1   **Assessing the performance of public transport services in a developing**

2   **country: a case study using data envelopment analysis**

3   **Abstract**

4   The accurate evaluation of public transport (PT) services in developing countries is a challenging task

5   due to a lack of reliable data and formal guidelines. The aim of this study was to develop a framework

6   addressing these data limitations and quantify PT performance using output-oriented Data Envelopment

7   Analysis (DEA). The local bus service operation of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) area of

8   Bangladesh was used as a case study. A performance assessment inventory was developed identifying

9   the major stakeholders related to local bus service operations. The relative efficiencies of different bus

10   routes (from users' and operators' perspectives) were estimated using the DEA model, which

11   incorporated data from a semi-structured questionnaire survey linked with the inventory. The PT

12   authority also ranked all bus routes according to their degree of efficiency. Results indicated that relative

13   efficiency scores in various routes varied according to the stakeholders' perspectives. A range of

14   different parameters were considered when evaluating the performance of the service. The proposed

15   inventory and framework would be useful for policymakers and urban planners in sequencing and

16   prioritizing different routes. This optimization process would provide improved transport services to

17   the general public.

18   Keywords: Public transport; data envelopment analysis; local bus routes; transportation modeling;

19   Bangladesh

20   **1. Introduction**

21   Due to rapid rates of urbanization, cities in both developed and developing countries are facing diverse

22   challenges in managing Public Transport (PT) services[1] (Badami & Haider, 2007; Morris, Ison, &

23   Enoch, 2005). Increasing traffic congestion, and the high maintenance costs of PT services, restrict the

24   transport authorities' ability to ensure the efficient operation of an affordable, quality PT service. These

25   issues also makes this form of transport less attractive to users (Bertini & El-Geneidy, 2003; Boujelbene

26   & Derbel, 2015; Hassan, Hawas, & Ahmed, 2013). Ensuring an efficient PT service is far more

27   challenging in a developing country than in a developed country due to a lack of financial resources,

28   political pressures, imbalance of supply and demand for PT services and a lack of demand-driven PT

29   service management policies (Boujelbene & Derbel, 2015; Iles, 2005; Sohail, Maunder, & Miles, 2004).

30   It appears that the demands for PT services are decreasing in many developed countries, with an

31   associated deterioration in the quality of the service provided. Much of this is due to an increasing

32   dependence on private vehicles. In developing countries, issues related to service quality are primarily

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[1] Public transport service is a shared transport service available for people to commute from one place to another
which consists of structural (e.g., road, transport modes) and non-structural elements (e.g., policies and rules).

33   associated with a rapid increase in transportation demand (Iles, 2005). Though most of the problems
34   associated with PT service management are similar in both the developed and developing worlds, their
35   causation, magnitude, and impacts on mobility behavior are different. In developing countries PT
36   management issues are exacerbated by rapid urbanization, a growing population, lack of safety and
37   security, and poor enforcement of rules and regulations (Verma & Ramanayya, 2019). Regular
38   assessment schedules and improved PT services are deemed essential to meet an increasing
39   transportation demand with the limited resources available.
40   Systematic transportation planning not only refers to the provision of transport facilities (the structural
41   measures) but also encompasses the regular improvement in the performance of the service (the
42   nonstructural measures). To improve PT services, cities in many developing countries have adopted
43   various structural and nonstructural measures to reduce the gap between demand and supply.
44   Nonstructural measures include the provision of subsidies, a performance assessment of PT service
45   through regular monitoring, and the evaluation of service efficiency (measured by cost efficiency, labor,
46   and vehicle utilization) and effectiveness (transit ridership, service quality, service satisfaction) (Iles,
47   2005; Verma & Ramanayya, 2019; C. Zhang, Juan, Luo, & Xiao, 2016). Monitoring and evaluation of
48   PT systems are useful in identifying deficiencies in the existing transportation service. Measuring PT
49   performance is useful in identifying issues in the existing system, possible root causes, and the sectors
50   requiring special attention. The identification of these issues and development of rigorous management
51   programs is a prerequisite for transit improvement (Dhingra, 2011; Litman, 2008).
52   Usually, the performance assessment of the PT service is carried out by the state in order to determine
53   suitable areas for funding and incentives. This focuses primarily on the operational efficiency and
54   effectiveness of the transit system (Dhingra, 2011; C. Zhang, Juan, & Xiao, 2015). Other organizations
55   such as local government, municipalities, and transport operators are also involved in these assessments.
56   Different stakeholders have their own focus areas. For instance, privately-owned transit operators
57   usually focus on economic return in order to maximize profits while minimizing costs (Huque, 2020).
58   Monitoring the PT service is essential for private transit operators so that they can become competitive
59   service providers. This is especially the case where multiple transit operators are responsible for
60   managing the PT sector of a city (Kathuria, Parida, & Sekhar, 2017; Khasnabis, Alsaidi, Liu, & Ellis,
61   2002; Swami & Parida, 2015). In contrast, public transit operators primarily focus on providing public
62   service to meet social demands (Phillips, 2004). The purpose and scope of the performance assessment
63   are also generally context-specific. Regular PT performance assessments are critical for both public and
64   private operators in the developing countries. For a public transit operator in a developing country,
65   major challenges in regards performing regular service assessments are related to the limited public
66   funds available, increased demand for PT services, and expanding social needs (Yao, Xu, & Li, 2019).
67   The influence of politics in developing cities also often result in poor service from private operators
68   (Sohail et al., 2004). PT performance assessment in developing countries is also a challenging task due

69 to a lack of data, data which is both labor-intensive, as well as costly, to obtain (Zannat & Choudhury,

70 2019).

71 Stakeholders such as users and communities have different expectations compared to transit operators

72 or PT authorities. PT users are mainly concerned with reducing travel time and costs, with an

73 expectation of good service quality at a low price. Due to differing stakeholder attitudes and

74 expectations, it becomes necessary to consider the opinions of all stakeholders in order to gain a

75 comprehensive understanding of PT performance. Conflicting interests among different actors,

76 however, can lead to difficulties in performance evaluation, so it is essential to have good

77 communication between the various stakeholders (Seker & Aydin, 2020; Susniene & Jurkauskas, 2008).

78 Only a small number of studies have highlighted the importance of incorporating perceptions of the

79 different stakeholders in the PT service quality evaluation process (Güner & Coşkun, 2016; Hassan et

80 al., 2013; Chintan Sheth, Triantis, & Teodorović, 2007; C. Zhang et al., 2016; Zhao, Triantis, Murray-

81 Tuite, & Edara, 2011). This is a challenging task, however, particularly in these developing countries

82 due to: (i) a lack of panel data for monitoring and evaluating PT services (Zannat & Choudhury, 2019);

83 (ii) a lack of a comprehensive framework of PT performance assessment inventory that addresses data

84 limitations, along with the views and interests of different stakeholders (Hassan et al., 2013; Hawas,

85 Khan, & Basu, 2012); (iii) the existence of multiple organizations and public transport authorities that

86 have overlapping activities and a lack of an overall coordinating authority (e.g., single bus route

87 operated by multiple public and private companies); and (iv) a lack of accountability and transparency

88 among responsible public transport authorities.

89 Most of the existing studies related to PT performance assessment have been conducted on cities located

90 in the USA, Europe, and China. Unfortunately, the PT performance assessment frameworks and

91 inventory developed for those cities are not really transferrable to developing countries, due to a lack

92 of commitment in addressing data limitation issues and the conflicting interests of multiple

93 stakeholders. For example, fine-scale data (e.g., time, location, and service status of PT) can be collected

94 using GPS technology installed in vehicles, which enables regular monitoring and evaluation of PT

95 operation (Zannat & Choudhury, 2019). In many large and medium-sized developed cities, smart cards

96 (e.g., Oyster card in London, Smart Link in New York) are used for automatic fare collection in the PT

97 system. Smart card data can also be used for extracting information such as arrival time (Zhou, Yao,

98 Chen, Gong, & Lai, 2017), passenger waiting time (Tavassoli, Mesbah, & Shobeirinejad, 2018), the

99 number of left-behind passengers (Zhu, Koutsopoulos, & Wilson, 2017), and the spatial variation in PT

100 ridership (Tu et al., 2018). All these data sources provide an opportunity to monitor PT performances.

101 In developing countries, this lack of structured networks and use of manually-operated fare collection

102 systems limit the ability for comprehensive data collection. For example, in Bangladesh, paratransit[2]

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[2] Paratransit is also known as community transport that provides individualized rides without fixed routes.

103   service, as well as, traditional PT service (e.g., local bus service) operates beyond permitted road

104   networks (Enam & Choudhury, 2011).

