



Choose bus for me-time

Passengers relax, socialise and do personal tasks during their bus journeys, this is an opportunity for 'me time'.

Travel-time in general has been conceptualised as a 'gift' to the passenger.

A bus journey can be an opportunity for time out, to 'switch off' or to do personal tasks such as organising work and home life.

Having this time has been found to provide the public transport traveller with an opportunity for 'time-out' (i.e. time to relax and 'switch off') during an otherwise busy routine. It might be valued as a piece of 'transition time', in which the passenger has the opportunity to mentally 'shift gears' between the different spaces and social spheres of departure and destination (e.g. work/home) or it might be a piece of 'time-for', which provides opportunities for personal tasks such as organising work and home life.

Travel-time means different things to different people and hence it is used and experienced in diverse ways. It has been found that travel-time is often used for simple, everyday activities which are of benefit to bus passengers in several different ways.

Many passengers enjoy time-out and time-for activities during this time, where others use activity to mitigate negative experiences of boredom, stress and social discomfort. Therefore travel-time activity can at times create distinctly positive and unique journey experiences, and at others simply make the experience less negative.

Furthermore, passengers' interaction with mobile technology – and in particular emergent information and communication technologies – is re-shaping the ways in which travel-time on this mode can be used, allowing greater potential for the tacit demarcation of personal space and the opportunity to disengage somewhat from the public space of the bus and connect virtually to wider social networks.

The most popular activities on the bus are those related to relaxation and personal benefit, such as reading, listening to music, and browsing the internet.

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It is the passengers themselves that are largely in control of their in-vehicle experience, being able to craft a range of different positive journey experiences through travel-time activity.

On the bus, comfortable journey experiences are primarily aided by travel-time activity in one of three ways: through 'time-out' and 'time-for' (relaxation or personal time) activities; through activities for distraction/displacement (i.e. killing time and lessening the negative experiences of the journey – boredom, social discomfort, stress); and through social activities.

Periods of relaxation and time-out form the most common positive articulations of travel-time on the bus. Passengers enjoy the time that the bus provides to listen to music, think, daydream, read, and gaze out of the window.

The restricted space of the bus is – for some – a desirable aspect as it means that they legitimately can't be doing anything.

This aspect is an important feature of the time out that the bus engenders for many passengers. Passengers' accounts of their bus journeys show that travel-time activities they engage in during time-out complement and facilitate this experience of time. Everyday, simple activities that have a relaxing or personally and socially productive function are favoured during such periods of time out and time-for on the bus.

Thank you to Professor Adrian Davis for this summary of Essential Evidence.

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