ASSESSING THE VALUE OF BUS SERVICES FOR LEISURE

Dr Jo Guiver
Institute of Transport and Tourism
Leisure Travel

• Different from utility travel:
  – Discretionary,
    • Whether or not to travel
    • Where to go
    • When to go
    • How to go
    • Who to go with
  – Bundles of choices
Discretionary Travel

Less important than utility?
Often cross-border
More politically expendable?
Why buses?

Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure
BUSES ARE BORING!
Why Buses?

• Use road network,
  – so potentially same reach as cars
• Greater range of destinations than railway network, canals, etc.
• Potential to enhance visitor experience
• More sustainable and less intrusive than individual car use
• However, present a number of problems, not least image and information
History of the Project
Rationale

• To produce an off-the-shelf, easy to use system to monitor services used for leisure
• To maximise the skills of the University and minimise costs to users.
How it worked

• University designed survey template
• Spread sheet allowed easy inputting of survey data
• Macros in spread sheet generated instant report
This Area

Are you aware if this area is a: [ ] tick all that apply

National Park
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
World Heritage Site
Don't Know

Is this why you chose to visit? [ ] Yes [ ] No

When did you last visit this area? [ ] In the last:
week [ ] month [ ] year [ ] 5 years [ ] never [ ]

When did you last use this bus service? [ ] In the last:
week [ ] month [ ] year [ ] 5 years [ ] never [ ]

When do you expect to visit the area again? [ ] In the next:
week [ ] month [ ] year [ ] 5 years [ ] never [ ]

About you

If you are from the UK, what is your home postcode? [ ]
If you are from outside the UK, which country are you from? [ ]

Are you: [ ] Male [ ] Female [ ]

Do you have any disability which restricts your mobility? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ]

Which Age group are you in?
Under 15 [ ] 16-19 [ ] 20-29 [ ] 30-39 [ ]
40-49 [ ] 50-59 [ ] 60-69 [ ] 70+ [ ]

How many people are travelling with you today? [ ]

What is your approximate annual income?
Less than £10,000 [ ] £10,000-£19,999 [ ]
£20,000-£29,999 [ ] £30,000-£39,999 [ ]
£40,000-£49,999 [ ] £50,000 or more [ ]

Did you enjoy your visit today? [ ]
Not at all [ ] Not much [ ] It was OK [ ] Mostly [ ] I had a great time [ ]

What was good and bad?

Any Further Comments?

DalesBus Travel Survey

This bus service is managed by the Dales & Bowland Community Interest Company.
Does it meet your needs? Is it good value for money?
Your answers to this survey will help us improve the service and look for more funding. Please return the form to the surveyor or driver or post it back in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your help!
To receive further information about DalesBus please give us your e-mail address: [ ]

What did you think about the bus service today?

Very Poor: [ ] Poor: [ ] No Opinion: [ ] Very Good: [ ]
Reliability: [ ] Comfort: [ ] Cleanliness: [ ] Value for money: [ ]
Standard of driving: [ ] Information: [ ] Driver's helpfulness: [ ]
Frequency of service: [ ] Suitability of vehicle: [ ]

How did you find out about this bus?

[ ] saw bus [ ] saw bus stop information [ ]
word of mouth [ ] journey planner [ ]
internet search [ ] poster [ ]
used before [ ] accommodation provider [ ]
leaflet [ ] tourism information centre [ ]

which leaflet/tourist centre? [ ]
other source of information [ ]

We would like to talk to bus passengers about their visit, if you want to help, please give your name and telephone number or e-mail address.
Name: [ ]
Tel/e-mail: [ ]

Please return your completed form to the surveyor or use a pre-paid envelope to send it to the Institute of Transport and Tourism, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2BP. No stamp required.

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Travel Survey

What did you think of the bus service today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
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<td>Frequency of service</td>
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<td>Suitability of vehicle</td>
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</table>

How did you find out about this bus?

- Saw bus
- Saw bus stop information
- Word of mouth
- Journey planner
- Internet search
- Poster
- Used before
- Accommodation provider
- Leaflet
- Tourism Information Centre

Reason for your visit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided walk</td>
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<td>Other walking</td>
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<td>Visit place/attraction</td>
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<td>Visit friends or relations</td>
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<td>Getting to/from accommodation</td>
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<td>See countryside from bus</td>
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</table>

Your trip today

24 hour clock

Where did day start? [ ] at [ ]
Is that home [ ] or holiday base? [ ]
Where will day end? [ ] at [ ]
Is that home [ ] or holiday base? [ ]
Place 1 [ ] at [ ]
Place 2 [ ] at [ ]
Place 3 [ ] at [ ]

Which other forms of travel did/will you use?