105   This study looked to address the challenges noted above by (i) developing a performance assessment

106   inventory which considered the data limitations; (ii) identifying and classifying different actors and

107   their roles in PT service operation in order to incorporate their interests in the framework of PT

108   performance assessment; (iii) deriving an efficiency score for the PT service incorporating both

109   qualitative and quantitative parameters; and (iv) highlighting the importance of efficiency scores and

110   their implications in regards providing a better PT service. This study utilizes data envelopment analysis

111   (DEA) to evaluate PT performance in a developing country and looks at developing approaches to

112   account for the major challenges related to PT performance assessment. It highlights the importance of

113   incorporating different stakeholders in evaluating the performance of PT service by applying a

114   combined qualitative and quantitative approach. The study is carried out in Chattogram City

115   Corporation (CCC) area of Bangladesh (Figure 1) and is focused on the local bus service. To the best

116   of our knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to focus on a PT performance assessment in a city of

117   a developing country.

2. Theoretical background

119   The requirement to conduct comprehensive PT performance assessments have emerged as a necessity

120   in ensuring rigorous quality management and increased operational efficiency in regards this form of

121   transport (Boujelbene & Derbel, 2015; Güner & Coşkun, 2016; Kathuria et al., 2017; Khasnabis et al.,

122   2002; Taboada & Han, 2020). According to Wei et al. (2017), a performance assessment process is the

123   first step required in making a PT management system efficient. A well-structured PT evaluation system

124   is a prerequisite for sustainable transportation (Jasti & Ram, 2018; Zannat, Adnan, & Dewan, 2020).

125   Continuous evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of a service is required to improve its

126   quality (Kathuria et al., 2017; Swami & Parida, 2015). Carter and LoMAx (1992) noted that in

127   transportation systems, the management of planning and assessment of performance have become an

128   integral part of ensuring accountability and transparency by providing baseline data with which to assess

129   the system as whole. Their argument has been supported by analyzing the emerging use of the PT

130   assessment process for funding allocation, administrative planning, and to allow a comparative analysis

131   of the various transit agencies. Performance-related information is necessary for decision-makers to

132   evaluate public investment alternatives (Chintan Sheth et al., 2007). The increasing use of such

133   assessment processes allows a better gauge of performance measures and indicators — integral parts of

134   the performance assessment (Benjamin & Obeng, 1990). According to Fielding, Glauthier, and Lave

135   (1978), the efficiency and effectiveness of PT performance measures are useful for multi-level

136   governance. Phillips (2004) added 'impact' to efficiency and effectiveness. Carter and LoMAx (1992)

137   suggested PT performance assessment should be based on effectiveness, efficiency, impact,

138   productivity, and quality of service. The complex interaction of multiple factors, stakeholders, and

139   organizations results in a PT performance assessment being potentially a very challenging task
140   (Hirschhorn, Veeneman, & van de Velde, 2018; Chintan Sheth et al., 2007). Complexities in
141   performance assessment may also vary according to (i) the system under consideration (e.g., bus, train,
142   and airways); (ii) the routes; (iii) functions; (iv) policy changes; and (v) the specific goals and objectives
143   (Ryus et al., 2003).

144   Existing studies have applied differing techniques when undertaking the task of assessing transit service
145   performance. Examples include the SERVQUAL model (Barabino, Deiana, & Tilocca, 2012; Sam,
146   Hamidu, & Daniels, 2018), impact score technique (Alçura, Kuşakcı, Şimşek, Gürsoy, & Tanrıverdi,
147   2016), importance-performance analysis (Z. M. Ali, Ismail, Suradi, & Ismail, 2009; Cao & Cao, 2017;
148   Wu, Shieh, & Pan, 2008), customer satisfaction index (Z. M. Ali et al., 2009; Eboli & Mazzulla, 2009),
149   ordered logit model (Echaniz, Ho, Rodriguez, & dell'Olio, 2019; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008),
150   structural equation modeling (Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Shen, Xiao, & Wang, 2016; Wan, Kamga, Hao,
151   Sugiura, & Beaton, 2016), and multicriteria evaluation (Hassan et al., 2013; Pedroso, Bermann, &
152   Sanches-Pereira, 2018; Yeh, Deng, & Chang, 2000). More recently, some studies have used the
153   Structural Entropy-TROPSIS model to evaluate the PT system (Huang, Shuai, Sun, Wang, & Antwi,
154   2018; X. Zhang, Zhang, Sun, Zou, & Chen, 2018).

155   Over the last two to three decades, substantial work using data envelopment analysis (DEA) has been
156   undertaken (Alizadeh & Safi, 2020; Lao & Liu, 2009; Chintan Sheth et al., 2007; Singh, Singh, Singh,
157   Kumari, & Sangaiah, 2019; Wei et al., 2017). The DEA is a non-parametric approach, introduced by
158   Charnes, Cooper, and Rhodes (1978), and based on the work of Farrel (1957). This approach uses a
159   linear programming method to measure the relative efficiencies of multiple organizations using
160   decision-making units (DMUs) (Lao & Liu, 2009). The DEA evaluates DMUs against best practice, so
161   this approach is popular (Alizadeh & Safi, 2020; Lao & Liu, 2009; C. Zhang et al., 2016). It is widely
162   used in situations where a system has a great variety of inputs and outputs (A. I. Ali & Lerme, 1997);
163   factors common to PT systems (Lao & Liu, 2009; Wei et al., 2017). Different approaches can be taken
164   when assessing PT performance (Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Hassan et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2018;
165   Pedroso et al., 2018; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008; Yeh et al., 2000; X. Zhang et al., 2018), however
166   DEA offers a number of advantages. Firstly, it allows the simultaneous analysis of inputs and outputs
167   in order to derive an efficient rating within a set of units. Secondly, inputs and outputs can have
168   diversified units. Thirdly, the DEA does not require the generation of standards against efficiency
169   measures. Fourthly, the method does not require predetermined production functions to relate the inputs
170   and outputs. Finally, it is a data-driven approach (A. I. Ali & Lerme, 1997; Alizadeh & Safi, 2020; Lao
171   & Liu, 2009; Malano, Burton, & Makin, 2004; Chintan Sheth et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2017), thereby
172   allowing an effective assessment to be conducted.

173   To measure the PT performance, many studies use the original Charnes-Cooper-Rhodes (CCR) and
174   Banker-Charnes-Cooper (BCC), which assumes a constant and variable return to scale (Karlaftis &
175   Tsamboulas, 2012; C. Zhang et al., 2015). Other studies have attempted to improve the measurement

176   approach by modifying the DEA or combining the DEA approach with other models. Wei et al. (2017)
177   applied a combination of DEA, geographic information system (GIS), and multi-objective spatial
178   optimization techniques to assess the operational efficiency of PT services. Chintan Sheth et al. (2007)
179   used DEA and goal programming functionality in DEA to analyze the relationship among the PT service
180   providers and users, along with exogenous factors related to the transportation investment (e.g.,
181   emissions, noise pollution, etc.). Alizadeh and Safi (2020) proposed a hybrid framework (combining
182   DEA and data mining techniques) to measure the performance of a bus fleet. While many of the other
183   studies have concentrated on improving the measurement approach of the DEA, the focus of the current
184   work has been on addressing data limitation issues and incorporating the perceptions of multiple
185   stakeholders including users, operators, and service providers.

3.   Materials and methods

187   This study employed three interrelated steps in the development process. Firstly, any conflicting
188   interests between the different stakeholders were identified, and their roles in the decision-making
189   process related to PT operation were clarified, particularly those related to the local bus service in CCC.
190   Secondly, a performance assessment inventory was developed to account for the different stakeholder
191   groups. This was based on knowledge obtained from the literature and feedback from the various
192   stakeholders. Finally, policy recommendations aimed at improving the performance of local bus service
193   were developed and documented.

