dominance of those travelling for the purpose of visiting friends and families could be used as strategic information to attract more passengers in this category by specifically developing marketing campaigns to attract this market. As stated in Section 5.4.5, the results show that the largest proportion of respondents was students. The latter could indicate another possible reason for the dominance in the visiting friends and family category; this could be since students are mostly studying away from their families, and therefore use long-distance coach liners to visit their families and friends.

#### 5.4.6 Frequency of travel

The last question, relevant to the respondents' profiles, is presented in Table 5.6. The question concerns the regularity with which a long-distance coach liner travel. Due to a low response rate in the initial categorisation and to obtain meaningful inferential data for the study, the initial response rate categories for “twice a week”, or “more often”, and “2 to 3 times a month”, were grouped together, recoded, and termed as “multiple times per month”.

TABLE 5.6  
RESPONDENTS' FREQUENCY OF TRAVEL  
ON A LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINER

	Frequency	Percentage
Multiple times per month	19	4.8
Once a month	34	8.5
Less than once a month	38	9.5
Once in six months	195	48.9
Once a year	113	28.3
Total	399	100.0

According to the recoded results, slightly less than half of the respondents (48.9%) had travelled once in the past six months, followed by those who had travelled once a year (28.3%). The reason that respondents did not travel more frequently is due to the national government regulations for COVID-19 pandemic as inter-provincial travel was prohibited during the data collection period.

## 5.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR SCALED ITEMS

In this section, the descriptive statistics are presented for all the items intended to measure the respondents' experience and satisfaction with a long-distance coach liner in South Africa. Descriptive statistical analysis was utilised to identify frequencies and percentages of the answers to the questions in the questionnaire. Information obtained will help to answer the research question by identifying the most common responses to the Likert scale statements. Respondents were asked to score their level of agreement with statements concerning their long-distance coach liner experience and satisfaction. A collection of statements was provided, which were divided into different dimensions (aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value, efficiency, and satisfaction, as predicted by the literature review). On a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement with each statement (strongly agree).

The analysis of the responses will be divided into subcategories as they appear on the questionnaire (see Annexure A). The responses are collapsed into only three categories where "Strongly disagree" and "Disagree" are combined to form a new column titled "Disagree to some extent" while "Agree" and "Strongly agree" combine to form the "Agree to some extent" column.

### 5.5.1 Aesthetics

As illustrated in Table 5.7, more than three-quarters of the respondents showed some level of agreement with three of the five statements related to the aesthetics dimension. The majority of the respondents (80.7% and 85.2% respectively) indicated that the long-distance coach liners' interiors and exteriors were well maintained and that the staff were neatly dressed (81.4%). Almost three-quarters of the respondents (74.9%) felt that the long-distance coach liner was clean.

Over two-thirds of the respondents (67.7%) agreed to some extent that the physical environment (e.g., light, colours, overall layout, design and decoration) of the long-distance coach liners were attractive. These results reveal that generally the respondents had positive feedback regarding the maintenance and staff appearance of the long-distance coach liner.

TABLE 5.7

## RESPONDENTS' RATING OF AESTHETICS ITEMS:

## PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
AES1	The vehicle interior was well maintained	5.8	13.5	80.7
AES2	The vehicle exterior was well maintained	3.6	11.2	85.2
AES3	The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed	3.1	15.5	81.4
AES4	The physical environment (e.g., light, colours, overall layout, design and decoration) of the long-distance coach liner was attractive	6.6	25.7	67.7
AES5	The long-distance coach liner was clean	7.5	17.6	74.9

The mean scores and standard deviation for the aesthetic dimension is reported in Table 5.8. The mean scores range from M=3.8 to M=4.1 and the standard deviation from 0.8 to 0.9. The respondents rated AES2 (M=4.1) "*The vehicle exterior was well maintained*" and AES3 (M=4.1) "*The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed*" items higher than other items. Items AES4 and AES5, relating to the physical environment and the cleanliness of the coach liner, attracted the lowest mean scores (M=3.8 and M=3.9 respectively). The relatively low standard deviations for all five items (0.8 and 0.9) indicate that the respondents were in agreement in their opinion of the aesthetics of the coach.

TABLE 5.8  
MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: AESTHETICS

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
AES1	The vehicle interior was well maintained	4.0	0.9
AES2	The vehicle exterior was well maintained	4.1	0.8
AES3	The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed	4.1	0.8
AES4	The physical environment (e.g., light, colours, overall layout, design, and decoration) of the long-distance coach liner was attractive	3.8	0.9
AES5	The long-distance coach liner was clean	3.9	0.9

### 5.5.2 Entertainment

Regarding the entertainment dimension it can be seen from Table 5.9 that 63.4% of the respondents agreed to some extent that long-distance coach liners had a functioning sound system, while 55.4% of the respondents agreed to some extent that the long-distance coach liner had functioning on-board video equipment for entertainment. Just over half (50.8%) of the respondents agreed to some extent that they enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during their trip, while 41.6% indicated to some extent that they did not enjoy watching movies during the trip. Furthermore, 40.3% of the respondents showed some level of disagreement with the item relating to listening to music played during the trip with the long-distance coach liner. A vast majority of the respondents (83%) showed some level of disagreement that the long-distance coach liner they travel on had WIFI. The fact that most of the respondents indicated that long-distance coach liners frequently used by them did not have WIFI is an indication that there is still more that could be done in the provision of services that influence the entertainment experience with long-distance coach liners. Some entertainment activities are accessed through the use of WIFI such as reading online books, playing games, watching movies or listening to music.

TABLE 5.9  
RESPONDENTS' RATING OF ENTERTAINMENT ITEMS:  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
ENT6	There was a functioning sound system on the long-distance coach liner	19.0	17.6	63.4
ENT7	There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment	28.9	15.7	55.4
ENT8	I enjoyed watching movies during my trip	41.6	25.0	33.4
ENT9	The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI	83.0	7.2	9.8
ENT10	I enjoyed listening to music played in the coach during my trip	40.3	31.6	28.1
ENT11	I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip	21.8	27.4	50.8

The mean scores and standard deviation for items measuring the entertainment dimension are displayed in Table 5.10. The items ENT7 “*There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment*” and ENT11 “*I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip*” have high mean scores ( $M=3.4$ ) with the same standard deviation (1.2). ENT9 “*The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI*” scored the lowest mean ( $M=1.9$ ). The standard deviations for the six items related to entertainment range between 1.0 and 1.2. This indicates less agreement amongst the respondents than the questions relating to aesthetics dimension discussed in Section 5.5.1. This shows that respondents have different expectations or preferences regarding entertainment, some respondents require provided entertainment while others would prefer to sit quietly and relax during their journey.

TABLE 5.10

## MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: ENTERTAINMENT

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
ENT6	There was a functioning sound system on the long-distance coach liner	3.3	1.1
ENT7	There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment	3.4	1.2
ENT8	I enjoyed watching movies during my trip	2.9	1.2
ENT9	The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI	1.9	1.0
ENT10	I enjoyed listening to music played in the coach during my trip	2.8	1.2
ENT11	I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip	3.4	1.2

## 5.5.3 Peace of mind

When looking at the peace of mind dimension (Table 5.11), the largest proportion of respondents (82.7%) showed some level of agreement that the driver(s) of the long-distance coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip. This was followed by 80.9% of respondents who felt that they were safe while travelling on a long-distance coach liner. Furthermore, 79.5% agreed to some extent that they felt safe when disembarking from the long-distance coach liner. The results also show that a large proportion of the respondents indicated that their trip with long-distance coach liner was peaceful (73.4%) and that they did not feel crowded when boarding the long-distance coach liner (72.2%). More than half of the respondents (55.1%) experienced psychological comfort while travelling with this long-distance coach liner. These results indicate that the respondents had positive feedback regarding the safety of long-distance coach liners.

TABLE 5.11

## RESPONDENTS' RATING OF PEACE OF MIND ITEMS:

## PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
POM12	I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner	16.8	27.5	55.1
POM13	I felt safe while travelling on the long-distance coach liner	5.3	13.8	80.9
POM14	Embarking and disembarking points were safe	7.0	14.1	78.9
POM15	The driver/s of the coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip	5.8	11.5	82.7
POM16	I did not feel crowded when I boarded the long-distance coach liner	10.1	17.7	72.2
POM17	I felt that my personal space was maintained through well-spaced seating arrangements	12.8	18.5	68.7
POM18	My trip with the long-distance coach liner was peaceful	6.5	20.1	73.4
POM19	I felt relaxed and well-rested during my trip	13.5	20.9	65.6
POM20	I think that my personal details are safe with the long-distance coach company	5.5	23.8	70.7
POM21	I felt safe when disembarking from the coach liner	5.5	15.0	79.5

The mean scores and standard deviation for the peace of mind dimension are presented in Table 5.12. Two items, namely POM13 “*I felt safe while travelling on the long-distance coach liner*” and POM15 “*The driver/s of the coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip*” shared the highest mean score ( $M=4.1$ ), with a standard deviation of 0.9 and 0.8, respectively. The data points are clustered within a restricted range of values, as indicated by the low standard deviation. It implies that respondents were in agreement that they felt peace of mind during their last trip on a long-distance coach liner. Item POM12 “*I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner*” had the lowest mean score, with  $M=3.5$  and highest standard deviation (1.2). The relatively high standard deviation indicates that some passengers felt a low degree of comfort and others a high degree of comfort. This suggests an area where long-distance coach liner management needs to make extra



efforts in ensuring that nervous passengers experience psychological comfort during the long-distance trip.

TABLE 5.12

## MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: PEACE OF MIND

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
POM12	I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner	3.5	1.2
POM13	I felt safe while travelling on the long-distance coach liner	4.1	0.9
POM14	Embarking and disembarking points were safe	3.9	0.9
POM15	The driver/s of the coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip	4.1	0.8
POM16	I did not feel crowded when I boarded the long-distance coach liner	3.8	0.1
POM17	I felt that my personal space was maintained through well-spaced seating arrangements	3.7	0.1
POM18	My trip with the long-distance coach liner was peaceful	3.9	0.9
POM19	I felt relaxed and well-rested during my trip	3.7	1.0
POM20	I think that my personal details are safe with the long-distance coach company	3.9	0.8
POM21	I felt safe when disembarking from the coach liner	3.9	0.8

#### 5.5.4 Economic value

In terms of economic value, Table 5.13 indicates that a large proportion of respondents (80.2%) showed some level of agreement that the long-distance coach liners' embarking points were easily accessible. A large proportion of respondents agreed to some extent that it was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process (79.4%) and embarkation or disembarkation points (74.4%), while three-quarters of the respondents (75.1%) agreed that they received value for their money when travelling with the long-distance coach liner. Seventy percent of the respondents agreed to some extent that the service received was worth the price that they paid. Only 65.1% of respondents showed some level of agreement that it was relatively quick to find information about timetables of the long-distance coach liner, while 64.7% felt the same about routes.