- Car [ ] [ ] miles Walking [ ] [ ] miles
- Train [ ] [ ] miles Cycling [ ] [ ] miles
- Other [ ] [ ] miles

Other physical activity? No [ ] Yes [ ]

Did you have a car available to you today?

- Yes [ ]
- No [ ]

Don't own a car [ ] Car/driver not available [ ]
Don't drive [ ] On holiday without car [ ]
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Click to Generate Report

Click to Open Data Entry Form
### Report

**What did you think of the Bus Service today?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Service</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Total No Respondents</th>
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<td>265</td>
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<td>217</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing percentage of valid responses for various attributes of bus service.](image)

- **Very Good**
- **Good**
- **Very Poor**
- **Poor**
Findings: Passengers

Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure
How knew about bus

- Saw bus
- Internet Search
- Tourist Info Centre
- Saw bus stop info
- Word of Mouth
- Leaflet
- Used before

% of total responses
Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure

Reason for Visit

- Visit Event
- Work
- Visit Friends
- Outdoor Activities
- Meal/Drink Out
- Shopping
- See Countryside from bus
- Visit Place/Attraction
- Walking

Respondents
Reason for Visit

Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure
Visiting Area and Using Bus

- **When last visited area**: 
  - Week: 30
  - Month: 20
  - Year: 10
  - 5 years: 0
  - Never: 0

- **Last used this bus service**: 
  - Week: 40
  - Month: 30
  - Year: 20
  - 5 years: 10
  - Never: 0

- **When expect to visit again**: 
  - Week: 20
  - Month: 30
  - Year: 20
  - 5 years: 10
  - Never: 0
Alternatives if Bus not running

% of Valid Responses

- Walking
- Cycle
- Train
- Car
- Bus
- Stay at Home

Stay at home  Same Destination  Different Destination
Alternatives

• 35% would stay at home
• 64% would not visit area
  – (Stay at home 35%
    + Different destination 29%)
• 27% would use a car
• 47% would change day of travel to use bus
• Check nos who would not have travelled
• Money spent, etc.
Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure
Spending

• Average Spending per day
  – £16.47 excluding accommodation
  – £25.89 with accommodation for one night
Spending

Average Spending per passenger £s

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

Other
Souvenirs
Entrance fees
Other travel costs
All bus fares
Shopping
Food and drink
Accommodation

Food and drink has the highest average spending.
Accommodation

47% stayed at least one night in holiday accommodation

Average length of stay was 5 nights
Assessing the Value of Bus Services for Leisure

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
88% of respondents did some form of physical activity

469 (65%) people walked

14 (2%) people cycled

127 (18%) said they did other physical activity
Satisfaction

% of Valid Responses

Frequency of Service
Information
Comfort
Suitability of Vehicle
Value for Money
Cleanliness
Drivers Helpfulness
Standard of Driving
Reliability

Very Good
Good
Very Poor
Poor
Satisfaction

- 89% would recommend service to a friend
- 64% had a great time
- Most Factors ‘very good’
- Comfort, Information and Frequency ‘good’
In Summary

• We have evidence that these buses are helping to:
  – Reduce Social Exclusion
  – Reduce car use
  – Generate Local Spending
  – Are liked and used for physical activity which suggests they improve well-being and health
How to Evaluate the Benefits?

• Can apples, pears and grapes be added up as units of fruit?

• Do we need to attribute relative values to the benefits?
Game at Seminar

Participants sat at different tables according to their roles:

– Volunteer Sector
– Local authorities
– National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc
– Consultants
– Bus operators
– Academics
Rates of Return

Number of extra people able to get out for day

Extra People able to get out for a day

Number of car journeys replaced

Car journeys replaced

Number of extra hours of physical activity

Extra Hours Physical Activity

Extra spending brought into the area

Extra spending in Area
Allocation of £1,000 Budget

Volunteers
Local Government
Academics
Consultants
National Parks
Bus Operators
Average

Health and Well-being
Local Spending
Social Inclusion
Car Use Reduction
Decision-making

• Stronger voices have more influence
• Some just averaged individual budgets
• Budget allocation reflects priorities rather than efficiency
• Types of beneficiary important as well as abstract ideas
• Difficult to isolate benefits
• Are Decisions to allocate Public Money rational?
• Is evidence useful?
• Should we be comparing the benefit/cost ratios of these buses with other expenditure?
Where to now?

• Enlarge data collection?
• Extrapolate survey findings to whole season?
• Look at costs?
• More investigation into what works/what doesn’t?
Thank you!
Any Questions or Suggestions?

Jo Guiver
The Institute of Transport and Tourism
The University of Central Lancashire
jwguiver@uclan.ac.uk

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