3.1.   Study area

195   The study area is within the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) located in the southeastern part of
196   Bangladesh (Figure 1). Chattogram is the second-largest city in Bangladesh, a prime seaport, and a
197   large commercial hub and business center (Zannat, Raja, & Adnan, 2019). The city has a total
198   population of 3.3 million with a mean density of approximately 19,000 people per km^2 (Bondarenko,
199   2018). The population growth rate is 2.3%, which is higher than the national growth rate of Bangladesh
200   (Mia, Nasrin, Zhang, & Rasiah, 2015). For administrative purposes, the CCC area is divided into 41
201   wards (the smallest administrative unit). The average household size is 4.8 person with 1.6 earning
202   members per household (WB, 2018). The average daily household income is approximately BDT 1,700
203   (BBS, 2016). The literacy rate of the population living within the study area has increased from 44.6%
204   in 1981 to 68.8% in 2011 (BBS, 2011). It is a polycentric city with four distinctive commercial centers:
205   Kotwali, Chawkbazar, Agrabad, and GEC circle. The major industrial zones are located in the
206   peripheral areas (WB, 2018). Among the EPZs found within Bangladesh, the Chattogram Export
207   Processing Zone (EPZ) is the biggest contributor to exports. This constituted 11% of the national GDP
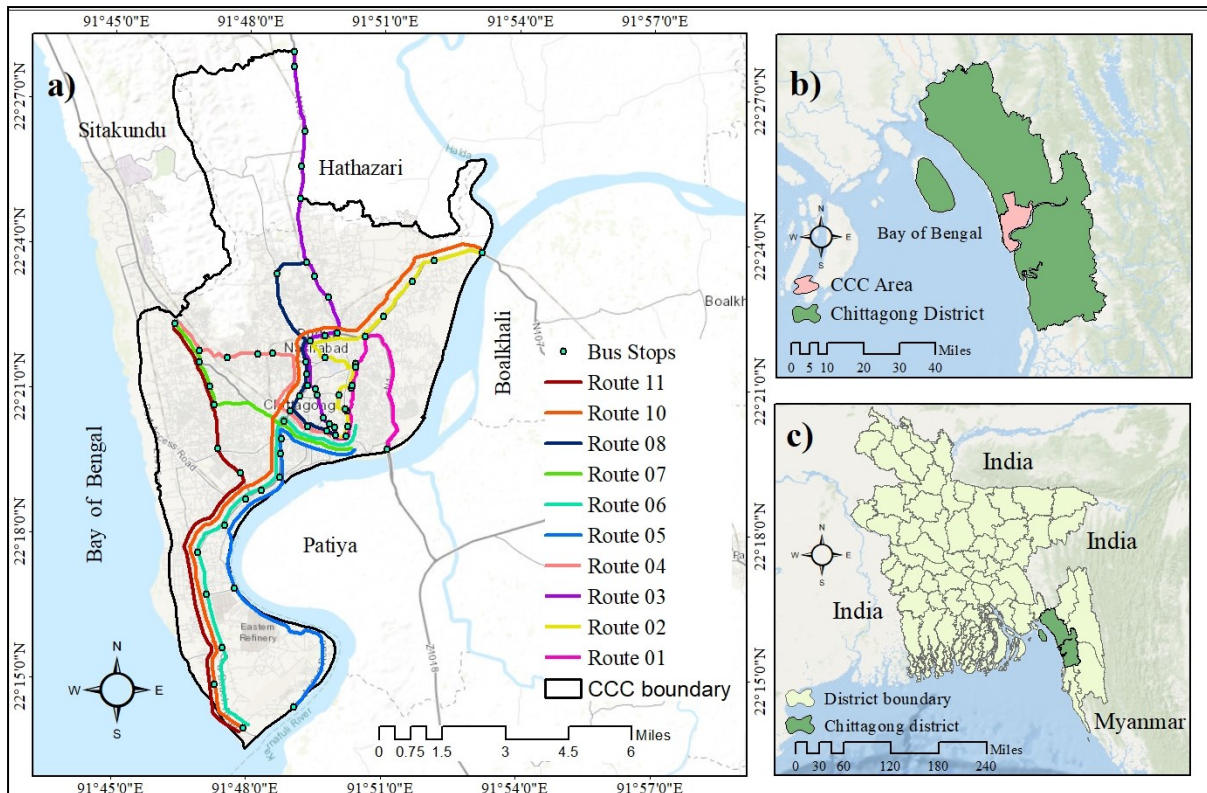208   in 2011 (Mia et al., 2015).

Figure 1 Location of Chattogram city corporation (CCC) area

As is the case with other major Bangladesh cities, the CCC is experiencing an increased demand for transportation caused by rapid population growth and urbanization. A local bus service is the primary mode of transport for most city dwellers. About 50% of commuters use local bus services to travel within the area (CDA, 2009). Many industries, factories, offices, garments, and shopping centers are located in the CCC, so the local bus service plays a very important role in the movement of people within the zone (Zannat, Showkat, & Islam, 2014). Other types of motorized and non-motorized vehicles (e.g., rickshaw, autorickshaw which is driven by compressed natural gas (CNG), human hauler, private car) operate within the area (Zannat et al., 2021). There are currently 10 routes traversed by the public bus service, 17 routes for human haulers, and 16 routes for CNG powered auto-rickshaws. There are, however, no dedicated bus lanes in the existing transport network. The average seating capacity of local buses ranges from 24 to 36 person and air conditioning systems are not available. Around 1,300 buses operate within the city area. There are more than 70 designated bus stops along the 10 routes, however local buses tend to pick up and drop off passengers at any point along the road (WB, 2018). This study addresses all 10 bus routes within the city (01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10, and 11) (Figure 1). The length of these routes are between 8 (route 08) and 25 kms (route 10) (CDA, 2009).
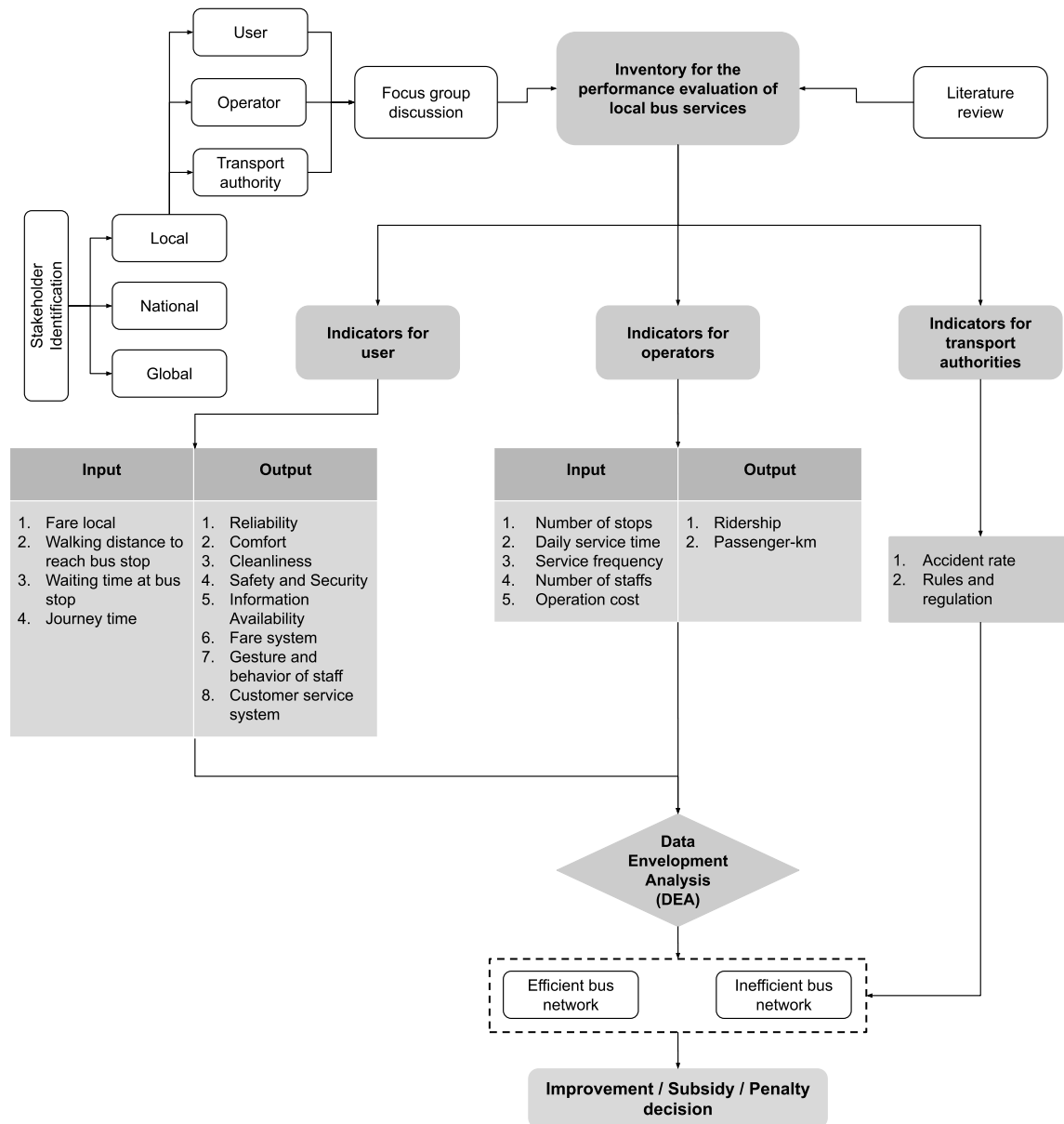
Figure 2 Flowchart, showing methodology of this work

3.2. Identifying stakeholders of local bus service

Understanding the role of the differing stakeholders responsible for PT operations is important when evaluating the performance of this mode of transport (Susniene & Jurkauskas, 2008). In a developing country like Bangladesh, a stakeholder's role and the extent of their involvement in the demand and supply management of the PT services, is not well defined. In this study all stakeholders were carefully identified and classified in regards their roles, the type of relationships with others, and their involvement in the formulation of policies. The most obvious stakeholder is the actual user of the bus service. There are no PT user-oriented organizations (formal or informal) in the study area so focus group discussions and questionnaire surveys were carried out with representatives of the various user groups. Local and national acts, rules, policies, and ordinances, institutional memorandum and

238 organogram were reviewed to understand the involvement of other stakeholders (e.g., municipality, PT

239 company, road maintenance service) in the provision of the service. Relevant documents were collected

240 from the respective organizations, including from their websites. A short interview was also conducted

241 with representatives of the major organizations within the CCC to understand their activities and ability

242 to provide improved bus services.