TABLE 5.13  
RESPONDENTS' RATING OF ECONOMIC VALUE ITEMS:  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
ECO22	It was relatively quick to find information about timetables	12.8	22.1	65.1
ECO23	It was relatively quick to find information about routes	10.3	25.0	64.7
ECO24	It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process	3.0	17.6	79.4
ECO25	Embarking points were easily accessible	5.8	14.0	80.2
ECO26	It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points	5.8	19.8	74.4
ECO27	I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance coach liner	9.6	15.3	75.1
ECO28	The service I received on the long-distance coach liner was worth the price I paid	12.0	18.0	70.0

The mean scores and standard deviation for the economic value dimension is shown in Table 5.14. The items ECO25 "*Embarking points were easily accessible*", ECO26 "*It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points*", and ECO27 "*I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance coach liner*" ( $M=3.9$ ) have higher mean scores than the other items. This implies that passengers are satisfied with the service that they received from long-distance coach liners, but they found it difficult to find information about the ticketing process, confirmed by the lowest mean score relating to item ECO24 "*It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process*" ( $M=3.1$ ). The relatively low standard deviations (between 0.8 and 1.0) indicate that there is agreement amongst respondents regarding the economic value dimension.

TABLE 5.14

## MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: ECONOMIC VALUE

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
ECO22	It was relatively quick to find information about timetables	3.7	0.1
ECO23	It was relatively quick to find information about routes	3.2	0.9
ECO24	It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process	3.1	0.8
ECO25	Embarking points were easily accessible	3.9	0.8
ECO26	It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points	3.9	0.8
ECO27	I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance coach liner	3.9	0.9
ECO28	The service I received on the long-distance coach liner was worth the price I paid	3.8	1.0

## 5.5.5 Efficiency

When analysing the results for the efficiency dimension, it can be seen that a large proportion of the respondents agreed that travelling by long-distance coach liner was very convenient (70.4%) and the information about travel rules was provided (66.4%) (Table 5.15). Of the 399 respondents, 64.7% agreed that the long-distance coach liner was dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality and 62.5% indicated that long-distance coach liners provided consistent services, with 61.6% agreeing to some extent that bus times were convenient. Just more than half of the respondents (52.8%) showed some level of agreement that they were informed about bus delays in time. Less than half of the respondents 40.6% showed some level of agreement that access was provided for passengers with special needs.

TABLE 5.15

## RESPONDENTS' RATING OF EFFICIENCY ITEMS:

## PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
EFF29	I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality	16.3	19.0	64.7
EFF30	The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip	18.0	19.6	62.5
EFF31	The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules	17.8	15.8	66.4
EFF32	There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the bus	25.8	18.0	56.2
EFF33	I was informed about bus delays in time	30.4	16.8	52.8
EFF34	Bus times of the long-distance coach liner are convenient	14.6	23.8	61.6
EFF35	Access is provided for passengers with special needs	21.3	38.1	40.6
EFF36	Travel by the long-distance coach liner was very convenient	9.5	20.1	70.4

Table 5.16 shows the mean and standard deviation scores for efficiency. As shown in Table 5.16, *“travel by the long-distance coach liner was very convenient”* of the efficiency dimension scored the highest mean ( $M=3.7$ ) with a standard deviation of 0.9. Four items EFF29 *“I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality”*, EFF30 *“The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip”*, EFF31 *“The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules”* and EFF34 *“Bus times of the long-distance coach liner are convenient”* scored a mean of  $M=3.6$ . The lowest means ( $M=3.3$ ) were found in items EFF32 *“There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the bus”*, EFF33 *“I was informed about bus delays in time”*, EFF35 *“Access is provided for passengers with special needs”*. The lowest means imply that the information about the instructions on how to use facilities that is provided by long-distance coach management is not sufficient and respondents are not being informed in time about bus delays.

TABLE 5.16

## MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: EFFICIENCY

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
EFF29	I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality	3.6	1.1
EFF30	The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip	3.6	1.0
EFF31	The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules	3.6	1.1
EFF32	There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the bus	3.3	1.1
EFF33	I was informed about bus delays in time	3.3	1.2
EFF34	Bus times of the long-distance coach liner are convenient	3.6	1.0
EFF35	Access is provided for passengers with special needs	3.3	0.1
EFF36	Travel by the long-distance coach liner was very convenient	3.7	0.9

## 5.5.6 Satisfaction

Table 5.17 shows passengers' level of satisfaction, 72.2% of the respondents indicated to some extent that they were satisfied with their overall experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner. A large proportion (71.9%) confirmed their agreement with the fact that their overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good. Of the respondents, 69.9% indicated that overall, they were satisfied to some extent with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner, and 69.1% of the respondents were of the opinion that their travel needs were satisfied during the trip. Slightly fewer respondents (63.9%) indicated some level of agreement that their travel experience was better than expected. From the data, it emerged that 58.6% of the respondents considered the long-distance coach liner as first choice to travel with again while 56.4% agreed to some extent that the employees tried to understand their needs, and 53.4% indicated that employees addressed their needs quickly and satisfactorily.

TABLE 5.17

RESPONDENTS' RATING OF SATISFACTION ITEMS:  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Code	Items	Disagree to some extent	Neutral	Agree to some extent
SAT37	My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	11	19.8	69.1
SAT38	I will consider this long-distance coach liner as my first choice if I travel again	19.5	21.8	58.6
SAT39	I feel that the employees tried to understand my needs	9.8	33.8	56.4
SAT40	The employees addressed my needs quickly and satisfactorily	11.3	35.3	53.4
SAT41	Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner	7.8	22.3	69.9
SAT42	Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner	8.3	19.5	72.2
SAT43	Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected	14.8	21.3	63.9
SAT44	My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good	8.5	19.5	71.9
SAT45	My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	11	19.8	69.1

The mean scores and standard deviation for satisfaction are highlighted in Table 5.18. As indicated in the table, the respondents rated SAT41 *“Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner”*, SAT42 *“Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner”* and SAT44 *“My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good”* items highly, with mean scores of  $M=3.8$ . This indicates that the respondents had a good experience, and they are satisfied with traveling with the long-distance coach liner. Standard deviations for all the items but SAT43 *“Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected”* were only 0.9. This indicates that the respondents largely agreed in their responses to the items dealing with satisfaction.

TABLE 5.18

## MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATION: SATISFACTION

Code	Items	Mean	Std.Dev
SAT37	My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	3.7	0.9
SAT38	I will consider this long-distance coach liner as my first choice if I travel again	3.6	0.9
SAT39	I feel that the employees tried to understand my needs	3.6	0.9
SAT40	The employees addressed my needs quickly and satisfactorily	3.6	0.9
SAT41	Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner	3.8	0.9
SAT42	Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner	3.8	0.9
SAT43	Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected	3.6	1.1
SAT44	My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good	3.8	0.9

## 5.6 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER DIMENSION

Table 5.19 presents the central tendency and dispersion for the intended dimensions of passengers' experience and satisfaction. From the data it emerged that the mean scores for the intended dimensions range between  $M=2.9$  and  $M=3.9$  on the 5-point Likert scale. The standard deviation ranges between 0.6 and 0.9. With the exception of the entertainment dimension, all the mean scores are above 3.0 (neutral), but none is above  $M=4.0$  (agree). The results seem to imply that the passengers' experience and satisfaction of long-distance coach liners were not overwhelmingly high for this study sample, but on the most part, passengers agreed that they were generally satisfied with the experience. Of much concern is the entertainment dimension which is below  $M=3.0$ , suggesting that the respondents feel that the entertainment offered on the long-distance coach liner did not contribute to their experience. Peace of mind had the highest mean score ( $M=3.9$ ) which seems to indicate that having peace of mind whilst travelling is an important contributing factor to satisfaction when travelling on a long-distance coach liner. The relatively low standard deviations (between 0.6 and 0.9) indicate that respondents were, on the whole, in agreement with their responses to items related to the six dimensions.

TABLE 5.19  
CENTRAL TENDENCY AND DISPERSION: DIMENSIONS OF PASSENGERS'  
EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
Aesthetics	399	1	5	3.1	0.6
Entertainment	399	1	5	2.9	0.9
Economic value	399	1	5	3.8	0.7
Efficiency	399	1	5	3.5	0.8
Peace of mind	399	1	5	3.9	0.7
Satisfaction	399	1	5	3.7	0.8

### 5.7 VALIDITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT: EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 3, five independent factors (experience dimensions) and one dependent factor (satisfaction) were identified to measure passengers' experience of and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. According to Olckers (2011:191), "the main purpose of the EFA is to "group a large item set into meaningful subsets that measure different factors". The number of variables that underpin the set of items and the underlying dimensionality of the set of things were determined using an EFA (Olckers 2011:191). This would allow the researcher to identify items that did not measure an expected aspect, as these items may be poor indicators of the intended construct and should be excluded from further analysis.

The content and face validity of the items measuring these factors were improved through the assistance of three subject expert reviewers in a South African public university (see Section 4.4.3.5). In the following sections, the KMO, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, total variance explained, pattern matrix, and factor matrix are reported and discussed.



### 5.7.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity independent and dependent factors

To strengthen the validity of this study, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 44 items intended to measure the independent and dependent variables. Prior to the EFA extraction, to determine the acceptability of the data for factor extraction for the independent and dependent variables, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used. The number of components to keep can be determined using Kaiser's criterion (Auerswald & Moshagen 2019:27). It is critical to determine the factorability of the correlation matrix prior to starting an EFA.

As illustrated in Table 5.20, a statistically significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ( $p=0.000$ ) showed that sufficient correlations existed among the items intended to measure the independent variables to proceed with a factor analysis. The overall significance of the correlations inside the correlation matrix was confirmed by the KMO measure of sample adequacy of 0.937, which is substantially above the guideline of 0.60. Based on the KMO and significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the extraction communalities for all the items in this study are acceptable.

TABLE 5.20

#### KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST OF SPHERICITY FOR THE INTENDED INDEPENDENT FACTORS

KMO and Bartlett's Test for Independent factors			KMO and Bartlett's Test for Dependent factors		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.937	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.92
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7874.204	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2537.996
	Df	630		Df	28
	Sig.	0.000		Sig.	0.000

As presented in Table 5.20, the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy obtained for the dependent factor (satisfaction) was 0.92 and a significant value of  $p=0.000$  for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. This suggests that the data for the intended dependent factors are

suitable for factor extraction. In the EFA, all 44 items were subjected to Principal Factor Analysis with Kaiser Rotation.

#### 5.7.2 Total variance explained (TVE)

A further examination was conducted using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) to determine the total variance explained (TVE) in the dataset. PAF was used as the goal of the study was to identify the factor structure evident within the covariance matrix. PCA was not employed as is a different technique which is used to simply explain the total variation within the data but it does not identify distinct factors and the relationship between the factors. PCA is used to reduce the number of components within a study while PAF (or factor analysis) is used to identify a distinct factor structure within the data. The TVE for the independent factors is shown in Table 5.21. The data confirms the existence of five latent variables with eigenvalues greater than one and a cumulative percentage of variance explained of 49.649 percent, as shown in Table 5.21.

TABLE 5.21

#### TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED: INDEPENDENT FACTORS

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	13.369	37.136	37.136	12.882	35.784	35.784	11.311
2	2.264	6.289	43.424	1.794	4.982	40.766	10.18
3	1.918	5.329	48.753	1.425	3.958	44.724	6.294
4	1.485	4.125	52.878	0.985	2.737	47.462	7.107
5	1.294	3.595	56.473	0.787	2.187	49.649	5.874

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Table 5.22 captured the total variance explained for the dependent factor (satisfaction) using the extraction method, Principal Axis Factoring. The results presented in Table 5.22 suggest the existence of one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and a cumulative percentage of 64.915%.

