Dear Data: My Metrobus Experiences

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Abstract

Data collection can be exciting, as the Dear Data project demonstrates. In this project, various forms of data were collected on my experiences on the Metrobus. I found that collection and visual representation of data were challenging in a good way. However, I struggled with turning what I considered to be 'fun' and 'creative' to a research paper which I considered 'academic'. I used the Problem, Purpose Statement, and Questions (PPS &Q) to conceptualize my data collection under three subjects: greetings on the bus, punctuality, and gender of transit operators. The paper has been structured in an IMRAD (introduction, methodology, results/findings, and discussion) fashion with a slight variation which includes data collection, analysis, visual representation, and reflection sections. This paper, written as an assignment for ED 702, is a testament that my perceived dichotomy between being creative and academic can be reconciled.

Introduction

Commuting from one place to another is an important aspect of people's daily lives. As an international student currently living in St. John's, this is certainly the case. Currently, I do not own a car, so the public transport system is my main means of transportation. Metrobus is the public bus system which operates throughout St. John's, Mount Pearl, and Goulds. According to the statement found on the website, the mission of Metrobus is

> to provide safe and efficient public transit service for the City of St. John's. To ensure that our employees have the support and resources to deliver an affordable, customer-focused service on a cost-effective basis. To implement industry-leading technologies in the delivery of innovative service (Metrobus, 2018, para. 1).

Metrobus was chosen as the focal point of my Dear Data assignment because I was dissatisfied with the services provided by the Metrobus in St. John's. Gao, Yu, and Liang (2016) noted that customer satisfaction on the transit system was influenced by factors such as customer service, wait and travel time, and fares. Having lived in London, England, where transport systems are much more efficient, Metrobus was found lacking in certain areas. According to Transport for London (2018):

> We manage one of the largest bus networks in the world, with more than 9,300 vehicles in the fleet. Our subsidiary company, London Bus Services Ltd, plans routes, specifies service levels and monitors service quality. It is also responsible for around 50 bus stations and more than 19,000 bus stops (para. 1).

London is a very busy city with millions of commuters. In spite of the large population of commuters, they manage to have a very efficient bus operation. I have been visiting London since 1991, and they become more efficient every year. St. John's is a small city compared to London. Yet, they struggle with building sheltered bus stops, punctuality, and good customer service. When the bus fare in London goes up, I do not mind paying because I know they will put the money to good use. I arrived St. John's in 2016. The monthly bus pass was $70.00 CAD. At the beginning of 2017, the monthly bus pass was increased to $78.00 CAD. There has been no improvement in the quality of service. However, Fitzpatrick (2016) claimed that those that were in favour of the hike stated that the transport system in St. John's

was already heavily subsidized by the City, and that the increment will help increase the revenue received by the city. The issue is not with the increment. The issue is that despite the hike in the bus fare, the quality of service still remains inadequate. It can be argued that what may be considered unsatisfactory by one may be considered satisfactory by another. For Aspfors (2010), "The concept of customer perception is built up by customer experiences, how they perceive the service they are offered and ultimately by whether they actually are satisfied with their experiences or not" (p. 10). My experiences with Metrobus, when compared to London buses, may be considered unsatisfactory. According to Gao, Yu, and Liang (2016), fare price has a great influence on the ridership of public transportation.

Customer service should be at the core of any organization's mission. This should also apply to Metrobus. To make a customer feel comfortable, it is important for service providers to provide a welcoming atmosphere. Gao, Yu, and Liang (2016) defined customer service in the transit sector as "the services provided by the employees of the public transportation agencies. It includes the behavior of the driver, conductor, in station customer service employees, etc." (p. 148). Coffel (1995) identified courtesy of bus drivers, operators/conductors, and station staff as staff behaviors that could attract more people to use public transit service. The Metrobus (2015) employment guide states that transit operators "receive in-depth driver and customer service training to provide our customers with a comfortable and safe ride in a courteous and friendly atmosphere" (para. 5). By courtesy, I mean verbally greeting the commuter cordially when they get on the bus. The welcoming atmosphere that is supposed to be on the Metrobus seems to be missing.