243 Table 1 provides a summary of all the various stakeholders (apart from the actual service users) and

244 their respective roles in the operation of the local services. These stakeholders were primarily involved

245 in decision-making, service operation, and the overall management processes. Different stakeholders

246 were involved in formulating policies at local (city), national, and global scales. For instance, the Road

247 Transport and Highway Division (RTHD) formulated policies for land transport at the national and city

248 level using information from national and international transport experts/consultants. This included

249 existing policies, rules and laws, cross-cutting issues among other departments and resource

250 availability. A stakeholder's involvement at the implementation level, however, is more complex. For

251 instance, local bus services in CCC are primarily operated by a privatized organization called the

252 Chattogram Metropolitan Paribahan Malik Group (CMPMG). The Bangladesh Road Transport

253 Authority (BRTA) is a regulatory body that controls, manages, and ensures discipline in the sector and

254 controls road safety at national and city levels within Bangladesh. The BRTA is also responsible for

255 vehicle registration, providing driving licenses and the designation of specific bus routes within and

256 outside the metropolitan area. The number of buses in a prescribed route (called the ceiling) is usually

257 determined at an official meeting, with people present normally include an administrator of Chattogram

258 Metropolitan Police (CMP), a Deputy Director from BRTA (Engineering), the General Secretary of

259 CMPMG, representatives from the CCC (Traffic Engineering section), Bangladesh Road Transport

260 Corporation (BRTC), reporters and representatives of civil society and other organizations.

261 Stakeholders meet only once during the implementation phase with the scope of the meeting constrained

262 by the official route ceiling. Local and state authorities do not monitor or inspect service quality.

263 Representatives working for the service operation and management at the local level were contacted for

264 input (Table 1). Discussions with these local officials provided details on the current inventory and the

265 approaches used to collect data. The stakeholders (with the exception of the final users) were then

266 divided into two groups: i) "transport operators" (e.g., BRTC, CMPMG, bus owners, and local partners)

267 and ii) "transport authorities" (RTHD, BRTA, BRTC, CCC, CDA, and CMP). Officials who work at

268 the national and global levels play an important role in the later phase of performance assessment such

269 as providing subsidies or incentives to the operators to improve service quality.

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274   Table 1 Stakeholders and their role in local bus operation in CCC

Level of involvement	Nature of involvement	Scale			Stakeholders
		Local	National	Global	
Decision making Level	Policy formulation and decision making	√	√		RTHD, ministers, members of Parliament, bureaucrats
	Provision of field information to the policy makers		√	√	Transport experts
Implementation level	Provision of route permit, license and registration	√	√		BRTA
	Provision of limited bus service	√			BRTC
	Maintenance and construction of roadway	√			CCC
	Construction and improvement of roadway	√			CDA
	Traffic and accident control	√			CMP
	Local bus service operation	√			CMPMG, bus owners, local partners

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276   **3.3.   Developing performance assessment inventory**

277   Following the identification of the major stakeholders (transit users, transport operators, municipality,

278   and state authorities), a number of performance indicators that could be used to evaluate the local bus

279   service were selected (Figure 2). This selection of input-output variables for the DEA is an important

280   step. Performance evaluations are generally carried out by expert intervention, using a heuristic

281   decision-making process, a review of the available literature, and exploratory analytical methods

282   (Taboada & Han, 2020). Due to a lack of fine-scale data such as bus route level data from passengers

283   and operators, and the lack of performance assessment standards in Bangladesh, the research team

284   developed an input-output inventory based on an extensive review of other studies which had been done

285   on the PT performance assessment process, with a focus on both developed and developing countries.

286   To adjust the inventory in the context of local bus service operation in CCC area, selected indicators

287   identified from the literature were then verified by the focus groups. During the focus group discussion,

288 different stakeholders (local bus service users, bus operators and transport authorities) ascertained the
289 importance, availability (i.e., source of information) and association of identified indicators with local
290 bus service operation and management in the context of CCC. The final inventory included definitions
291 of each indicator and the methods to be followed, or questions to be asked, to extract indicator-related
292 information. The performance assessment indicators from the perspective of users (Table 2), and
293 operators (Table 3), were included in the DEA analysis. The indicators from transport authorities
294 (municipal and other local organizations) were selected based on their roles and interest.

295 Table 2 Inventory of performance assessment from the users' perspective

	Indicator	Definition	Sources
Input	1. Fare	Ticket price (per person per km)	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2008)
	2. Walking distance to reach the bus stops	Time needed to reach the nearest stop from an origin on foot	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; CH Sheth, 2003; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	3. Waiting time at stops for buses	Average time spent waiting for a bus at a stop	(Nathanail, 2008)
	4. Journey time	Time spent on the bus	(CH Sheth, 2003)
Output	1. Reliability	The ability of a transit system to adhere to schedule, as well as the ability of the transit vehicles to depart or arrive on time	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; CH Sheth, 2003; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	2. Comfort	User perception about comfort within the bus in terms of crowding, air condition, noise level, and amenities	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Nathanail, 2008; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	3. Cleanliness	Cleanliness of the interior and exterior of buses	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Nathanail, 2008; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	4. Safety & security	Possibility of being involved in a road accident,	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011;

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	Possibility of becoming a victim of a crime	Nathanail, 2008; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
5. Information availability	Availability of information to the user provided by the service operator	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Nathanail, 2008; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
6. Fare system	The rate of the ticket and the ticket category	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
7. Gesture and behavior	Personal appearance and behavior of the various types of personnel employed by the transport operator	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Joewono & Kubota, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Nathanail, 2008; CH Sheth, 2003; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
8. Customer service system	Ease of purchasing tickets and how well user opinions or complaints to the service operator were handled	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)

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Table 3 Indicators of performance assessment from the operators' perspective

	Indicator	Definition	Sources
Input	1. Number of Stops	Total number of stops in a route	(Adler & Berechman, 2001; Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007)
	2. Daily service time	Total duration of operational time in a day	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	3. Service frequency	Number of trips made by a bus in a day	(Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Lai & Chen, 2011; Lao & Liu, 2009; Tyrinopoulos & Antoniou, 2008)
	5. Number of staffs	Number of staff used to operate the buses on a route	(Husain, Abdullah, & Kuman, 2000; Kerstens, 1996)
	6. Operating cost	The cost of running a bus from origin to destination, including staff wages	(Husain et al., 2000)

	1. Ridership	Number of passengers accommodated per day	(Adler & Berechman, 2001; Lao & Liu, 2009)
Output	---	---	---
	2. Passenger-km	Multiplication of the total passengers, daily trip number, and length (km) of a route	(Kerstens, 1996; Lao & Liu, 2009)

298   ### 3.4.   Conducting a survey

299   A field survey was carried out in April 2018 to collect the necessary data from the users,

300   operators, and transport authorities to assess performance. To obtain information from the PT users, a

301   semi-structured questionnaire was used. The interview questionnaire was developed based on the

302   inventory discussed in the previous section. The sample size was determined using equation 1 below

303   (Israel, 1992). The equation determined the minimum number of the respondents within a large

304   population size required at a 95% confidence level with a normal distribution.

$$n = z^2pq/e^2 \tag{1}$$

305   where, *n* is the sample size; *z* is the z-value of given confidence level (for 95% confidence level it is

306   1.96); *p* is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, and *q* is the (1-*p*)

307   and *e* is the tolerance level (assumed 5% tolerance level).

308   About 3.3 million people live in CCC, of whom about half rely on PT (CDA, 2009). As the population

309   size was large, and the variability (the proportion of middle-income people using non-motorized

310   transport) was not known, it was assumed *p* = 0.5 (maximum variability), so *q* would be 0.5. The

311   minimum size of the sample was estimated to be 384. A total of 10 routes were selected so the minimum

312   number of required respondents was 38-40 for each route. After conducting 40 interviews, however,

313   the number of respondents surveyed per route was increased to give a 'data saturation' point. The data

314   saturation was achieved after completing 80 to 100 interviews per route. No new insights were gained

315   after this due to repetition of information. A total of 1000 PT users were selected with approximately

316   100 users being interviewed in each of the 10 bus routes (Figure 1). A total of 10 survey groups (each

317   group comprising 3-4 persons) carried out the survey, with each group assigned a specific bus route

318   during the survey. Data was collected between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm on both weekdays and on

319   weekends. The survey was conducted in Bengali, and each question was explained to the respondent in

320   a non-technical manner, with each questionnaire being completed in approximately 15 minutes.

321   Respondents also provided socio-demographic information such as age, gender, education, occupation

322   and household income. Table 4 provides a summary of the sample population in relation to the overall

323   population distribution within the CCC. Information obtained from the local bus service evaluation is

324   expected to be slightly biased towards the low and lower middle-income segment of the population.