TABLE 5.22

## TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED: DEPENDENT FACTOR

Total Variance Explained						
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.538	69.226	69.226	5.193	64.915	64.915

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

## 5.7.3 Pattern matrix: Independent factors

Table 5.23 presents the results of the pattern matrix for the independent variables. In the case where an item loaded on two factors, it was grouped with the factor where it had the largest value. Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2014) state that cross loadings where one loading is sufficiently higher than the other can be retained while the other is removed. These authors also state that when deciding whether to remove or retain a cross loading, the conceptual interpretation should be considered (i.e., does one of the loadings make more sense than the other one?). This recommendation was considered in selecting the factor with higher loading. Principal Axis Factoring and Rotation Method Promax with Kaiser Normalisation and a Rotation which converged in iterations was used. All the items were retained as the factor loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.30.

TABLE 5.23  
PATTERN MATRIX: INDEPENDENT FACTORS

Pattern Matrix					
	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. The vehicle interior was well maintained				0.657	
2. The vehicle exterior was well maintained				0.758	
3. The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed				0.387	
4. The physical environment (e.g., light, colours, overall layout, design and decoration) of the long-distance coach liner was attractive				0.54	
5. The long-distance coach liner was clean				0.374	
6. There was a functioning sound system on the long-distance coach liner				0.385	0.476
7. There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment				0.307	0.625
8. I enjoyed watching movies during my trip					0.71
9. The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI					0.474
10. I enjoyed listening to music played in the coach during my trip					0.575
11. I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip					
12. I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner	0.576				
13. I felt safe while travelling on the long-distance coach liner	0.849				
14. Embarking and disembarking points were safe	0.664				
15. The driver/s of the coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip	0.669				
16. I did not feel crowded when I boarded the long-distance coach liner	0.717				
17. I felt that my personal space was maintained through well-spaced seating arrangements	0.756				
18. My trip with the long-distance coach liner was peaceful	0.798				
19. I felt relaxed and well-rested during my trip	0.684				
20. I think that my personal details are safe with the long-distance coach company	0.435				

TABLE 5.23 (CONTINUED)

## PATTERN MATRIX: INDEPENDENT FACTORS

## Pattern Matrix

	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
21. I felt safe when disembarking from the coach liner	0.645				
22. It was relatively quick to find information about timetables			0.73		
23. It was relatively quick to find information about routes			0.741		
24. It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process			0.809		
25. Embarking points were easily accessible			0.544		
26. It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points			0.601		
27. I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance distance coach liner	0.446	0.44			
28. The service I received on the long-distance coach liner was worth the price I paid	0.464	0.438			
29. I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality		0.553			
30. The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip		0.464			
31. The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules		0.591			
32. There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the bus		0.674			
33. I was informed about bus delays in time		0.687			
34. Bus times of the long- distance coach liner is convenient		0.567			
35. Access is provided for passengers with special needs		0.524			
36. Travel by the long-distance coach liner was very convenient		0.474			

## Factor 1 – Peace of mind

The results indicate that Factor 1 comprises of twelve items (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 27 and 28). Items 27 and 28 loaded onto Factor 1 where it had the largest value. Factor 1 will be referred to as peace of mind as the items described the peace of mind dimension discussed in the literature

## Factor 2 - Efficiency

Factor 2 comprises of eight items (29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36). Factor 2 will be referred to as efficiency as the items which loaded onto this factor described the efficiency dimension as discussed in the literature.

## Factor 3 – Economic value

Factor 3 includes five items (2, 23, 24, 25 and 26). Factor 3 will be referred to as economic value as the items which loaded onto this factor adequately described the economic value dimension as discussed in the literature.

## Factor 4 - Aesthetics

Factor 4 comprises of five items (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). Factor 4 will be referred to as aesthetics as the items adequately described the aesthetics dimension discussed in the literature.

## Factor 5 - Entertainment

Lastly, items 6 and 7 were loaded on factor 5 because it had the largest value on factor 5. Therefore, factor 5 comprises five items (6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) and will be referred to as entertainment. The five items on factor 5 adequately described the entertainment dimension as discussed in the literature.

### 5.7.4 Factor matrix – Dependent factor

Table 5.24 presents the factor matrix for the dependent factor. As illustrated in the table, only one factor could be extracted in the eight items measuring satisfaction. Principal Axis Factoring was used as the extraction method, and one factor extracted. All the items were retained as the factor loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.30.

The distinction between the Pattern Matrix and situations where a Factor Matrix was denoted was the number of extracted factors. When two or more factors were extracted, the output matrix was rotated to help interpret each factor in relation to the other factors in that structure. Because rotation is not possible when only a single factor is extracted, a pattern matrix cannot be determined, and the factor matrix is used.

TABLE 5.24  
FACTOR MATRIX: DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Factor Matrix	
	Factor
	1
37. My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	0.775
38. I will consider this long-distance coach liner as my first choice if I travel again	0.762
39. I feel that the employees tried to understand my needs	0.774
40. The employees addressed my needs quickly and satisfactorily	0.803
41. Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner	0.766
42. Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner	0.875
43. Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected	0.825
44. My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good	0.858

All further analysis after the reloading of items onto the new factor structure was done using this new factor structure.

## 5.8 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

A reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated for each factor to estimate the internal consistency of each of the items (Thompson & Schofield 2007:140). As outlined in the study by Salkind (2018:165), the acceptable value of alpha in reliability analysis is 0.8 in the case of intelligence tests, and the acceptable value of alpha in reliability analysis is 0.7 in the case of reliability tests. The higher the dependability coefficient, the more consistent or dependable the test results are. All Cronbach's alpha values are more than 0.70, as shown in Table 5.25. This indicates that the items used to assess the specified variables are accurate.

TABLE 5.25

## INTERNAL CONSISTENCY FOR THE SCALE ITEMS

(COMPLETE DATA SET, n = 399)

	Dimension	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Independent factors</b>	Aesthetics	5	0.819
	Entertainment	5	0.788
	Peace of mind	12	0.923
	Economic value	5	0.840
	Efficiency	8	0.858
<b>Dependent factor</b>	Satisfaction	8	0.934

## 5.9 FACTOR SCORES: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Odum (2011:3) asserts that factor scores are mostly used for further statistical analysis in place of measured variables, especially when numerous outcome scores are available. This section presents results for the descriptive statistics for each factor score. Table 5.26 presents the descriptive statistics for each factor identified.

TABLE 5.26

## FACTOR SCORES: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. dev
Aesthetics	399	1	5	3.9	0.6
Entertainment	399	1	5	2.9	0.9
Peace of mind	399	1	5	3.8	0.7
Economic value	399	1	5	3.8	0.7
Efficiency	399	1	5	3.5	0.8
Satisfaction	399	1	5	3.7	0.8
Valid n (listwise)	399				

Table 5.26 indicates that the five independent factors (entertainment, aesthetics, economic value, efficiency and peace of mind) measuring passengers' experience had mean scores ranging from M=2.9 to M=3.9 and standard deviations ranging from 0.6 to 0.9. The aesthetics factor attracted the highest mean score (M=3.9), and the



entertainment factor attracted the lowest mean score ( $M=2.9$ ). The mean score for satisfaction (dependent factor) was  $M=3.7$ . Based on the factor scores, entertainment seems to be a major concern with the respondents of this study. The low mean score suggests that the respondents disagreed with the statements measuring entertainment provided in the long-distance coach liner. The practical implications of the latter will be discussed in Chapter 6.

#### 5.10 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE FACTORS

The examination of correlation between the indicated factors is presented in this section. The Pearson product moment correlations for the independent and dependent components are shown in Table 5.27.

TABLE 5.27  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN FACTOR SCORES

	Entertainment	Aesthetics	Economic value	Efficiency	Peace of mind	Satisfaction
Entertainment	1	.494**	.336**	.584**	.532**	.543**
Aesthetics		1	.352**	.606**	.664**	.615**
Economic Value			1	.513**	.522**	.486**
Efficiency				1	.724**	.803**
Peace of mind					1	.815**
Satisfaction						1

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

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) which means that the value will be considered significant if the p-value is between 0.001 to 0.010 (Zhu 2016:27). As shown in Table 5.27, all correlations scores were statistically significant. The strongest correlations were found between peace of mind and satisfaction (0.815) and efficiency and satisfaction (0.803). This implies that peace of mind has the great impact on satisfaction. As stated in previous literature (Section 3.3.), passengers value peace of mind when travelling long distances and factors such as waiting time, travel time, and

availability of information has a great influence on satisfaction. The smallest correlation was found between entertainment and economic value (0.336), implying that the perception of economic value and entertainment are not associated, or have little association.

### 5.11 HYPOTHESES

A set of hypotheses were provided in Chapters 1 and 3. Based on the correlation analysis presented in Table 5.27, the outcome of the hypotheses is reported in Table 5.28.

TABLE 5.28

#### SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESES TESTED IN THIS STUDY

	Hypothesis	Rejected or not rejected
H <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant relationship between aesthetics and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant relationship between entertainment and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>3</sub>	There is a significant relationship between peace of mind and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>4</sub>	There is a significant relationship between economic value and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>5</sub>	There is a significant relationship between efficiency and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected

### 5.12 INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TESTS: T-TEST FOR GENDER

To see if there is a significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the specific factors (aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, efficiency, and economic value) and satisfaction in the study, an independent-samples t-test was used. The Levene test of equality variance was first established. The Levene test showed no significant differences between the gender and all the factors in the study. This suggest that the test of homogeneity of variance is achieved. Therefore, the t-test was performed to determine whether any significant differences exist between the gender of the respondents and the identified factors. The results of the t-test for gender are

displayed in Table 5.29. No significant differences were found in any of the factors based on the gender of the respondents. This suggest that gender does not have any effect on any of the identified factors in the study. This could also imply that gender does not have any effect on the dimensions of travelling, using a long-distance coach.

TABLE 5.29  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST: GENDER

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Entertainment	Equal variances assumed	0.827	0.364	-0.943	397	0.347	-0.08072	-0.2491	0.08765
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.948	386.269	0.344	-0.08072	-0.24819	0.08675
Aesthetics	Equal variances assumed	2.297	0.13	0.764	397	0.445	0.04987	-0.0785	0.17824
	Equal variances not assumed			0.771	390.649	0.441	0.04987	-0.07727	0.17701
Economic	Equal variances assumed	0.285	0.594	-1.501	397	0.134	-0.09989	-0.23071	0.03093
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.505	382.92	0.133	-0.09989	-0.23036	0.03058
Efficiency	Equal variances assumed	3.138	0.077	-0.167	397	0.868	-0.01276	-0.1633	0.13778
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.169	395.145	0.866	-0.01276	-0.16092	0.13541
Peace of Mind	Equal variances assumed	2.935	0.087	0.131	397	0.896	0.00904	-0.12701	0.1451
	Equal variances not assumed			0.132	392.823	0.895	0.00904	-0.12536	0.14345
Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	3.33	0.069	-0.067	397	0.947	-0.00541	-0.16512	0.15429
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.068	395.069	0.946	-0.00541	-0.16262	0.15179

\*p<0.05

Table 5.30 presents the results of the independent sample test for country of permanent residence. The Levene test results indicated no significant differences between the country of permanent residence of the respondents and identified factors. This suggest that the test of equality of variances is satisfied. Hence, the t-test was performed. It also emerged from the t-test results in Table 5.30 that no significant differences exist in all the factors based on the respondents' country of residence. This suggests that the country of permanent residence of a passenger does not affect the travelling experience and satisfaction obtained.