Wait and travel time are usually believed to be fundamental measurements of transit customer satisfaction (Gao, Yu, & Liang, 2016). Cervero and Wachs (1982) found that transit riders are more sensitive to schedule reliability than almost any other service attributes. Punctuality is a service quality I find very important. I rely on the bus to take me to school, work, and other places. Metrobus most often arrives later than the scheduled time. For White, Valk and Dialmy (2010), norms of punctuality vary across cultures. They explained that across cultures it is more taboo to arrive after the appointed time than it is to arrive before the appointed time depending on the event, person, and context. This is because the costs related with arriving late are generally greater than the costs associated with arriving early. They also explained that personal standards of punctuality are better understood as situational and sociocultural rather than dispositional (White, Valk, & Dialmy, 2010). Metrobus (2018) policy clearly states that passengers should be at the bus station five minutes before the scheduled time. With this in mind, "on time" can be considered as five minutes before the scheduled time or the exact scheduled time, while "late" will be considered as any time after the scheduled time. As part of the necessary requirements to be considered a Metrobus transit operator, the Metrobus employment guide clearly states that "Our Transit Operators operate transit buses on established routes, with definite time schedules in high density traffic and in all weather conditions" (Metrobus, 2015, para. 6). Transit operators arriving after the scheduled time is poor service quality.

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act in Canada is to " achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability and, in the fulfilment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences" (Government of Canada, 2018, para. 1).

The struggle for women and other minority groups to have equal opportunities in the work place is an ongoing battle. In 2016, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour's annual report stated that "The number of all employees in the transportation sector decreased by 1.7% and the number of women by 1.3%; however, the representation of women increased from 27.2% in 2014 to 27.4% in 2015, which denotes that the representation of women was not negatively impacted by the decrease in the size of the workforce" (Government of Canada, 2016). The report also noted that women are still underrepresented in the transportation sector. Metrobus seems to have more men working as transit operators than women. The underrepresentation of women in the transport sector may be understood from a benevolent sexism perspective. Hideg and Ferris (2016) explained that attitudes such as benevolence sexism may undermine Employment Equity Act goals. They explained that men that are benevolent sexist are compassionate towards women because they view women as weak. On the one hand they are more likely to support Employment Equity policies that allow women to gain employment in feminine positions. On the other hand they will not support policies that empower women to work in masculine positions. Another point of view with regards to gender equality in the workplace is provided by Altawyan (2017). Altawyan wrote that since the genders are significantly different, laws should reflect the differences between women and men in the workplace. For him, gender equality does not mean similarity, but means that all of the genders should be handled according to their biological basis. If we accept what Altawyan is proposing, then ideally women should not be transit operators. Some people feel that the Employment Equity Act is discriminatory. For example, Echavarria and Huq (2001) argued that if the Employment Equity Act is going to be fair, barriers to men applying for female dominated jobs be removed and vice versa. This is a good point. Equality should exist for all in the workplace provided that the requirements for the job are met by those concerned.

The purpose of this paper is to explore three sets of data revolving around St. John's Metrobus transport system. These data sets were subjects I found interesting and wanted to explore for my Dear Data project. The three sets of personal data will explore the following questions:

1. Who is the first to initiate/extend greetings on the bus?
2. Does the bus regularly arrive on time or late?
3. Are there more male transit operators than female transit operators when I board the bus?

The first section of the paper will deal with the methodology. Next, the section on data collection, data analysis, and visual representation will be discussed. A discussion on the interpretation of the data will be next. A section on reflection will be discussed. Finally, the paper will conclude with some implications of the Dear Data findings.

Methodology

In this section, I will explain the Dear Data approach to research. This section will cover my epistemological and ontological approach to the Dear Data project. The subject of ethics as it applies to the Dear Data project will also be discussed. The method chosen to collect data and its justification will be discussed as well.

This project uses an approach to collecting, analysing, and representing data called "Dear Data". Dear Data was developed by Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec (2016). The idea behind Dear Data is to collect personal data in order to help better understand one's self. Dear Data is an analog drawing project. It involves collecting and measuring a particular type of data about one's life (Lupi & Posavec, 2016). These data are represented in the form of drawings (Lupi & Posavec, 2016). In my case, data collection occurred over a three-week period. Each week, I collected data on a different subject on the Metrobus.

Taking the bus is personal because it is my main means of transportation. The decision to focus on bus experiences rather than analysis of my personal actions and relationships was done for several reasons. I felt that by looking at my habits or conduct I may influence the outcome because of the awareness of collecting personal data directly related to me. Collecting data on the bus allowed me to be less subjective and enjoy collecting the data knowing that there was little I could do to influence the outcome. However, it can be argued that the data collection process was influenced by choosing the Metrobus system as my central theme and selecting what subjects to collect data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). That is why I have chosen to say that collecting data on the bus is less subjective instead of objective. I acknowledge that I had vested interests in the data I chose to collect.

The Dear Data project is situated within the qualitative research approach. According to Leavy (2017), qualitative research is useful when the researcher is seeking to explore, describe, and explain a social phenomenon. My Dear Data project is an exploration of three different subject matters on the Metrobus in St. John's. This project falls under the interpretative paradigm since the data are based on my subjective experiences (Leavy, 2017) with regards to the Metrobus. My data are contextual (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). My data collection is based on transit operators on the routes that I travelled in St. John's. The events that I chose to collect data are unique to me and open to my interpretations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Other bus commuters may not agree with me on some of my perceptions. For example, I chose to collect data on greetings because it was my perception that the transit operators were not friendly. However, other commuters may see them as friendly. The data are unique in terms of the transit operators and bus routes, and how I perceive the quality of service. My interpretation of the data is not generalizable to all commuters.