325   Such income groups tend to use local bus services due to the lower cost when compared to other modes

326   (car, autorickshaw, ride-hailing service, rickshaw). It should be noted that the sample population is also

327   skewed in regards gender distribution, with a higher ratio of the male population sample. This is due to

328   the patriarchal nature of Bangladesh society and the low number of females in the labor force (36.4%)

329   in Chattogram (ADB, 2016). A summary of the user and operator input-output indicators is presented

330   in Table 5.

331   Table 4 Characteristics of the sample population (n = 1000)

Variable	Category	Sample distribution (%)	Distribution[*] of population in CCC (%)
Age	<15	49.1	58
	30-45	39.7	22
	45-60	9.4	13.4
	$\geq$60	1.8	6.6
Gender	Male	74.1	49.5
	Female	25.9	50.5
Education level	Elementary	15.8	N/A
	Secondary	17.9	
	Higher secondary	31.3	
	Graduate or higher	35	
Occupation	Business	26.5	N/A
	Service	35.3	
	Housewife	11.9	
	Student	19.8	
	Retired	3.8	
	Others	2.7	
Income (BDT) [***]	$\leq$20K	21.8	50
	20-40K	59.0	40
	40-60K	18.9	
	$\geq$60K	0.3	10

332   [*] WorldPop (www.worldpop.org) (Bondarenko, 2018), Census Data Bangladesh, 2011(BBS,

333   2011) [***] 1 BDT = 0.012 USD

334

335

Table 5 Summary of the input-output, extracted from the sample users (n=1000) and operators

Variable name	Unit	Mean	Std. Dev.	Relevant questions / source
Users' perspective (inputs)				
Fare	Taka/km	22.9	7.37	Field survey
Required time to reach the bus stops	Minute	11.26	5.83	Field survey
Waiting time at stops for buses	"	9.5	4.11	Field survey
Journey time	"	70.66	15.55	Field survey
Users' perspective (outputs)				
Reliability	Scaling by 1 to 5	2.04	0.566	▪ Punctuality of an operation ▪ Frequency ▪ Reliability to reach to a destination on time during peak hours ▪ Possibility of sudden breakdown of a bus
Comfort	"	1.83	0.533	▪ Adequacy of space inside a bus ▪ Comfort level in holding/keeping bags, luggage etc. in the bus ▪ Comfort level in accessing/egressing into bus with belongings ▪ Comfort level inside the bus during the summer ▪ Convenience level to read any book/newspaper in the bus at night
Cleanliness	"	1.93	0.607	▪ Cleanliness of the seats ▪ General cleanliness inside the bus ▪ Interior condition of the bus ▪ Exterior condition of the bus
Fare system	"	2.70	0.99	▪ Flexibility of existing ticket system ▪ Existing fare in compared to affordability

Safety and security	"	1.68	0.544	• Availability of necessary information (e.g., map of bus line, timetable, bus fare etc.) in the bus stops • Availability of necessary information (e.g., map of bus line, timetable, bus fare etc.) inside the bus • Availability and adequacy of transport information within the city
Information availability	"	2.65	0.83	• Safety level while on the bus • Safety level while waiting for a bus • Safety level while accessing/egressing a bus • Security level against crime (e.g., stealing, hijacking etc.) while on the bus • Security level against crime (stealing, hijacking etc.) at the stoppage
Gesture and behavior of staffs	"	2.01	0.63	• Behavior and attitude of the bus driver • Behavior and attitude of the staffs • Assistance level of the bus staffs • Satisfaction level with bus staffs' uniform
Customer service system	"	1.55	0.417	• Availability of ticket counter at the stoppage • Satisfaction level with existing ticket purchasing system • Response level of bus authority to complains filed by users

Operators' perspective (input)

No. of Stops	In number	15	CMP (TD)
Daily service time	Hour	17.8	CMPMG
Service frequency (per hour)	In number	6	CMPMG
Number of staff	In number	131	CMPMG

Operating cost	Taka/One-way Trip	750	Provided by the bus driver and staffs
Operators' perspective (output)			
Ridership	In number/per day	3430	Provided by the bus driver and staffs appointed by the owner
Passenger-km	Kilometer	55700	Estimated by multiplying ridership per trip, daily trip number, and route length of the corresponding route

337

338   *3.1.1.*   ***Input and output related information from the users' perspectives***

339   Due to a lack of availability of any official data, the following adjustment was made when gathering

340   input and output related information from the user:

341   **i) Fare**: Local bus operators tend to use a fare scale that is different from the government-defined fare.

342   The bus staff manually collect the fare from individuals. Passengers were asked about the amount that

343   they pay for each trip. They were also asked about their origin and destination. This was used to estimate

344   the fare paid per kilometer.

345   **ii) Time to reach the bus stops:** To protect the privacy of the users, information of their exact origin

346   and destination was not collected. Users also have different modes to reach the bus stop. To avoid the

347   complexity associated with these multiple access modes, the time required to reach the bus stop is

348   determined from the stated travel time instead of the geographically measured travel time. Users only

349   provided information about the trips that they were making during the interview (every interview was

350   done onboard). The collected information had less error for recall bias using this method.

351   **iii) Bus stop waiting time and journey time**: Since local bus services were manually operated, the

352   frequency of the service does not follow a similar pattern during the day. Information on the waiting

353   time of a trip was therefore collected at the bus stops from the users when they were making. Bus drivers

354   allow passengers to get in or out of the bus at locations other than designated bus stops, and can wait

355   for longer than the designated time to accumulate more passengers onboard. Buses tend to be old and

356   have no provision for GPS facilities. Due to this factor, accurate calculation of travel time between the

357   different bus stops was not possible. To overcome this issue, the onboard survey team recorded the

358   travel time using a stopwatch, while the users reported their access and egress bus stop information.

359   **iv) Qualitative information**: For each question related to the quality of local bus services, the

360   respondents provided a score on a 1 to 5 Likert-like scale. Multiple questions were asked to define each

361   parameter such as reliability, comfort, cleanliness, fare system, safety and security, information

362   availability, gesture and behavior of staff, and customer service system. A single response can be

363   unreliable and misleading, or placing a check in the wrong place may result in an incorrect response.

364   On the contrary, many items may have little impact on the overall score of discrete indicators (Ajzen,

365   2005). To evaluate how closely related the questions were as a group, a reliability check was performed

366   using Cronbach's alpha score (Field, 2013).

367   *3.1.2.*   ***Input and output related information from operators' perspectives***

368   A telephone survey was used to obtain information from the operators with the bus drivers being

369   interviewed at night after the end of their shift. The bus drivers answered questions related to the

370   operation of the services. Information was also collected from the bus owners and staff. The different

371   methods to collect the input and output variables are documented below:

372   **i) Daily service time (hour):** To calculate daily service time in each route, information was collected

373   from the bus owners (e.g., CMPMG) and crosschecked against information provided by the transport

374 authority (e.g., BRTA). This approach was followed because the service time of each driver/staff
375 member could vary depending on their working hours.

376 **ii) Service frequency (per hour):** The service frequency was calculated using information from the
377 staff responsible for monitoring the number of passengers traveling on the bus and from the number of
378 buses passing each checkpoint. The bus owners appointed staff to record the operations for each day.

379 **iii) Operating cost (per trip in BDT)**: Data related to operating cost (per trip) were also collected from
380 the driver during the telephone interview. As the wages of the drivers and staff (those working with the
381 drivers) is determined by the number of trips made within a day, drivers could provide information per
382 trip regarding both wage and fuel costs. People not directly involved in operating the bus service were
383 not considered as their salary does not vary depending on the number of trips made within a day. The
384 following equation was used to calculate operating costs. This does not include fixed costs (insurance,
385 road tax, registration fee, permit charge, etc.) as they do not vary within these short time periods.

Operating cost = Fuel cost (in BDT) per trip + wage of driver and staff (in BDT) per trip +
maintenance cost (in BDT) per trip   (2)

386 **iv) Daily ridership (number of passengers in a day)**: Drivers were asked about the total number of
387 passengers traveling on each trip, both during peak and off-peak times. Information about the total
388 number of trips made on the day of the survey was collected from the staff involved in cross-checking
389 the number of passengers travelling on each bus.

Daily ridership = Average number of trips made in a day * Average number of passengers
traveled with each bus   (3)

390 **v) Secondary data:** The number of bus stops and staff working on each bus route was collected from
391 the Chattogram Metropolitan Police (traffic department) and bus owner organization (CMPMG). Since
392 different bus routes were operated by different companies, one staff/driver work on multiple routes was
393 not possible in this case.

394 *3.1.3.   Information from transport authorities*
395 Transport authorities involved in operation and management of local bus service were asked to evaluate
396 the routes in respect to accident rates and maintaining traffic rules and regulations.

397 **3.5.   Performance assessment of local bus service**
398 This study employed the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to evaluate the performance of local bus
399 service in CCC using both qualitative and quantitative parameters. The DEA model includes linear
400 programming to create an empirical production function to maximize outputs or minimize inputs. The
401 efficiency score of each decision-making unit (DMU) is calculated by comparing its production
402 function with the estimated production function. Thus, the performance of a DMU is assessed by
403 directly comparing inputs and outputs with the "best practice" of a peer or a combination of peers
404 (Cooper, Seiford, & Zhu, 2011).