TABLE 5.30  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST: COUNTRY OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Entertainment	Equal variances assumed	0	0.989	-0.301	397	0.764	-0.06961	-0.52494	0.38572
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.281	13.834	0.782	-0.06961	-0.60059	0.46136
Aesthetics	Equal variances assumed	0.078	0.78	0.202	397	0.84	0.03558	-0.31145	0.38262
	Equal variances not assumed			0.199	13.936	0.845	0.03558	-0.34789	0.41906
Economic	Equal variances assumed	0.426	0.515	0.556	397	0.578	0.10026	-0.25402	0.45454
	Equal variances not assumed			0.645	14.328	0.529	0.10026	-0.23264	0.43316
Efficiency	Equal variances assumed	0.197	0.658	-1.256	397	0.21	-0.25925	-0.66515	0.14664
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.327	14.086	0.206	-0.25925	-0.67795	0.15945
Peace of Mind	Equal variances assumed	0.111	0.739	-0.01	397	0.992	-0.00182	-0.36939	0.36575
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.011	14.29	0.991	-0.00182	-0.35187	0.34823
Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	0.892	0.345	-0.435	397	0.664	-0.09545	-0.52679	0.33588
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.525	14.451	0.608	-0.09545	-0.48455	0.29364

\*p<0.05

### 5.13 RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA), TUKEY HSD TEST AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

As mentioned in Chapter 4, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to see if there were any statistically significant differences between the mean score of selected profile variables (age, occupation, travel purpose, and frequency with which respondents have travelled by long-distance coach liner) and the study's identified factors. If any variance among the groups is identified, it will be represented by a large F-Value and a p-value of less than 0.05 (Laerd Statistics 2021:1). The Tukey HSD test was used to explore where the significant differences in age and occupation of the respondents occurred, based on the significant differences identified. Only the groupings where significant differences occurred are presented and interpreted in the next section. The ANOVA results for age of the respondents are reported in Table 5.31.

TABLE 5.31  
ANOVA RESULTS FOR AGE OF RESPONDENTS

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	3.768	3	1.256	1.747	0.157
	<b>Within Groups</b>	283.974	395	0.719		
	<b>Total</b>	287.743	398			
<b>Aesthetics</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	4.518	3	1.506	3.659	0.013 *
	<b>Within Groups</b>	162.613	395	0.412		
	<b>Total</b>	167.131	398			
<b>Economic Value</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	3.29	3	1.097	2.533	0.057
	<b>Within Groups</b>	171.004	395	0.433		
	<b>Total</b>	174.294	398			
<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	4.479	3	1.493	2.621	0.05
	<b>Within Groups</b>	225.034	395	0.57		
	<b>Total</b>	229.514	398			
<b>Peace of mind</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	7.527	3	2.509	5.507	

	<b>Within Groups</b>	179.95	395	0.456		0.001 *
	<b>Total</b>	187.477	398			
<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Between Groups</b>	5.877	3	1.959	3.066	0.028 *
	<b>Within Groups</b>	252.408	395	0.639		
	<b>Total</b>	258.285	398			

\*P<0.05

As shown in Table 5.31, the Analysis of Variance results yielded a significant difference among the age groups of the respondents and selected factors in the study. Significant differences were found between age and aesthetics ( $F=3.659$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) and peace of mind ( $F=5.507$ ,  $p=0.001$ ); and also, between age and satisfaction ( $F=3.066$ ,  $p=0.028$ ). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores for aesthetics and peace of mind and specific age groups. These findings support existing research which found that as people grow older, their needs change and changes come to their buying decision making patterns (Navidi 2016:37). Therefore, the results suggest that passengers of different ages, travelling with long-distance coach liners, have different views with regard to aesthetics, peace of mind and satisfaction. Elderly respondents might value peace of mind more than young people, whereas the aesthetics experience might be more highly valued by young people (Navidi 2016:37).

As shown in Table 5.31 the p-value for entertainment: ( $F=1.747$ ,  $p=0.157$ ); economic value ( $F=2.533$ ,  $p=0.057$ ) and efficiency ( $F=2.621$ ,  $p=0.05$ ) have a value greater than the critical value of  $p<0.05$ . This indicates that the difference of mean between the respondents based on their age groups is not significant for these three factors.

Based on the ANOVA test results, Tukey HSD test was performed to investigate the specific age groups where significant differences exist and the identified factors. The results are shown in Table 5.32. For aesthetics, the differences were found between 18–25-year-olds and 26–35-year-olds ( $p=0.024$ ). This suggest that respondents between 18-25-years-old and 26-35-years-old perceived their experiences differently in terms of the aesthetics of the long-distance coach liner (e.g., interior and exterior maintenance). For



peace of mind, the differences were found between the 18–25-year-old group and the 26–35-year-old group ( $p=0.003$ ), and between the 18–25-year-old group and >45-year-old group ( $p=0.044$ ). This means that respondents' perceptions of aspects associated to peace of mind (e.g., safety, security, and bus driver professionalism) may change between the 18–25-year-old group and the 26–35-year-old group, as well as between the 18–25-year-old group and the >45-year-old group.

TABLE 5.32

## TUKEY HSD TEST FOR AGE: MULTIPLE COMPARISON

Dependent Variable	(I) Age recoded	(J) Age recoded	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Aesthetics	18-25 years	26-35 years	.19370*	0.024	0.0183	0.3691
	26-35 years	18-25 years	-.19370*	0.024	-0.3691	-0.0183
Peace of mind	18-25 years	26-35 years	.24685*	0.003	0.0623	0.4314
		> 45 years	.52645*	0.044	0.0099	1.043

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Note that only those variables indicating a significant difference was included in this table

Based on the Tukey HSD results for age of the respondents, a descriptive statistic for age is presented in Table 5.32. The goal is to look at the mean scores within the age groups where there were substantial variances. The mean scores for all of the groups were between  $M=3.44$  and  $M=4.08$ . The 18–25-year-old age scored substantially higher ( $M=4.08$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) in terms of aesthetics than the 26–35-year-old group ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=0.61$ ). For peace of mind, in both cases the 18–25-year-old group indicated significantly higher ( $M=3.96$ ,  $SD=0.63$ ) than the 26–35-year-old group ( $M=3.72$ ,  $SD=0.72$ ) and > 45-year-old group ( $M=3.44$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ). In terms of satisfaction, the 18–25-year-old group scored significantly higher ( $M=3.78$ ,  $SD=0.78$ ) than the 26–35-year-old group ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ). The higher mean scores recorded for the

younger group could indicate that they are more easily satisfied; or that the coach liners are better catering to their needs.

TABLE 5.33

## DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR AGE OF RESPONDENTS

		N	Mean	Std. Dev	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Aesthetics	18-25 years	215	4.08	0.67	3.9919	4.1718	1	5
	26-35 years	152	3.89	0.61	3.7907	3.9856	1	5
Peace of Mind	18-25 years	215	3.96	0.63	3.8786	4.0493	1	5
	26-35 years	152	3.72	0.72	3.6021	3.8322	1	5
	> 45 years	12	3.44	0.96	2.825	4.05	1	5

Table 5.33 shows that there is a significant difference between occupation and aesthetics ( $F=6.505$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and peace of mind ( $F=6.698$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), as well as between occupation and satisfaction ( $F=3.949$ ,  $p=0.009$ ), according to the ANOVA results for respondents' occupation. Respondent groups such as employed, students and retired may value peace of mind since they may regard travelling as time to rest from schoolwork whereas the unemployed group may enjoy looking at the beautiful exterior and interior of the bus and other aesthetics activities.

The results reveal a non-significant difference between occupation and the following experience factors: entertainment ( $F=0.357$ ,  $p=0.78$ ), economic value ( $F=1.563$ ,  $p=0.10$ ) and efficiency ( $F=2.17$ ,  $p=0.09$ ).

TABLE 5.34

## ANOVA RESULTS FOR THE OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Entertainment	Between Groups	0.779	3	0.26	0.357	0.784
	Within Groups	286.709	394	0.728		
	Total	287.488	397			
Aesthetics	Between Groups	7.871	3	2.624	6.505	0.000 *
	Within Groups	158.909	394	0.403		
	Total	166.78	397			
Economic Value	Between Groups	2.048	3	0.683	1.563	0.198
	Within Groups	172.053	394	0.437		
	Total	174.101	397			
Efficiency	Between Groups	3.729	3	1.243	2.17	0.091
	Within Groups	225.651	394	0.573		
	Total	229.38	397			
Peace of mind	Between Groups	8.973	3	2.991	6.698	0.000 *
	Within Groups	175.939	394	0.447		
	Total	184.912	397			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	7.444	3	2.481	3.949	0.009 *
	Within Groups	247.59	394	0.628		
	Total	255.034	397			

\*p&lt;0.05

Based on the ANOVA test results, Tukey HSD test was conducted to investigate where specific significant differences for respondents' occupation occurred. The results are displayed in Table 5.34. For aesthetics, the differences were found between full time employed and students ( $p=0.001$ ), and between those who are full-time employed and unemployed ( $p=0.029$ ). Regarding peace of mind, the results indicate that the differences were found between full-time employed and unemployed ( $p=0.000$ ), between students and part-time employed ( $p=0.007$ ), between those unemployed and students

( $p=0.007$ ). As regards satisfaction, significant differences occurred between passengers who are full-time employed and students ( $p=0.007$ ).

TABLE 5.35

## TUKEY HSD TEST FOR OCCUPATION: MULTIPLE COMPARISON

TUKEY HSD TEST FOR OCCUPATION : MULTIPLE COMPARISON Dependent Variable	(I) 4. Current occupation	(J) 4. Current occupation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Aesthetics	Full-time employed	Student	-.28676*	0.001	-0.4753	-0.0983
		Unemployed	-.28610*	0.029	-0.5514	-0.0208
	Student	Full-time employed	.28610*	0.029	0.0208	0.5514
	Unemployed	Part-time employed	-0.25123	0.165	-0.5644	0.0619
Peace of mind	Full-time employed	Unemployed	.30950*	0.000	0.1112	0.5078
		Full-time employed	.36267*	0.005	0.0835	0.6418
		Full-time employed	-0.17996	0.596	-0.5515	0.1915
	Student	Part-time employed	-.29706*	0.007	-0.5324	-0.0618
	Unemployed	Student	.29706*	0.007	0.0618	0.5324
Satisfaction	Full-time employed	Student	-.29706*	0.007	-0.5324	-0.0618
	Student	Full-time employed	.29706*	0.007	0.0618	0.5324

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on the Tukey HSD results for occupation of the respondents, a descriptive statistic for occupation is presented in Table 5.35. The aim is to investigate the mean scores within the various occupations of the respondents

where significant differences were found. All the mean scores ranged from  $M=3.50$  to  $M=4.12$ .

TABLE 5.36  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR OCCUPATION

		n	Mean	Std. Dev	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Aesthetics	Full-time employed	136	3.83	0.68	3.71	3.95	1	5
	Student	170	4.12	0.62	4.02	4.21	1	5
	Unemployed	53	4.12	0.60	3.95	4.28	1	5
Peace of mind	Full-time employed	136	3.65	0.71	3.53	3.77	1	5
	Student	170	3.96	0.64	3.86	4.06	1	5
	Unemployed	53	4.01	0.66	3.83	4.19	1	5
Satisfaction	Full-time employed	136	3.50	0.85	3.35	3.64	1	5
	Student	170	3.79	0.76	3.68	3.91	1.5	5

As shown in Table 5.35, the descriptive statistics show that the student group has the highest mean score ( $M=4.12$ ) for aesthetics and unemployed for peace of mind ( $M=4.01$ ). In terms of satisfaction, students have a higher mean ( $M=3.79$ ) than full-time employed respondents ( $M=3.50$ ). This implies that students are more satisfied or pleased with the services offered by the long-distance coach liner.