With regards to the Dear Data project, I believed that I could understand the different subjects on the Metrobus by observation. I am aware that there are other factors that come into play when trying to understand the various subjects which can be complex and dynamic (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). For example, I wanted to investigate whether there were more male or female transit operators. Again, observation alone cannot begin to unpack the issues of gender and equality in employment. This was limited by the fact that I could not conduct interviews to ask the transit operators of their opinions and whether my construction of reality tallied with theirs. Due to the data being personal, it can be said to be subjective both in my observation and interpretation of the data, although gathering data on the gender of transit operators may be considered as a critical and transformative approach to research. However, my Dear Data project cannot be critical and transformative because the data collected for the project were collected for my pleasure. The project was not undertaken to be a voice for underrepresented or marginalized groups (Leavy, 2017). Neither were the data collected to bring about change in the way Metrobus is currently operating, since my findings cannot be shared due to ethical reasons. The qualitative approach allowed me to explore the three subjects on different weeks with regards to Metrobus without trying to critically examine power relations at work in relation to Metrobus.

The method used to collect data was direct observation (Yin. 2009). Data collection can range from formal to casual during direct observation (Yin, 2009). In this project, data collection was done in a casual fashion. The transit operators were not aware that any data were being collected on the Metrobus. Observation is useful when one is trying to study the social world in its natural state (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). The interview method was not used because it would have been a breach of ethical protocols. The observation method provided the opportunity to record information as it occurred (Creswell, 2012).

Ethical protocols were considered in this project. In the Dear Data project, the transit operators were not aware that information was collected about them and their services. Getting informed consent (Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2017) did not apply in this case. During the data collection, no harm came to anyone. There have been no names and location provided to ensure anonymity (Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2017). Transit operators were never asked for their personal information.

Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Visual Representation

This section will be divided into three headings. Each heading will cover one week of data collection, data analysis, and visual representation. But before that, a general overview of data collection and analysis will be discussed.

Data were collected over a three-week period. Each week, a different set of data was collected. The observation method was used to gather data. Observations were stored on my android phone for easy access and convenience. The information was stored on the "do it later" app. Leavy (2017) explained that the data analysis process helps us make sense of the data we have collected. Trent and Cho (2014) defined analysis as "summarizing and organizing data" (p. 652). A simple approach to qualitative data analysis was used in this project. In the "do it later" app, data were immediately placed under two specific headings. Each week, the data collected were categorized in two headings. The number of occurrences under each category/heading were counted. The occurrences that appeared more either confirmed or disconfirmed what I set out to investigate. The interpretation of the data will be discussed under the findings and discussion section. Next, the dear data project for each week will be discussed. The discussion will cover what the project was, how the data were classified, the analysis of the data, and the visual representation of the data.

Week One: Greetings on the Bus.

In the first week of the Dear Data project, I was interested in finding out who greeted first. By greeting, I mean who said "hi", "hello", or any verbal acknowledgment of the other person. I used the direct observation method because I was curious about who would take the initiative to greet. On my android phone, I noted my observations on an app called "do it later". Only greetings that were verbally spoken when I boarded the bus were noted. Greetings that were spoken when I left the bus were not recorded. The observations took place from Monday to Saturday. I categorized my notes as yes and no. Yes for when the transit operator greeted first. No for when I greeted first. At the end of the week, the data were analysed. The number of "yes" was recorded. The number of "no" was recorded. Explanations from the literature were used to try and understand what these meant. The number of yes were thirteen, while the number of no were four. Greetings occurred 17 times between the transit operators and me. The transit operator greeted me first thirteen times while I only greeted four times. The only day I greeted both times on the same day was on a Saturday. A description of my boarding the bus and who initiated greetings will be described next. This will then lead to a description of my visual representation followed by an image of the drawing.

On Monday, I boarded the bus four times. The transit operator initiated the greeting three times, while the greeting was initiated by me once. On Tuesday, the three times the bus was boarded the transit operator initiated the greeting. The transit operator initiated the greeting the two times I boarded the bus. The bus was boarded four times on Thursday. The transit operator initiated the greeting all but once. On Friday, the bus was boarded twice, and the transit operator initiated the greeting twice. The greeting was initiated by me the two times the bus was boarded.