405   In this study, we classified the stakeholders into three groups — local bus operator (CMPMG, bus

406   owner and local partner), customers (local bus users and community people), and transport authority

407   (CMP, CDA, CCC, and BRTA). The DEA method was employed to evaluate the performance of the

408   local bus service from the point of view of the customer and the bus operators. In general transport users

409   tend to maximize the outputs (service quality) related to comfort, cleanliness, safety, and security. The

410   operators were generally satisfied with the initial investment and costs. Their aim was to maximize the

411   outputs (essentially rides).

412   The following assumptions were used during model development:

413   1) Bus-lines are isolated individual entities that have a similar type of inputs and outputs and have the

414   same type of activities;

415   2) All types of service vehicles use the same amount of fuel per unit distance;

416   Performance was assessed from the perspective of the transport authority, using a general scoring

417   method for each route.

418   This study considered each bus route as a DMU. There are two types of DEA models possible: input-

419   oriented and output-oriented. This study applied a radial output-oriented approach. The DEA scores

420   were calculated using the following equations (Lao & Liu, 2009):

$$Max\ \mu$$

$$\text{Subject to} \qquad x_{i0} \geq \sum_{j=1}^{n} x_{ij}\, \lambda_j \qquad i = 1,2,\dots,m \qquad\qquad (4)$$

$$y_{r0}\, \mu \leq \sum_{j=1}^{n} y_{rj}\, \lambda_j \qquad r = 1,2,\dots,s$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j = 1$$

$$\lambda_j \geq 0 \qquad\qquad j = 1,2,\dots,n$$

421   where, j is the index of decision-making units, i is the index of input, r is the index of output, x_{ij} is the

422   i^{th} input for DMU$_j$, y_{rj} is the rth output for DMU$_j$, λ_j is the nonnegative scalars (weight) for DMUj, and

423   μ is the optimal output level.

424   For model 3, there might be both input and output slacks[3]. After calculating model (3) we have:

$$S_i^- = \theta^* x_{i0} - \sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j x_{ij} \qquad\qquad i = 1,2,3\dots,m$$

$$S_r^+ = \sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j\, y_{rj} - y_{r0} \qquad\qquad r = 1,2,3\dots,s \qquad (5)$$

---

[3] Slacks represent potential reduction in the input (for input-oriented DEA) or increase in the output (for output-oriented DEA) variables for the weakly efficient or inefficient DMU units in the data set when compared with the ultimate benchmark targets.

425   where, S_i^- and S_r^+ represents input and output slacks, respectively. Therefore, we use following linear

426   programming model to determine possible non-zero slacks after solving model 3.

$$max \sum_{i=1}^{m} S_i^- + \sum_{r=1}^{s} S_r^+$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j x_{ij} + S_i^- = \theta^* x_{i0} \qquad i = 1,2,3\dots,m$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j y_{ij} + S_r^+ = \theta^* y_{i0} \qquad r = 1,2,3\dots,s \qquad (6)$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j = 1$$

$$\lambda_j \geq 0 \qquad j = 1,2,3\dots,n$$

427   ## 4. Results

428   ### 4.1. Performance of local bus service

429   #### *4.1.1. Performance assessment by users*

430   Table 6 provides a summary of the results. It presents the relative efficiency scores and the ranks of

431   different bus routes from the perspective of the user and the operator, as well as a rank of each route

432   from the perspective of the transport authority. The relative efficiency score lies between 0 and 1, where

433   0 and 1 indicate the respective inefficient and efficient DMU (bus routes) among all the DMUs

434   considered. Of the ten bus routes used in this study, four (routes 02, 03, 06, 08) were relatively efficient

435    $(1/\mu=1.0)$ from the users' perspective and were ranked as 1.

436   Figure 3 provides further insights into the performance of the local bus service according to the user,

437   and presents the relative efficiency scores of single input and output for the different bus routes. Most

438   of the routes were found to be efficient in regards fares (as the input). Route 02 was efficient in all four

439   input areas: fare, access time, journey time, and waiting time. The users provided relatively higher

440   scores for most of the outputs for this route such as cleanliness, customer service, information,

441   reliability, comfort, personal appearance. Route 08 was efficient for fare, journey time, and waiting

442   time, while route 03 yielded a higher efficiency score for fare and access time. The relative efficiency

443   scores of routes 04 and 07 were the lowest. Although four of the ten routes obtained higher efficiency

444   scores according to the user, their performance was not equivalent for all input-output pairs.

445   Table 6 DEA scores $(1/\mu)$ of routes from different perspectives

Route	Users' perspective	Ranking from users' perspective	Operators' perspective	Ranking from the operators' perspective	Ranking of routes by TA
Route 01	0.858	3rd	0.956	2nd	7
Route 02	1	1st	1	1st	8

| Route 03 | 1 | 1st | 0.567 | 3rd | 4 |
Route 04	0.847	3rd	0.8	3rd	1
Route 05	0.919	2nd	0.744	3rd	9
Route 06	1	1st	1	1st	2
Route 07	0.847	3rd	1	1st	5
Route 08	1	1st	0.976	2nd	10
Route 10	0.849	3rd	1	1st	3
Route 11	0.931	2nd	0.879	3rd	6

446
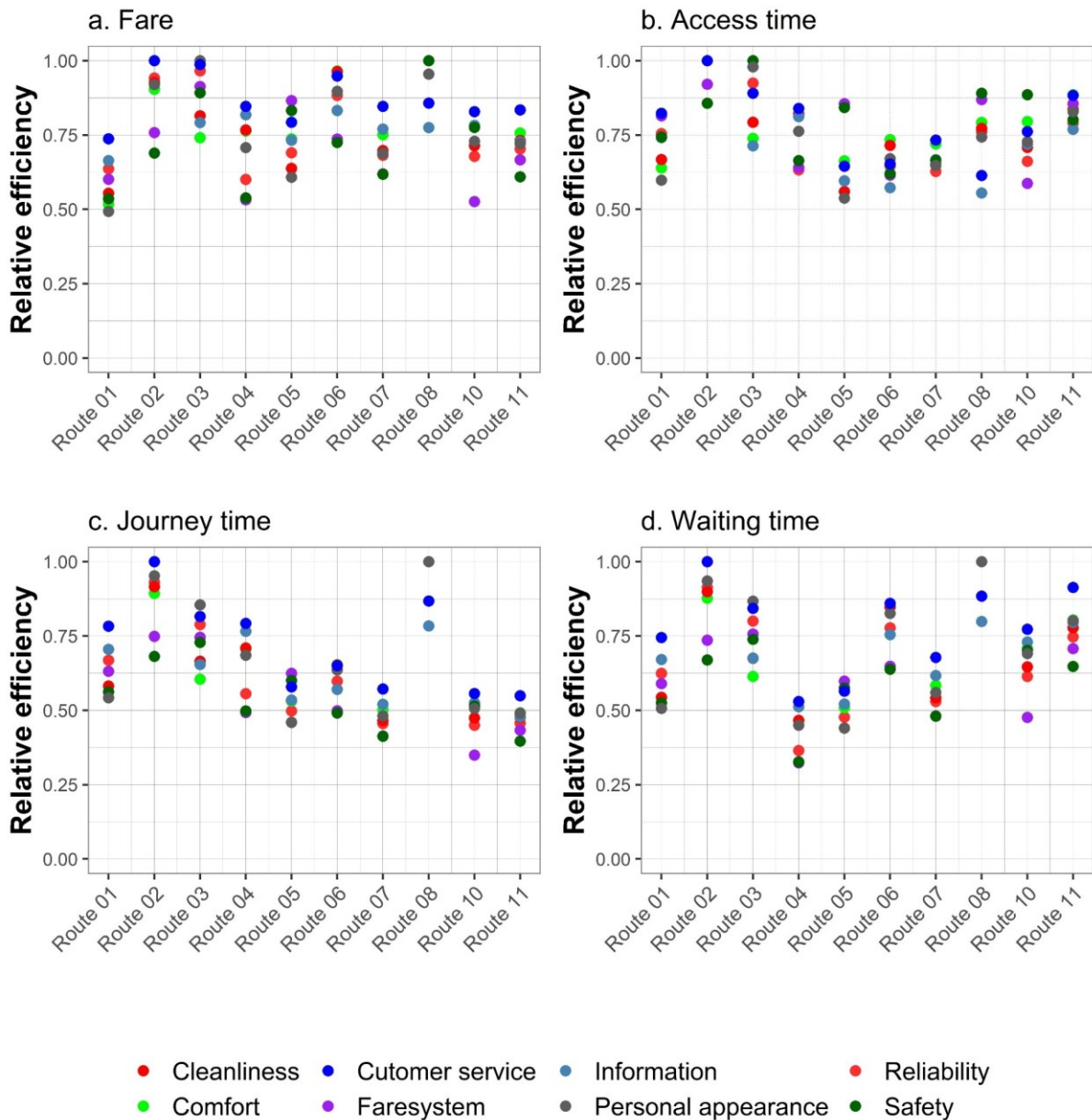
447

448   Figure 3 Individual input and output wise efficiency score of the routes (users' perspective)

449   *4.1.2.*   *Performance assessment by operators*

450   Bus routes 02, 06, 07, and 10 were the most efficient (ranked as 1) according to the operator, while

451   route 03 was the least efficient (Table 6). Route 03 is approximately 11 km in length and has a relatively

452   low operating cost. However, the number of staff working during the service time was high compared

453   to the number of daily ridership and the passenger-km of other routes. Due to this, the route was least

454   efficient in all five aspects of inputs (Figure 4). On the other hand, routes 02, 06, 07, and 10 were

455   characterized by a larger number of bus stops, leading to longer service times of buses that provide

456   service to a larger group (i.e., higher ridership and passenger-km). Hence, these routes received higher

457   efficiency scores from the operators.