The ANOVA results for respondents' travel purposes are reported in Table 5.36. The results revealed non-significant differences between respondents' travel purpose and all identified factors in the study: entertainment ( $F=0.747$ ,  $p=0.58$ ), aesthetics ( $F=1.256$ ,  $p=0.28$ ), economic value ( $F=1.402$ ,  $p=0.22$ ), efficiency ( $F=0.699$ ,  $p=0.62$ ), peace of mind ( $F=0.392$ ,  $p=0.85$ ) and satisfaction

( $F=0.258$ ,  $p=0.93$ ). The results indicate that travel purpose does not impact on any of the experience factors and passengers' satisfaction.

TABLE 5.37  
ANOVA RESULTS FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES OF RESPONDENTS

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Entertainment	Between Groups	2.71	5	0.542	0.747	0.588
	Within Groups	285.032	393	0.725		
	Total	287.743	398			
Aesthetics	Between Groups	2.629	5	0.526	1.256	0.282
	Within Groups	164.502	393	0.419		
	Total	167.131	398			
Economic Value	Between Groups	3.055	5	0.611	1.402	0.223
	Within Groups	171.24	393	0.436		
	Total	174.294	398			
Efficiency	Between Groups	2.022	5	0.404	0.699	0.625
	Within Groups	227.492	393	0.579		
	Total	229.514	398			
Peace of mind	Between Groups	0.931	5	0.186	0.392	0.854
	Within Groups	186.546	393	0.475		
	Total	187.477	398			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	0.843	5	0.169	0.258	0.936
	Within Groups	257.441	393	0.655		
	Total	258.285	398			

\* $p<0.05$

The ANOVA results for the frequency of times that respondents have travelled with a long-distance coach liner are indicated in Table 5.37. No significant differences were found between the frequency of travel and the identified factors: entertainment ( $F=1.228$ ,  $p=0.30$ ), aesthetics ( $F=1.099$ ,  $p=0.36$ ), economic value ( $F=1.224$ ,  $p=0.3$ ), efficiency ( $F=0.968$ ,  $p=0.42$ ), peace of mind

( $F=0.668$ ,  $p=0.61$ ) and satisfaction ( $F=0.227$ ,  $p=0.92$ ). This implies that the frequency travelled by respondents has no effect on the experience factors and satisfaction. The reason could be that transport (long-distance coach liner) are in high demand and customers repeat purchase when they are satisfied. Another reason could be that the passengers do not have any alternative mode of transportation.

TABLE 5.38

## ANOVA RESULTS FOR FREQUENCY TRAVELLED BY RESPONDENTS

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Entertainment	Between Groups	3.543	4	0.886	1.228	0.298
	Within Groups	284.2	394	0.721		
	Total	287.743	398			
Aesthetics	Between Groups	1.844	4	0.461	1.099	0.357
	Within Groups	165.287	394	0.42		
	Total	167.131	398			
Economic Value	Between Groups	2.14	4	0.535	1.224	0.3
	Within Groups	172.155	394	0.437		
	Total	174.294	398			
Efficiency	Between Groups	2.233	4	0.558	0.968	0.425
	Within Groups	227.28	394	0.577		
	Total	229.514	398			
Peace of mind	Between Groups	1.263	4	0.316	0.668	0.614
	Within Groups	186.214	394	0.473		
	Total	187.477	398			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	0.594	4	0.148	0.227	0.923
	Within Groups	257.691	394	0.654		
	Total	258.285	398			

\* $p<0.05$

## 5.14 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The following sections present the results of the regression analysis conducted in the study. The regression test was carried out to examine which of the independent factors (aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency) is/are predictors of passengers' satisfaction. According to Frost (2020:1), regression analysis is a form of inferential statistics which describes the nature of the relationship between two variables.

### 5.14.1 Regression analysis: Dependent variable satisfaction

The model summary presented in Table 5.38 provides information about the regression line's ability to account for the total variation in the dependent factor. As displayed in Table 5.38,  $R^2=0.761$ . This implies that 76.1% of the total variance in satisfaction is explained by the independent variable of the model. The Adjusted  $R^2=0.758$  (75.8%), F value=250.225,  $p=0.000$ , indicating that the model is significant.

TABLE 5.39

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS: DEPENDENT VARIABLE SATISFACTION

Model Summary b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.872a	0.761	0.758	0.39635	0.761	250.222	5	393	0	1.939
a Predictors: (Constant), Peace of _Mind, Economic, Entertainment, Aesthetics, Efficiency										
b Dependent Variable: Satisfaction										

### 5.14.2 Regression analysis: Coefficients

The coefficients or predictors of the model are presented in Table 5.39. The results show that entertainment ( $\beta=0.027$ ,  $p=0.37$ ), aesthetics ( $\beta=0.035$ ,  $p=0.413$ ) and economic value ( $\beta=0.002$ ,  $p=0.958$ ) were insignificant predictors of passengers' satisfaction. Based on the findings only two factors namely efficiency ( $\beta=0.455$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and peace of mind ( $\beta=0.552$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) were found to be significant predictors of passengers' satisfaction. Both efficiency



and peace of mind had positive values. This implies that if the efficiency is increased by one unit, there will be 0.455 increase in the value of satisfaction. Similarly, if there is an increase in the value of peace of mind by one unit, there will be 0.552 increase in the value of passengers' satisfaction. These two predictors (efficiency and peace of mind) do not have a one-to-one relationship with satisfaction but do have a positive impact on satisfaction.

TABLE 5.40  
COEFFICIENTS

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	<b>(Constant)</b>	-0.261	0.147		-1.772	0.077		
	<b>Entertainment</b>	0.027	0.03	0.028	0.905	0.366	0.619	1.616
	<b>Aesthetics</b>	0.035	0.043	0.028	0.819	0.413	0.512	1.954
	<b>Economic Value</b>	0.002	0.036	0.002	0.053	0.958	0.688	1.454
	<b>Efficiency</b>	0.455	0.042	0.429	10.816	0.000	0.387	2.583
	<b>Peace of Mind</b>	0.552	0.048	0.47	11.531	0.000	0.366	2.732
<b>a</b>	<b>Dependent Variable: Satisfaction</b>							

### 5.15 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the empirical results of the current study. The chapter commenced with a discussion of the response rate obtained from the online survey administered and the type of long-distance coach liner that the respondents most recently used. The gender, age, permanent country of residence, occupation, travel purpose, and travel frequency of the respondents were all presented. The descriptive statistics of items designed to gauge respondents' experiences with and satisfaction with long-distance coach lines were then presented.

The reliability of each of the identified factors in the study was tested and the results from Cronbach alpha coefficients proved that the scale was internally reliable. The chapter continued with the descriptive statistics focusing on the central tendency and dispersion of data, providing mean scores and standard deviations. Pearson's product moment correlations were calculated to assess the correlations between variables. The results indicate that all the experience factors have a significant positive relationship with passenger satisfaction. Factor analysis was used to identify latent constructs or factors. The key findings were interpreted and discussed. The final section of this chapter reported on the t-test, ANOVA and regression analysis.

The study's next and last chapter will provide a summary of the findings. Following that, the results will be discussed, followed by the management implications. The study's weaknesses will also be discussed. The chapter will conclude with research suggestions for the future.

## CHAPTER 6

### SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

It is noted that the field of transportation makes a significant contribution to the economy of a country. Transport markets and related transport infrastructure networks are key drivers in the promotion of more balanced and sustainable development, particularly by improving accessibility and the opportunities of less developed regions or disadvantaged social groups.

This study was motivated by the fact that little, or no research has been conducted concerning passengers' experiences and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Several studies in the field of marketing suggest that organisations aim to provide services that create memorable or favourable experience and satisfaction (Chepur & Bellamkonda 2019:1; Gentle et al 2007:395). Creating favourable customer experience leads to customer satisfaction. Not only do satisfied customers repeat purchase and spread positive word of mouth about the product or service, but customers remain loyal to the product or service. It was also noted that customers encounter favourable or unfavourable experience during the customer behaviour buying process. Consumer buying behaviour refers to the methods involved when individuals or groups choose, buy, utilise or dispose of products, services, concepts or experiences to suit their needs and desires (Haider & Shakib 2018:6). A behaviour is what consumers display in searching for, paying for, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they think will satisfy their needs (Haider & Shakib 2018:6).

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Understanding the dimension of passengers' experience and satisfaction would allow coach liners' management to concentrate on factors that ensure that passengers' experiences lead to satisfaction, which could result in positive behavioural intention. To retain existing passengers and attract passengers from private and other transportation modes, long-distance coach liner

operators should make a proactive effort to understand the challenges faced by passengers to increase their satisfaction levels.

The research question that the study sought to address is: *What are passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa?*

To address the research question of the study, the following objectives were formulated.

- Undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a particular focus on long-distance coach liners.
- Study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof in the road transport industry.
- Investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to long-distance coach liners.
- Conduct an empirical investigation to measure passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Based on the results of the empirical investigation, highlight theoretical and practical implications to management of long-distance coach liner operators in South Africa.

This chapter provides a synopsis of the entire study and highlights the most significant findings and the implications for long-distance coach liner operators. Finally, it recommends areas for future research.

## 6.2 SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 served as the background to the study and highlighted issues such as the problem and purpose of the research, the research question and objectives, a brief literature review, conceptualisation and theoretical framework, research design and methods, and contributions of the study.

Chapter 2 provided literature on bus transportation in South Africa. The background of road transportation, and policies in the transportation sector in South Africa were discussed. It was noted that several types of bus transportation can be found in South Africa and that South Africa has policies

and entities that regulate both public and private transportation. The last sections of Chapter 2 discussed external and internal factors affecting bus transportation and a summary of the chapter.

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to provide the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction. Five dimensions of passengers' experience, namely aesthetic, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency were identified as being relevant to the current study and discussed in detail. Each of these dimensions was comprehensively defined and discussed, and the likely relevance of each within the long-distance coach liner industry was highlighted. The conceptualisation of and literature on passengers' satisfaction was also provided in this chapter. Based on the literature review, satisfaction refers to customer contentment, the fulfilment of a need, and the evaluation of a product or an organisation's performance. Satisfaction is influenced by memorable experience, which may contribute to the customer returning to the organisation and spreading positive word-of-mouth messages to potential customers.

The research methodology followed in the study was explained in Chapter 4. The study followed a quantitative research approach and descriptive design. The respondents were identified through convenience and snowball sampling. In this study, the population involved all South Africans. The target population, however, consisted of long-distance coach liner passengers in South Africa. Two qualifying questions guided the recruitment of the respondents. To begin, a respondent had to be 18 years old or older in order to take part in the survey. Secondly, a respondent should have travelled by a long-distance coach liner at least once within the 12 months period prior to participating in the online survey. An online survey questionnaire was employed to obtain primary data for the study. Four hundred and nine (409) completed questionnaires was received from long-distance coach liner passengers but only three 399 were deemed usable, and these were used for the analysis. The descriptive analysis determined the characteristics of the data, normality of the data, and the profile characteristics of the participants. Inferential data analysis included factor analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), t-tests, Pearson Product Moment

Correlations, and Multiple Regression Analysis. Ethical considerations were also discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 presented a detailed report on the results of the empirical study. It described the respondents' profile, and descriptive statistics associated with the scaled items that measured the long-distance coach liner passengers' experience and satisfaction. Thereafter, factor analysis was performed to determine the number of latent factors. The impact of selected profile variables on perceptions of passengers' experience dimensions was reported and the relationships between the passengers' experience dimensions and satisfaction were determined.

### 6.3 RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

This section provides a summary of the respondents' profile. More females (55.4%) participated in the study compared to males (44.6%). However, the margin of difference between genders was not large enough to signal any concern about gender bias in the report. More than half of the respondents (53.9%) were between 18-25 years of age. In terms of country of permanent residence, a large proportion of the respondents resides in South Africa (96.5%). In terms of respondents' occupation, 42.6% were students followed by 34.1% of the respondents who were full-time employed. More respondents had travelled to visit friends and families (45.9%). Slightly below half of the respondents (48.9%) had travelled once in the past six months. The influence of the profile variables on the dimensions of passengers' experience and satisfaction are provided in the conclusions below.

### 6.4 OUTCOME OF HYPOTHESIS TESTS

A set of hypotheses were provided in Chapters 1 and 3. Based on the results of the correlation analysis in Table 5.27, the outcome of the hypotheses can be reported as is summarised in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1  
OUTCOME OF HYPOTHESIS TESTS

	Propositions and hypotheses	Rejected or not rejected
H <sub>1</sub>	There is a significant relationship between aesthetics and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>2</sub>	There is a significant relationship between entertainment and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>3</sub>	There is a significant relationship between peace of mind and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>4</sub>	There is a significant relationship between economic value and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected
H <sub>5</sub>	There is a significant relationship between efficiency and passengers' satisfaction	Not rejected

## 6.5 CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section highlights the main conclusions, implications and recommendations based on the theoretical and empirical findings of the study and provides a discussion where appropriate. These will be presented using the objectives of the study as frame of reference.

### a) Objective 1

*Undertake a theoretical investigation into road transportation in South Africa with a particular focus on long-distance coach liners.*

The first goal of the investigation is addressed in this section. The second chapter looked at the literature on road transportation in South Africa, focusing on long-distance coach liners.

Important conclusions relevant to the literature review are listed below.

- Transportation contributes significantly to the South African economy and is an essential part of daily life (Stats SA 2019:1).

- The ability to transport goods efficiently from areas of production to areas of consumption are important for trade and economic development (Vilakazi & Paelo 2017:1).
- Bus transportation is the most widely used mode of transportation compared to any other transport mode and has gained popularity worldwide as a cost-effective alternative to far more expensive urban rail alternatives. It is well-known for delivering fast and comfortable services (Cervero 2013:1; Loyola et al 2019:2; Mackie et al 2012:17; Walters 2008:2).

The implications following the discussion in Chapter 2 can be found below.

- Long-distance coach liners as a means of passenger transport are responsible for linking passengers in the major cities of South Africa.

#### b) Objective 2

*Study the literature on passengers' experience and satisfaction to provide an understanding and application thereof in the road transport industry.*

Chapter 3 provided a discussion on the concept of passengers' experience and satisfaction.

Important conclusions relevant to the literature review are listed below.

- The survival of any organisation in a contemporary business environment depends on creating positive customer experience (Chepur & Bellamkonda 2019:1; Gentle et al (2007:395).
- Customer experience is viewed as the source of sustainable differentiation and the new competitive battleground (Asfaha 2017:1).
- An experience is formed during the consumers' search for products, purchase and after-sales phases and may involve service channels (Brakus et al 2009:52; Carreira et al 2013:233; Chepur & Bellamkonda (2019:1); Hsieh et al 2017:1395).
- Aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency were identified as the dimensions of passengers' experience.



- Customer satisfaction is defined as a customer's assessment of a product or service in relation to their requirements and expectations (Quan et al 2020:66).

Implications based on Chapter 3 are listed below.

- Customer experience occurs before, during and after consumption, which, in the context of transportation travel experience is formed by passengers' interactions with vehicle(s), the service provider(s), and other aspects in the moments beyond the actual trip (Carreira et al 2014:36).
- Consumer buying behaviour refers to the methods involved when individuals or groups choose, buy, utilise, or dispose of products, services, concepts or experiences to suit their needs and desires (Haider & Shakib 2018:6). Consumers display their buying behaviour in searching for, paying for, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they think will satisfy their needs (Haider & Shakib 2018:6).
- The stages in the customer buying process must be noted, these include before, during and after consumption because they all have an impact on customer experience (Carrier 2020:1). Therefore, long-distance coach liner managers must not only focus on creating memorable experience during the buying stage but rather focus on all stages in the customer-buying decision process. To achieve this, managers must ensure that all relevant information about long-distance liner service is available for customers to book bus tickets and evaluate travel options and prices (before). After consumption, managers can create a customer relationship management (CRM) App or use surveys to allow passengers to rate their service, raise concerns and share compliments.
- Further studies are necessary to better understand the passengers' transport behaviour and how to improve their experience with long-distance coach liners.
- Organisations must strive to ensure that their services match or exceed customers' expectations.
- Improving customer satisfaction is vital to the future development of transport

- Future research should also investigate the best private transport practices and effective policies to enhance passengers' experience that will lead to satisfaction and encourage a modal shift to private bus transport
- Treat experiences as comprising tangibles, intangibles and emotional aspects, and ensure that all three levels of the experience contribute to customer satisfaction.
- Understand that creating passengers' experience leads to customer satisfaction which maximises profits.

c) Objective 3

*Investigate literature on methods of measuring experience and satisfaction, with the aim of developing an appropriate measuring tool applicable to road transportation.*

Chapter 4 addressed Objective 3 of the study. The important conclusions resulting from the literature review include the following.

- No existing study could be found that provided a measuring instrument to address the problem statement of this study.
- A new measuring instrument was developed based on the dimensions of the study. Statements relating to the dimensions were either adapted, adopted or formulated by the researcher.
- All items related to the various dimensions were found to be reliable.

The implication emanating from this objective is provided below.

- The measuring instrument can be used by long-distance coach liners and other bus companies to establish the passengers' experience and satisfaction.

d) Objectives 4 and 5

*Conduct an empirical investigation to measure passengers' experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa; and based on the results of the empirical investigation, highlight theoretical and practical implications to management of coach liners in South Africa.*

This study investigated the perception of passengers regarding their experiences with long-distance travel in South Africa. Important conclusions and recommendations resulting from the empirical data are provided below.

- Aesthetics experience

Aesthetics experiences represent the design, colour, features and the configuration (location of components) of the interior and exterior of the bus (Van der Waerden et al 2018:530). An attractive interior and exterior component of the bus will contribute to satisfaction and loyal customers. The current study confirmed that aesthetics influence passengers' experience. Items AES4 and AES5, which relate to the physical environment ( $M=3.8$ ) and the cleanliness of the coach liner ( $M=3.9$ ) respectively, had the least positive perceptions for aesthetics ( $M=3.1$ ). This implies that the passengers of long-distance coach liners are not well pleased with the physical environment and cleanliness of the coach liner. The study further found that there is a significant positive relationship between aesthetics and passengers' satisfaction ( $r=0.615$ ). Long-distance coach liners should be aware that age and occupation of passengers influence the Furthermore, the study discovered a significant relationship between age and aesthetics ( $F=3.659$ ,  $p=0.013$ ) as well as a strong relationship between occupation and aesthetics ( $F=6.505$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). perceived experience of aesthetics. The latter is vital in ensuring that passengers are satisfied.

Other research (e.g., Ali & Amin 2014:254, Kirillova et al 2014:283; Van der Waerden et al 2018:530) have found a favourable and significant link between aesthetics and passenger happiness. Based on the findings it is recommended to management of long-distance coach liners that both interior and exterior components (e.g., seats, floors, lighting) of the vehicle need to be always well maintained to enhance passengers' satisfaction. Thorough cleaning of the coach (e.g., inside, outside, seats) is required prior to departure and on arrival. During the trip, it is important to ensure that disposables are properly kept in the coach. A well-positioned 'dust bin' can be offered after every third-row seat in the coach for easy and proper disposal of used materials/rubbish. The long-distance coach liner management must focus on improving tangible elements

(the equipment in the bus, furnishing, staff appearance/dressing and visual communication and intangible elements include the smell on the bus, the temperature on the bus, lighting and appearance.

- Entertainment

Entertainment facilities have become an important component of travelling. In modern society, technology advancements enable passengers to enjoy the trip by watching online movies, reading eBooks and downloading the latest music. Entertainment activities relating to bus transport involves reading, using the sound music system, watching movies and enjoying internet access (WIFI) (Carreira 2014:39). The results revealed that item ENT9 "*The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI*" scored the lowest mean ( $M=1.9$ ). Entertainment scored the lowest mean ( $M=2.9$ ) among the five factors in the study. The present study also found that entertainment is a factor that influences passengers' experience and satisfaction. The finding is in line with previous research findings by Akbari and Wagner (2021:249), Elmaslhara and Soares 2019:94) and Hwang and Yoo (2021:48) who concluded that entertainment experience influences customer satisfaction. Based on these findings, it is recommended that long-distance coach liner managers improve their service by ensuring that internet connectivity is strong to allow passengers to enjoy online music videos, movies and to read books. The results have practical implications for long-distance coach liner managers. Specifically, entertainment can be used to attract passengers and to enhance their satisfaction with the overall travel experience. This research contributes to a better understanding of the importance of entertainment in long-distance coach travel. The research also illustrates how different forms of entertainment can boost certain emotions and behaviours.

- Peace of mind

Peace of mind was conceptualised as a form of affective well-being that is characterised by feelings of internal peace and harmony (Datu et al 2018:1904). It can be defined as freedom from trouble, a feeling of tranquillity, content and the cessation of hostilities; relaxation, good friendship and serenity (Johnson 2013:9). In the context of this study, peace of mind refers to inner

peace. In the field of transportation, peace of mind is associated with psychological comfort and relaxation (Schiefelbusch 2015:53). Thus, safety is one of the passengers' concerns when planning a trip; it has also an impact on travel decision making. Peace of mind comprises three factors, namely safety, security and privacy (Amoah et al 2016:30). The factor, peace of mind, attracted a high mean score ( $M=3.8$ ), while the item "*Embarking and disembarking points were safe*" attracted the most positive evaluation. This implies that long-distance coach liner passengers are well pleased with embarking and disembarking points. Peace of mind attracted the most favourable evaluations. Peace of mind ( $\beta=0.552$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) were found to be a significant predictor of passengers' satisfaction. This confirms the study by Ainsworth & Foster (2016:29) that peace of mind has the strongest impact on customer satisfaction.

Long-distance coach liner operators and managers are advised to strengthen security systems to ensure that passengers always feel safe. CCTV cameras can be installed in the bus to monitor and alert drivers to passengers' behaviour in the bus. Furthermore, private security personnel can be contracted to ensure that safety measures in the bus and at embarking and disembarking points are in place.

- Economic value

Economic value is the degree to which consumer benefits provided by a good or service exceed the costs of producing that good or service. Challenges encountered by passengers during the trip or before the trip are costly. These costs include travel costs, time, bus fares and any other costs suffered because of choosing the mode of transport (Litman & Doherty 2009:2). Economic value scored the second highest mean of 3.8 with a standard deviation of 0.7. This implies that passengers with long-distance coach liners are well pleased with the specific economic value items. Economic worth was discovered to have a substantial link with contentment ( $r=0.485$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and predictive power on satisfaction ( $r=0.486$ ,  $p=0.01$ ). This confirms what other scholars found (Cirillo et al 2011:217; Han & Ryu 2009:491; Litman & Doherty

2009:2) that economic value has a significant influence on passenger satisfaction.