● Passenger-Km   ● Ridership
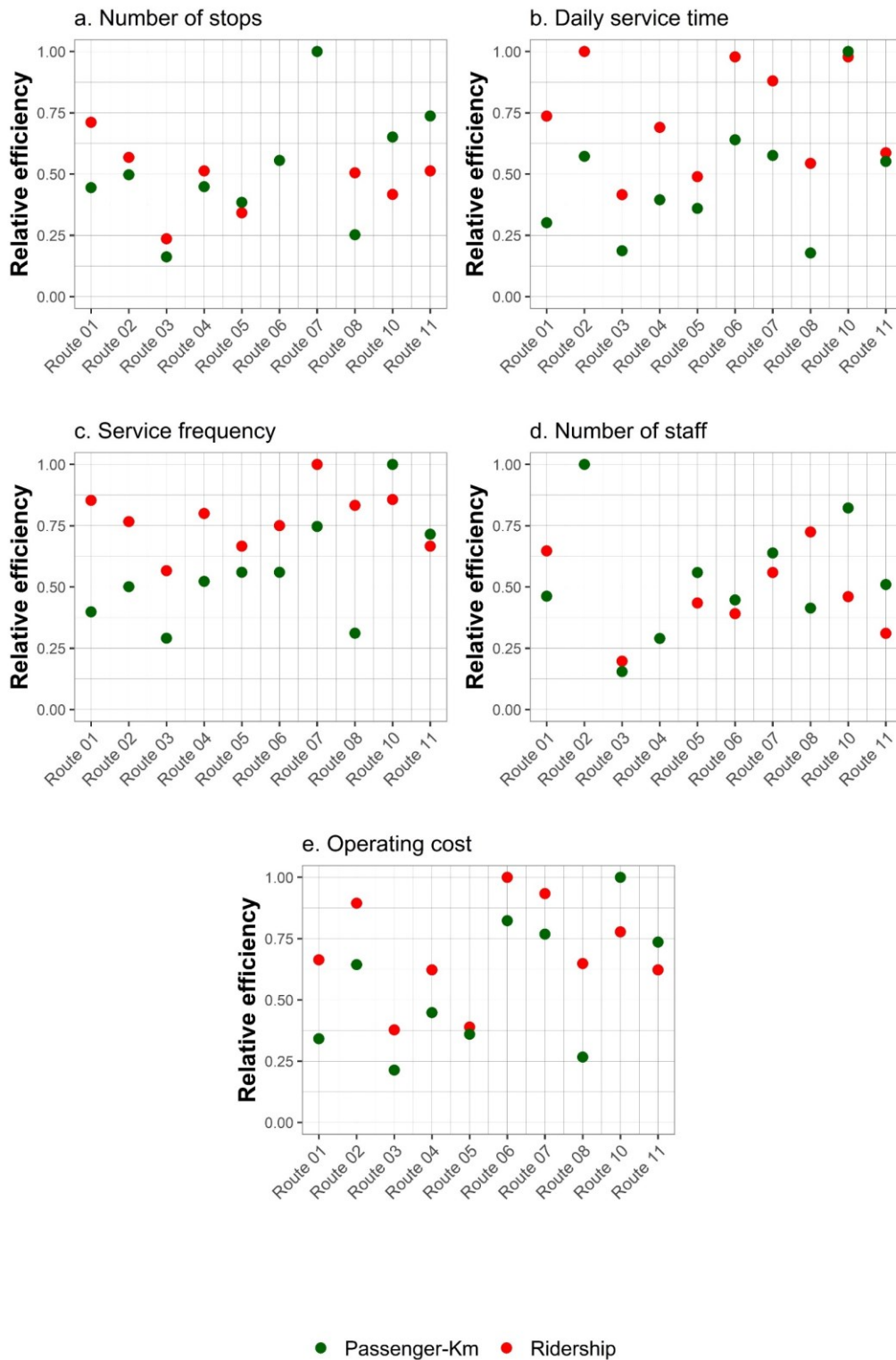
458

459   Figure 4 Individual input- and output-wise efficiency score of the routes (Operators' perspective)

460   *4.1.3. Performance assessment by PT authority*

461   The PT authority ranked the 0 bus routes based on the application of existing traffic rules and

462   regulations, and accident rates. Compared to the ranking of the users and operators, the PT authority

463   selected route 04 as the best due to its low accident rate, the regularity of license upgrades, and tax

464   clearance. Route 08 was regarded as the least efficient in terms of traffic rules and regulations.

465   **4.2. Performance evaluation of the DEA model**

466   The performance of the DEA model was assessed by estimating slacks. Slacks were measured from

467   both a user and operator perspective. Bus routes with an efficiency score (μ) 1 without slack was

468   considered efficient, while routes having an efficiency score of 1 with slacks was weakly efficient. The

469   routes with an efficiency score >1 (with or without slack) are inefficient.

470   Table 7 exhibits that route 02, route 03, route 06, and route 08 were estimated to be efficient (slack is

471   zero) from the users' perspective (i.e., there is no weakly efficient DMU). Similarly, route 02, route 06,

472   route 07, and route 10 were efficient from the operators' perspective (Table 8). It was noted that route

473   02 and route 06 were on the efficiency frontier line both from the users' and operators' perspectives.

474   On the other hand, routes that had an efficiency score >1 and slack status "True" were inefficient. These

475   inefficient routes had slacks in both inputs and outputs. Tables 7-8 also show non-zero optimal λ_j which

476   is the benchmark for a specific inefficient DMU under evaluation.

477   The output-oriented model reveals that to improve the efficiency of route 01, route 04, route 05, route

478   07, route 10, and route 11, operators must improve the service quality to increase user satisfaction. For

479   example, operators of route 01 need to improve the service quality for additional slack variables

480   S_{y1}=0.27, S_{y2}=0.39, S_{y3}=0.39, S_{y5} =0.08, S_{y6} =0.15, S_{y7} =0.84 to increase the users' satisfaction relevant

481   to the reliability, comfort, cleanliness, information system, safety and security, and appearance of staff.

482   Service quality of route 02 or route 03 can be considered as a benchmark. Likewise, route 01 needs to

483   increase passenger-km for an additional slack variable $\mathbf{S_{y2}}$ =17440 from the operators' perspective. On

484   the other hand, for route 11, the operator needs to increase ridership for an additional slack variable

485   S_{y1}=860 passengers/day.

486

Table 7 Efficiency score of the routes with slack (users' perspective)

Route	μ	Slack status	Fare	Access time	Waiting time	Journey time	Reliability S_{y1}	Comfort S_{y2}	Cleanliness S_{y3}	Fare S_{y4}	Info. system S_{y5}	Safety and security S_{y6}	Personal appearance S_{y7}	Customer service S_{y8}	λ_2	λ_3	λ_6	λ_8
Route 01	1.17	TRUE	0.27	0	0.82	1.15	0.27	0.39	0.39	0	0.08	0.15	0.84	0	0.75	0.41	0	0
Route 02	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Route 03	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Route 04	1.18	TRUE	0	0.08	4.87	3.82	0.60	0.003	0.05	0.47	0.07	0.19	0.22	0	1	0	0	0
Route 05	1.09	TRUE	0	0	2.59	14.47	0.57	0.14	0.49	0	0	0.08	0.78	0.12	0.06	0.49	0	0.42
Route 06	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Route 07	1.18	TRUE	0	1.27	1.83	25.11	0.37	0	0.23	0.21	0.12	0	0.32	0	0.83	0.15	0	0.02
Route 08	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Route 10	1.05	TRUE	0.01	0	0	21.16	0.58	0	0.28	1.06	0.08	0	0.46	0.16	0.37	0.49	0	0.11
Route 11	1.07	TRUE	0.14	0	0	33.22	0.27	0.02	0.14	0	0.21	0.02	0.17	0	0.77	0.05	0	0.07

487   Table 8 Efficiency scores of routes with slack (operators' perspective)

Route	μ	Slack status	No. of Stops	Daily service time	Service frequency	No. of staffs	Operating cost	Ridership S_{y1}	Pass-km S_{y2}	λ_2	λ_6	λ_7	λ_9
Route 01	1.05	TRUE	0.33	2.83	0	0	182.5	0	17440	0.29	0	0.45	0
Route 02	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Route 03	1.76	TRUE	9.33	2.67	0	56.67	200	0	15000	0	0	0.67	0