- Efficiency

Reliability and maintenance are important factors that influence the efficiency experience as this is proven by  $M = 3.5$  in the Table 5.19 and Table 5.26. Three items namely EFF32 *“There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provide on the bus”* ( $M=3.3$ ), EFF33 *“I was informed about bus delays in time”* ( $M=3.3$ ), and EFF35 *“Access is provided for passengers with special needs”* ( $M=3.3$ ) attracted the lowest mean among the items measuring efficiency. This implies that long-distance coach liner passengers are not well pleased with these specific aspects measuring the efficiency experience. Efficiency was discovered to have a substantial link with satisfaction ( $r=0.803$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), as well as predictive power ( $\beta=0.455$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that when efficiency is improved customer satisfaction will be increased. The significant relationship between efficiency and satisfaction found corroborates with previous research findings such as Loyola et al (2019:2) and Velaga et al 2012:21).

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that a small booklet/pamphlet should be provided on each seat of the coach that will provide information with clear instructions on how to use/operate vital equipment in the coach. Prior to departure, the driver or driver assistant should educate passengers on the use of key equipment/facilities in the coach. Customers do not like to wait for the service; thus, employees of long-distance coach liners need to be well-trained to be punctual and consistent with bus departure and arrival times. Managers of long-distance coach liners are advised to provide reliable services. Travel time and waiting time are to be noted by long-distance coach liner management as a factor that influences travel decisions. To improve bus services, for example, reduce bus delays, and bus operators should adjust driver schedules by redeploying drivers to meet an original bus timetable as much as possible (Kang et al 2020:200). A place should be provided to assist passengers with disabilities (for example for people in wheelchairs) to board and disembark from the coach.

- Passengers' satisfaction

The success and profitability of a business depend on enhancing customer satisfaction and future patronisation (Bae et al 2018:3). Customers have more options and become knowledgeable and more selective, and they increasingly have higher expectations than before. Satisfied customers repeat purchase and spread positive word of mouth about the product or services (De Meyer & Mostert 2011:80). Customer satisfaction influences behavioural intentions, such as returning to the organisation and positive word-of mouth marketing. Satisfied customers also remain loyal to the product or service. The mean score for all the items measuring satisfaction ranged from  $M=3.6$  to  $M=3.8$  (see Table 5.18). This implies that overall, respondents were satisfied with their long-distance coach liner experience. The findings of the study further show that there is a significant relationship between aesthetics, entertainment, peace of mind, economic value and efficiency and passengers' satisfaction (see Table 5.27). This suggests that these dimensions play an important role in enhancing passenger satisfaction in long-distance coach liner transportation. Significant differences were found between age and satisfaction ( $F=3.066$ ,  $p=0.028$ ) (see Table 5.30) and between occupation and satisfaction ( $F=3.949$ ,  $p=0.009$ ) (see Table 5.33). This implies that different age groups of passengers have different views about satisfaction. Specifically, differences were found between the 18–25-year-old group and the 26–35-year-old group ( $p=0.024$ ) (see Table 5.32). This implies that passengers who are 18-25 years old have different preferences, tastes and choices from those who are between 26-35 years old. With regards to satisfaction, it was found that significant differences exist between students and full-time employees. Students have a higher mean ( $M=3.79$ ) than full-time employees ( $M=3.49$ ) (see Table 5.35). This implies that students seem to be satisfied with the services provided by the long-distance coach liner.

Based on the findings relating to passenger satisfaction, it is recommended that management should ensure that they maintain the current level of service delivery to passengers, paying attention to services that influence satisfaction such as understanding and addressing customer needs quickly and

satisfactorily. Long-distance management should also provide training for their employees to improve their service to passengers. The various recommendations provided under each of the dimensions may enhance the satisfaction of the passengers.

## 6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The first limitation of the study relates to the data collection tool. Based on Covid19 regulations in 2020, data was collected through an online survey, with the questionnaire distributed to respondents via email and social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter. A large amount of data was collected from WhatsApp respondents followed by Facebook, with no respondents being recruited through Twitter. As highlighted in the literature, not all people included in the target population have internet access and so some potential respondents could not participate due to internet access limitations. Due to this, the results should be generalised with caution, and it is advised that future studies should strive to use a data collection technique such as an intercept interview to reach different types of respondents. An intercept is a survey where respondents are intercepted in shopping malls or at a particular place (e.g., bus stations). The process involves stopping the potential respondent, screening them for appropriateness, and administering the survey on the spot. Another limitation relates to the sampled population. The 18–25-year age group was the most represented in the study (53.9%). Future studies should strive to obtain the perceptions of a more equal distribution of age groups. Moreover, due to COVID-19 national regulations, inter-provincial travel was prohibited during the data collection process. Consequently, there was a low response rate with respondents who travel multiple times per month. Most respondents had travelled only once in the past six months (see Section 5.4.6). For this reason, it was difficult to determine perceptions of the more recent service offered by long-distance coach liners in South Africa.

Furthermore, only five experience dimensions were examined in this study. While this is not regarded as a limitation and the reliability of all the dimensions was confirmed as forming part of the overall passengers' experience with long-



distance coach liners in South Africa, future research could investigate other dimensions that might form part of the long-distance coach liner travel experience.

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## ANNEXURE A: COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE



## CONSENT FORM AND COVER LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Yolokazi Mthi. I am currently a master's student in the Department of Marketing Management at Nelson Mandela University. The title of my study is "Passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa".

As long-distance coach liners contribute significantly to the South African economy through job creation. The primary aim of my study is to investigate passengers' perceived experience and satisfaction with long-distance coach liners in South Africa. Understanding the determinants of passengers' experience and satisfaction would allow coach liner's management to concentrate on factors that ensure passengers' experiences lead to satisfaction, which could result in positive behavioural intention. The findings may assist long-distance coach operators to improve their competitive position by enhancing the experience they offer to passengers.

Your choice to participate in the study is voluntary and your honest responses will be much appreciated. The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and your responses will remain anonymous. Only aggregate results will be reported. You have every right to discontinue completing the questionnaire at any time should you wish to do so without any consequences. The ethical clearance number to conduct this research is **H20-BES-MRK-071**.

By submitting the questionnaire, you consent that your responses may be included in the study.

The final results of the study can be emailed to any participant who wants to receive feedback.

Should you have questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to email me on [s214130533@mandela.ac.za](mailto:s214130533@mandela.ac.za).

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this study.

Regards

Yolokazi Mthi (214130533) (Student)  Qualification: Master of Commerce in Marketing	<b>Supervisors</b> Dr Felix Amoah (felix.amoah@mandela.ac.za)  Prof. Marlé van Eyk (marlé.vaneyk@mandela.ac.za)
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## QUESTIONNAIRE

**A long-distance coach liner can be defined as a coach liner that travels distances further than 100km. A long-distance coach liner is a special type of bus with added features and luxuries and are mostly used for transporting passengers to long-distance destinations such as between cities and even countries.**

**Please tick one (X)**

		Yes	No
1.	Have you travelled as a passenger on any long-distance coach liner in South Africa within the last 12 months?		
2.	Are you 18 years or older?		

If you have answered "no" to either of the questions above, thank you for your time, but you do not need to complete the subsequent questions.

If you have answered yes to both questions 1 and 2, which long-distance coach liner/s have you travelled with most recently? **Please mark (X) in the box of the table below:**

Greyhound	
Intercape	
Mega Bus	
Eldo Coaches	
Protours	
Citiliner	
Translux	
City to City	
Other, please specify .....	

**Please answer all questions in Sections B and C**

### SECTION B

Think of the most recent experience you had when traveling by long-distance coach liner in South Africa and answer all the questions below. The scale is measured from 1 to 5, where Strongly Disagree = (1), Disagree = (2), Neutral = (3), Agree = (4) and Strongly Agree = (5). In the following sections, please click the appropriate number to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

		←————→				
1	The vehicle interior was well maintained	1	2	3	4	5
2	The vehicle exterior was well maintained	1	2	3	4	5
3	There was sufficient signage inside the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5

4	The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed	1	2	3	4	5
5	The air conditioning provided a comfortable temperature	1	2	3	4	5
6	The long-distance coach liner had functional charging ports for electronic equipment	1	2	3	4	5
7	The physical environment (e.g. light, colours, overall layout, design and decoration) of the long-distance coach liner was attractive	1	2	3	4	5
8	The long-distance coach liner was clean	1	2	3	4	5
9	The long-distance coach liner had comfortable seats	1	2	3	4	5
10	The seats in the long-distance coach liner were adjustable	1	2	3	4	5
11	The seats in the long-distance coach liner were reclinable	1	2	3	4	5
12	The long-distance coach liner provided adequate arm support	1	2	3	4	5
13	Leg space was enough in the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
14	There was a functioning sound system on the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
15	There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
16	I enjoyed watching movies during my trip	1	2	3	4	5
17	The long-distance coach liner that I used had WIFI	1	2	3	4	5
18	I enjoyed listening to music played in the coach during my trip	1	2	3	4	5
19	I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip	1	2	3	4	5
20	I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
21	I felt safe while travelling on the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
22	Embarking and disembarking points were safe	1	2	3	4	5
23	The driver/s of the coach liner was professional throughout the entire trip	1	2	3	4	5
24	I did not feel crowded when I boarded the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
25	I felt that my personal space was maintained through well-spaced seating arrangements	1	2	3	4	5
26	My trip with the long-distance coach liner was peaceful	1	2	3	4	5
27	I felt relaxed and well-rested during my trip	1	2	3	4	5
28	I think that my personal details are safe with the long-distance coach company	1	2	3	4	5
29	I felt safe when disembarking from the coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
30	It was relatively quick to find information about timetables	1	2	3	4	5

31	It was relatively quick to find information about routes	1	2	3	4	5
32	It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process	1	2	3	4	5
33	Embarking points were easily accessible	1	2	3	4	5
34	It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points	1	2	3	4	5
35	I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
36	The service I received on the long-distance coach liner was worth the price I paid	1	2	3	4	5
37	I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality	1	2	3	4	5
38	The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip	1	2	3	4	5
39	The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules	1	2	3	4	5
40	There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the bus	1	2	3	4	5
41	I was informed about bus delays in time	1	2	3	4	5
42	Bus times of the long-distance coach liner are convenient	1	2	3	4	5
43	Access is provided for passengers with special needs	1	2	3	4	5
44	Travel by the long-distance coach liner was very convenient	1	2	3	4	5
45	My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	1	2	3	4	5
46	I will consider this long-distance coach liner as my first choice if I travel again	1	2	3	4	5
47	I feel that the employees tried to understand my needs	1	2	3	4	5
48	The employees addressed my needs quickly and satisfactorily	1	2	3	4	5
49	Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
50	Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner	1	2	3	4	5
51	Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected	1	2	3	4	5
52	My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good	1	2	3	4	5

**SECTION C: PROFILE OF RESPONDENT**

Please use a cross (x) to indicate your response to the questions below.

**B1: Gender**

Male	Female
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**B2: Age**

18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	>65
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**B3: Country of permanent residence**

South Africa	Other, please specify .....
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**B4: Current Occupation**

Full-time employed	Part-time employed	Retired	Student	Unemployed
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**B5: Travel purpose of your most recent trip on a long-distance coach liner**

Leisure/ Holiday	Education/ Exhibition	Visit to family / friends	Shopping	Business trip / Conference	Other
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

**B6: Frequency of travel on a long-distance coach liner?**

Twice a week or more often	Once a week	2 to 3 times a month	Once a month	Less than once a month	Once in six months	Once a year
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

**Thank you for your participation, it is much appreciated!**

## ANNEXURE B: SOURCES OF SCALED ITEMS

## STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

## SECTION A: DIMENSION OF PASSENGERS' EXPERIENCE

No.	ITEM	CONTEXT	AUTHORS
	<b>AESTHETICS</b>		
AES1	Vehicle interior maintenance was attractive	Bus transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
AES2	Vehicle exterior maintenance was attractive	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
AES3	There is sufficient signage in the long-distance coach liner	Malaysian theme park	Ali, Kim & Li (2018:2)
AES4	The staff in the long-distance coach liner were neatly dressed.	Malaysian theme park	Ali, Kim & Li (2018:2)
AES5	The air-conditioning provided a comfortable temperature	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41) Ali, Kim & Li (2018:2)
AES6	The long-distance coach liner had functional charging ports for electronics equipment	Public Transport Bus  Public Transport Bus  Quality of the bus fleet	Aido, Agymang & Monkak (2013:12)  Vilakazi & Govender 2014: 261 Misiurski (2015:480)  Pruyn & Smidts (1998:322)
AES7	Physical environment (e.g. light, colours, overall layout, design)	Resort hotel industry	Ali & Amin (2014:254)



	and decoration) of coach liner was very attractive		
AES8	The long-distance coach liner had comfortable seats	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)  Van Lierop et al 2018: 62  Ugo (2014:5)
AES9	The long-distance coach liner was clean	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
AES10	The seats in the long-distance coach liner were reclinable		Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
AES11	Coach liner provides adequate arm support during a trip	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
AES12	Leg space was enough in the long-distance coach liner	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>		
ENT1	There was a functioning sound system in the coach	Mid-distance bus trips	Carreira (2014:41)
ENT2	There was on-board functioning video equipment for entertainment	Public Transport	Schiefbusch (2015:53)
ENT3	I enjoyed watching movies during my trip	Mid-distance bus trips	Carreira (2014:41)
ENT4	The coach liner that I used had WIFI	Bus rapid transit system  Quality of the bus fleet	de Aquino, de Shouza & da Sliva (2018:4042)  Misiurski (2015:480)

ENT5	I enjoyed listening to music played in the coach during my trip	Tourist Customer Experience	Astrom (2017:128)
ENT6	I enjoyed reading a book without interruption from other passengers during my trip		
	<b>PEACE OF MIND</b>		
POM1	I experienced psychological comfort while traveling with this long-distance coach liner	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)
POM2	I felt safe while traveling on a long-distance coach liner	Public Transport	Mouwen (2015:6)
POM3	Embarking and disembarking points were safe	Bus rapid transit system	de Aquino, de Shouza & da Sliva (2018:4044)
POM4	The driver/s of the coach was professional throughout the entire trip	Bus rapid transit system  Bus rapid transit system	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)  de Aquino, de Shouza & da Sliva (2018:4044)
POM5	I did not feel crowded when I boarded the long-distance coach liner	Bus rapid transit system	de Aquino, de Shouza & da Sliva (2018:4044)
POM6	I felt that my personal space was maintained through seating arrangements	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)
POM7	My trip with the long-distance coach liner was peaceful	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)
POM8	I felt relaxed and well-rested during my trip	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)

POM9	I think that my personal details are safe with the long-distance coach company	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)
POM10	I felt safe when disembarking from the coach liner	Public Transport	Schiefebusch (2015:53)
.	<b>ECONOMIC VALUE</b>		
ECO1	It was relatively quick to find information about timetables	Public Transport Companies in Moroccan Cities	Karim & Fouad (2019:57)
ECO2	It was relatively quick to find information about routes	Public Transport Companies in Moroccan Cities	Karim & Fouad (2019:57)
ECO3	It was relatively quick to find information about the ticketing process	Public Transport Companies in Moroccan Cities  Bus Transportation	Karim & Fouad (2019:57)  Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
ECO4	Embarking points were easily accessible	Public Transport Companies in Moroccan Cities  Bus Transportation	Karim & Fouad (2019:57)  Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)

ECO5	It was relatively quick to find information about the embarkation or disembarkation points	Public Transport Companies in Moroccan Cities  Bus Transportation	Karim & Fouad (2019:57)  Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
ECO6	I feel that I received value for my money travelling with the long-distance coach liner	Public Transport in South Africa	Vilakazi & Govender (2014: 261)
EC07	The service I received on the long-distance coach liner was worth the price I paid	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)
	<b>EFFICIENCY</b>		
EFF1	I found the long-distance coach liner dependable and accurate in terms of service punctuality	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)
EFF2	The long-distance coach liner provided the same service as my last trip	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)
EFF3	The long-distance coach liner provided information about the travel rules	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)

EFF4	There were information boards with clear instructions of how to use facilities provided on the long-distance coach liner	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
EFF5	I was informed about bus delays in time	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
EFF6	Bus times of the long-distance coach liner are convenient	Bus Transportation	Fan et al (2015:253)
EFF7	Access is provided for passengers with special needs	Bus Transportation	Carreira, Patricio & Jorge (2014:41)
EFF8	Travel by the long-distance coach liner is very convenient	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015:148)
	<b>SATISFACTION</b>		
SAT1	My overall travel needs were satisfied during the trip	Customer Satisfaction  South African domestic airline industry	Palawatta (2015:16)  De deyer & Mostert (2011:80)
SAT2	I will consider this coach liner as my first choice if I travel again	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015:148)  Freitas (2013:380)
SAT3	I feel that the employees tried to understand my needs	South African domestic airline industry  Hospitality Sector	De deyer & Mostert (2011:80)  Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015:148)

SAT4	The employees addressed my needs quickly and satisfactorily	Bus rapid transit system	de Aquino, de Shouza & da Sliva (2018:4042)
SAT5	Overall, I am satisfied with the friendliness of the employees in the long-distance coach liner	Educational tour bus services	Rantanavaraha, Jomnonkwao & Khampirat (2016:16)
SAT6	Overall, I was satisfied with my experience whilst travelling with the long-distance coach liner	Educational tour bus services	Rantanavaraha, Jomnonkwao & Khampirat (2016:16)
SAT7	Overall, my travel experience was better than I expected	Educational tour bus services	Rantanavaraha, Jomnonkwao & Khampirat (2016:16)
SAT8	My overall experience with the long-distance coach liner was good	Educational tour bus services  Hospitality Sector	Rantanavaraha, Jomnonkwao & Khampirat (2016:16)  Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)

## SECTION B: PROFILE OF RESPONDENT

		Context	Authors
B1	Gender	Bus Transportation	Carreira (2014:40)
B2	Age	Bus Transportation	Carreira (2014:40)
B3	Country of permanent residence	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)

B5	Current occupation	Hospitality Sector	Gallarza, Arteaga & Chiappa (2015: 148)
B6	Travel purpose	Bus Transportation	Carreira (2014:40)
B7	Frequency of the travel	Bus Transportation	Carreira (2014:40)

## ANNEXURE C: ETHICS LETTER



PO Box 77000, Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, 6031, South Africa mandela.ac.za

Chairperson: Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Human)  
Tel: +27 (0)41 504 2906

Ref: [H20-BES-MRK-071] / Approval]

29 June 2020

Prof F Amoah  
Department: Marketing

Dear Prof Amoah,

**TITLE OF STUDY: PASSENGERS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION WITH LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA (MCOM)**

PRP: Prof f Amoah  
PI: Y Mthi

Your above-entitled application served at the *Faculty Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Business and Economic Science*, (12 June 2020) for approval. The study is classified as a negligible/low risk study. The ethics clearance reference number is **H20-BES-MRK-071** and approval is subject to the following conditions:

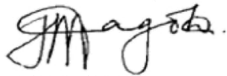
1. The immediate completion and return of the attached acknowledgement to [Lindie@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Lindie@mandela.ac.za), the date of receipt of such returned acknowledgement determining the final date of approval for the study where after data collection may commence.
2. Approval for data collection is for 1 calendar year from date of receipt of above mentioned acknowledgement.
3. The submission of an annual progress report by the PRP on the data collection activities of the study (form RECH-004 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) by 15 December this year for studies approved/extended in the period October of the previous year up to and including September of this year, or 15 December next year for studies approved/extended after September this year.
4. In the event of a requirement to extend the period of data collection (i.e. for a period in excess of 1 calendar year from date of approval), completion of an extension request is required (form RECH-005 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal)
5. In the event of any changes made to the study (excluding extension of the study), completion of an amendments form is required (form RECH-006 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal).
6. Immediate submission (and possible discontinuation of the study in the case of serious events) of the relevant report to RECH (form RECH-007 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) in the event of any unanticipated problems, serious incidents or adverse events observed during the course of the study.
7. Immediate submission of a Study Termination Report to RECH (form RECH-008 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) upon unexpected closure/termination of study.
8. Immediate submission of a Study Exception Report of RECH (form RECH-009 to be made available shortly on Research Ethics Committee (Human) portal) in the event of any study deviations, violations and/or exceptions.
9. Acknowledgement that the study could be subjected to passive and/or active monitoring without prior notice at the discretion of Research Ethics Committee (Human).



Please quote the ethics clearance reference number in all correspondence and enquiries related to the study. For speedy processing of email queries (to be directed to [Lindie@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Lindie@mandela.ac.za)), it is recommended that the ethics clearance reference number together with an indication of the query appear in the subject line of the email.

We wish you well with the study.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Mago', with a stylized flourish at the end.


**Prof S Mago**

Cc: Department of Research Capacity Development  
Faculty Research Co-ordinator: Lindie van Rensburg

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONDITIONS FOR ETHICS APPROVAL</b>
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I, **Prof F Amoah** (PRP) of the study entitled **PASSENGERS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION WITH LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA (MCOM (H20-BES-MRK-071))**, do hereby agree to the following approval conditions:

1. The submission of an annual progress report by myself on the data collection activities of the study by 15 December this year for studies approved in the period October of the previous year up to and including September of this year, or 15 December next year for studies approved after September this year. It is noted that there will be no call for the submission thereof. The onus for submission of the annual report by the stipulated date rests on myself.
2. Submission of the relevant request to Faculty RECH in the event of any amendments to the study for approval by Faculty RECH prior to any partial or full implementation thereof.
3. Submission of the relevant request to Faculty RECH in the event of any extension to the study for approval by Faculty RECH prior to the implementation thereof.
4. Immediate submission of the relevant report to Faculty RECH in the event of any unanticipated problems, serious incidents or adverse events.
5. Immediate discontinuation of the study in the event of any serious unanticipated problems, serious incidents or serious adverse events.
6. Immediate submission of the relevant report to Faculty RECH in the event of the unexpected closure/discontinuation of the study (for example, de-registration of the PI).
7. Immediate submission of the relevant report to Faculty RECH in the event of study deviations, violations and/or exceptions.
8. Acknowledgement that the study could be subjected to passive and/or active monitoring without prior notice at the discretion of Faculty RECH.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ 

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 29/06/2020

## ANNEXURE D: LANGUAGE EDITOR DECLARATION

## DECLARATION

12 November 2021

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language and format edited the final draft of Yolokazi Mthi's M Com dissertation titled PASSENGERS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION WITH LONG-DISTANCE COACH LINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The responsibility for implementing the recommended language and format changes rests with the author of the study.

Yours truly



R Ferreira

MBA (PET); BCom (Hons) (UPE); DipMktM (IMM)

## ANNEXURE E: TURNITIN REPORT

MCOM DISSERTATION 2021

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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## PRIMARY SOURCES