26

Route 04	1.25	TRUE	4.67	0.33	0	63.33	125	0	7500	0	0	0.83	0
Route 05	1.34	TRUE	3.69	4.71	0	0	322.96	0	0	0.14	0	0.29	0.16
Route 06	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Route 07	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Route 08	1.03	TRUE	2.88	7.38	0	0	162.5	0	17625	0.31	0	0.25	0
Route 10	1	FALSE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Route 11	1.14s	TRUE	0	1.5	0.05	27.5	0	860.87	0	0	0	0.7	0.25

488

489   ## 5. Discussion
490   ### 5.1.   Stakeholders and their roles in the PT performance assessment
491   One of the main objectives of this study was to identify the major stakeholders involved in providing
492   local bus services in the CCC area and to understand their specific roles and responsibilities. This was
493   to determine who would be involved in the process of performance assessment. Results revealed that
494   several stakeholders are associated with the operation of local bus service in CCC (Table 1). The study
495   identified that the complex nature of stakeholder involvement, and a general lack of coordination and
496   accountability among the differing players, limited any possibility of improvement in the quality of
497   service provided by the local bus service. Al-Qadery and Muhibbullah (2008) also demonstrated these
498   issues in regards a lack of coordination and integration of the different institutions. This also resulted
499   in a deterioration in service quality. As a result, traffic congestion in many areas increased significantly,
500   a factor which was also observed in the CCC.

501   ### 5.2.   Factors influencing efficiency of different bus routes
502   Transport planners, local governments, and transport operators in many cities have recognized the PT
503   performance assessment as an effective tool for planning, management, monitoring and evaluation of
504   this form of transport (Litman, 2008). The results seen in this study indicate that even with ongoing data
505   limitations the use of proper guidelines can allow a PT performance assessment to be successfully
506   undertaken in developing countries with the outcomes used to improve general service quality. The
507   DEA modeling indicated that significant differences existed among the various stakeholders. These
508   findings are in line with the original hypotheses. For example, routes 02, 03, 06, and 08 were efficient
509   from the users' perspective, with an average bus stop wait time of less than 10 minutes. The average
510   travel time to reach the final destination (55 to 65 minutes) was also generally less than other routes. A
511   similar association of efficiency score with travel time and waiting time was reported in other studies
512   (Lee, Lee, Kho, & Kim, 2019; Sun, Chen, Zhang, & Shen, 2016). However, input parameters such as
513   fare per kilometer and average time to reach a bus stop from home indicated a lower influence on the
514   efficiency score. Most of the bus stops were located within 400 m or 15 minutes walking distance.
515   However, the estimated slack values (Table 7) indicated that, from the users' point of view, poor
516   reliability, cleanliness, safety and security and lack of comfort on some of the routes were issues which
517   resulted in a lower efficiency score. Several studies have highlighted that improvements in these
518   services can improve the efficiency of the PT service (Eboli & Mazzulla, 2009; Joewono & Kubota,
519   2007; Lai & Chen, 2011). From an operator's perspective, routes with a smaller number of stops, a low
520   service time, staff, and higher daily ridership and passenger-km were more efficient. Routes 02, 06, 07,
521   and 10 were found to be in this category. In contrast, routes 03 and 08 were more efficient from a user
522   point of view than from an operator point of view. These routes received a high score from users for
523   reliability, comfort, fare system, safety and security, gesture and behavior, access time, waiting time,
524   time spent on buses, and egress time, while the operators provided low scores for ridership and

525   passenger-km. Several studies have also demonstrated that bus route operating costs are associated with

526   operation time, passenger-km, and the number of bus stops (Eboli & Mazzulla, 2007; Lao & Liu, 2009).

527   Routes 02 and 06 were quite efficient according to both the users and operators. In contrast to users and

528   operators, the PT authority mainly considered the existing state of applicable traffic rules and

529   regulations when evaluating the performance of the different bus routes.

530   ## 5.3.   Measures to improve bus route efficiency

531   The differences in efficiency scores indicated variations in the quality of service, technical efficiency,

532   and the level of traffic law maintenance across the bus routes examined. It is likely that reducing the

533   relative differences in efficiency scores could help improve the performance of the local bus service.

534   The modeling has provided details on these major deficiencies. Poor satisfaction levels felt by users in

535   respect to current service conditions indicated a general need for other stakeholders to listen to their

536   thoughts and incorporate these into any rectification measures. The survey has highlighted the major

537   areas of dissatisfaction where improvements are most needed. Islam, Hasan, Das, and Rahman (2018)

538   have also stated the necessity of incorporating the needs and expectations of service users into PT

539   service improvement procedures. For example, the low satisfaction of users in regards comfort,

540   information systems and customer service conditions have reinforced the need to improve conditions

541   inside the buses, stoppage intervals and ticket counters. Previous PT policies also overlooked the

542   minimum standards that a bus operator should follow in order to provide acceptable services within the

543   CCC area. Efforts to reduce waiting times at bus stops, as well as reductions in the average travel time,

544   would make this mode of transport more acceptable to users. Although cities of many developing

545   countries heavily rely on government subsidies for PT services, it does not necessarily ensure improved

546   management and operation of the service due to a weak association between the subsidies provided and

547   the actual fare structure (Iles, 2005; Verma & Ramanayya, 2019).

548   From the operators' perspective, having higher ridership and passenger-km would not translate into

549   higher efficiency rates. It is important to provide demand-driven route planning to ensure adequate

550   stoppage intervals and dedicated service frequency. The poor performance score from the transport

551   authorities indicated issues with the attitudes of the various operators towards current transport rules

552   and regulation, and the dissatisfaction of the authorities with the current operation of these bus services.

553   ## 6. Conclusion

554   This study aimed to develop a comprehensive framework to assess the performance of different bus

555   routes from the perspective of users, operators, and the local authorities. It also aimed to address the

556   data limitation issues which are common in developing countries. The DEA method was employed to

557   calculate the relative efficiency of 10 bus routes in the CCC area of Bangladesh. The modeling results

558   indicated perceived differences in the performance of local bus routes according to the particular

559   viewpoint of the specific stakeholder. Data collection is resource-intensive, however the measures

560   outlined could replicate the framework necessary to allow successful evaluation of the PT, both in the

561   short and the long term. For instance, transport authorities could store information related to the business
562   (such as fuel cost, the wages of staff, daily service timings, service frequency and total ridership) which
563   individual bus owners regularly collect to enable accurate monitoring of business profitability. Such
564   information is essential for useful PT evaluation activities. The transport authority (e.g., BRTA) will be
565   able to utilize this compiled information for use in renewing of transit operator contracts. The most
566   labor-intensive task in implementing the proposed inventory is the collection of user satisfaction
567   information. Alternative methods such as the use of mobile technology would help collect data quickly
568   and also reduce associated costs. In Bangladesh, mobile and smartphones are being used by 83% and
569   43% of the total population, respectively. A recent study revealed that almost 80% of slum dwellers
570   have personal mobile phones, while 30% have internet facilities and access to social networks such as
571   Facebook (Huq, Holvoet, & Huq, 2020). In this case it is unlikely that the collection of user opinions
572   using mobile phone technology will be skewed to certain income groups. Consideration of the opinion
573   of users (customer satisfaction criteria) in the performance assessment could assist in improving the
574   service to the satisfaction of the users. The inclusion of transport operators in the performance
575   evaluation process will also permit the suppliers to be proactive in fulfilling the demands of the
576   customers. This will also likely reduce uncontrolled competition between the many poorly performing
577   transit operators.

578   Although this study has presented a comprehensive approach to assessing the performance of local bus
579   services, a few limitations must be noted. First, the performance of local bus services may vary within
580   a route. This study only estimated an overall efficiency score for each route. Second, users provided
581   only approximate data for some of the input variables. This included such things as the time needed to
582   arrive at the bus stop from home, the time needed to reach the destination from bus stops, and the
583   waiting time for the bus. Third, temporal variations in the performance of different bus routes were not
584   considered. Fourth, a very basic measurement method (CCR) has been used which can be further
585   improved by using an advanced DEA model such as super-efficiency network data envelopment
586   analysis (SE-NDEA). Future research can utilize the proposed framework and also incorporate other
587   urban factors such as land use mix and density of population, along with other environmental factors
588   such as pollution figures and number of recorded accidents. This approach would enable a more detailed
589   inspection and comparison of performance differences between differing bus routes. The inventory can
590   also be used for assessing the performance of inter-city PT services. In those circumstances stakeholder
591   identification and classification may differ, and focus group discussions will be needed to adjust all
592   indicators for inter-city level assessments where necessary. The proposed inventory and framework
593   would be useful in other developing countries where access to detailed and accurate data is limited.
594   Policymakers and urban planners can use the results of this work when sequencing and prioritizing
595   different routes. Use of this process will provide an improved service experience.

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