The data of who greeted first was represented in an umbrella drawing. The umbrella was chosen because I felt it depicted a sense of security and safety. Exhibiting qualities of courtesy can be

considered as promoting an atmosphere of welcome. Being aloof or rude may be considered unfriendly. Within the iron frames of the umbrella, I chose to place my data for each day. I wanted some element of colour and decided to use different colours to represent different days of the week. The shape with horizontal lines will represent the transit operator, while the shape coloured in will represent me.
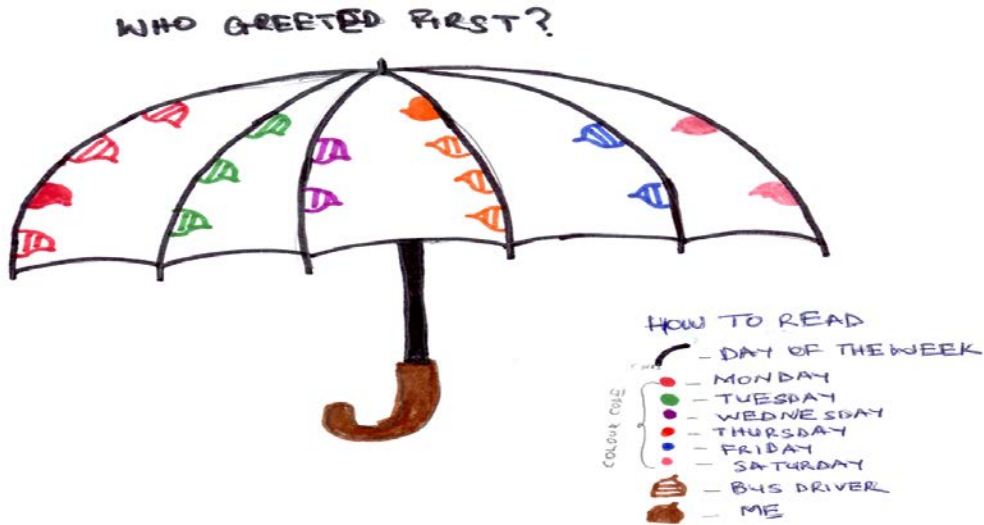

Week Two: On Time or Late

In week two, data were collected on punctuality. The bus schedule was checked on Google map and the exact time the bus was scheduled to arrive was noted before heading out to catch the bus. On each occasion, I arrived at the bus stop five minutes before the scheduled time. Once I observed the bus coming I would check the time. Once I got on the bus I recorded whether the bus was on time or late, in the app called "do it later". If the bus was on time I recorded it under the heading on time. If the bus was late, I recorded under the heading late. This was done from Monday to Saturday. The data were analysed by counting how many "on time" or "late" entries they were. The data were also analysed by looking at the period of the day (morning, afternoon, or evening). Military time was used to identify the time. Morning was from 6:00 to 11: 59. Afternoon was from 12:00 to 17:59. Evening was from 18: 00 to 20:00. During this week, the bus was boarded thirteen times. The bus arrived on time three times, while it arrived late ten times. It arrived on time in the morning period between 6:00 AM and 8:00 AM. After 8:00 AM the bus arrived late every time I boarded it.

Next, a description of my data on whether the bus was on time or late will be provided. This will be followed by my rationale in representing my data using the bus drawing and the drawing itself.

On Monday, the bus was boarded twice. The bus arrived on time between 6:00 and 8:00. The bus was late between 14:00 and 16:00. The bus was boarded five times on Tuesday. The bus arrived late on the five occasions. Between 8:00 and 10:00 the bus arrived late. I took a connecting bus between 12:00 to 14:00 and both times, the bus was late. Between 18:00 and 20:00, I took connecting buses and they were both late. On Wednesday, the bus was boarded twice. The bus came on time once and late once. The bus was on time in the morning between 6:00 and 8:00. The bus was late in the afternoon between 16:00 to 18:00. On Thursday and Friday, the bus was late the one time I boarded it between 10:00 and

12:00. The bus was boarded twice on Saturday. In the morning, between 6:00 and 8:00 the bus arrived on time. The bus arrived late between 16:00 and 18:00.

For this data, I chose to represent the data in visual form using double decker bus. I felt the bus image was appropriate since my theme was Metrobus. In this case, I had a six decker bus since my data collection was from Monday to Saturday. I chose to use circles in two colours to represent when the bus was on time or when the bus was late. Colour yellow was selected to represent when the bus was on time, depicting a feeling of happiness. Colour red was chosen to represent when the bus was late to depict anger and frustration. The mostly rectangular shaped boxes were used to represent day of the week and time. The boxes moving vertically represent the days of the week from Monday to Saturday (bottom to top). The boxes moving horizontally represent two hour intervalsl from 6:00 to 20:00 military time (left to right). Two circles connected with a line represent connecting buses.
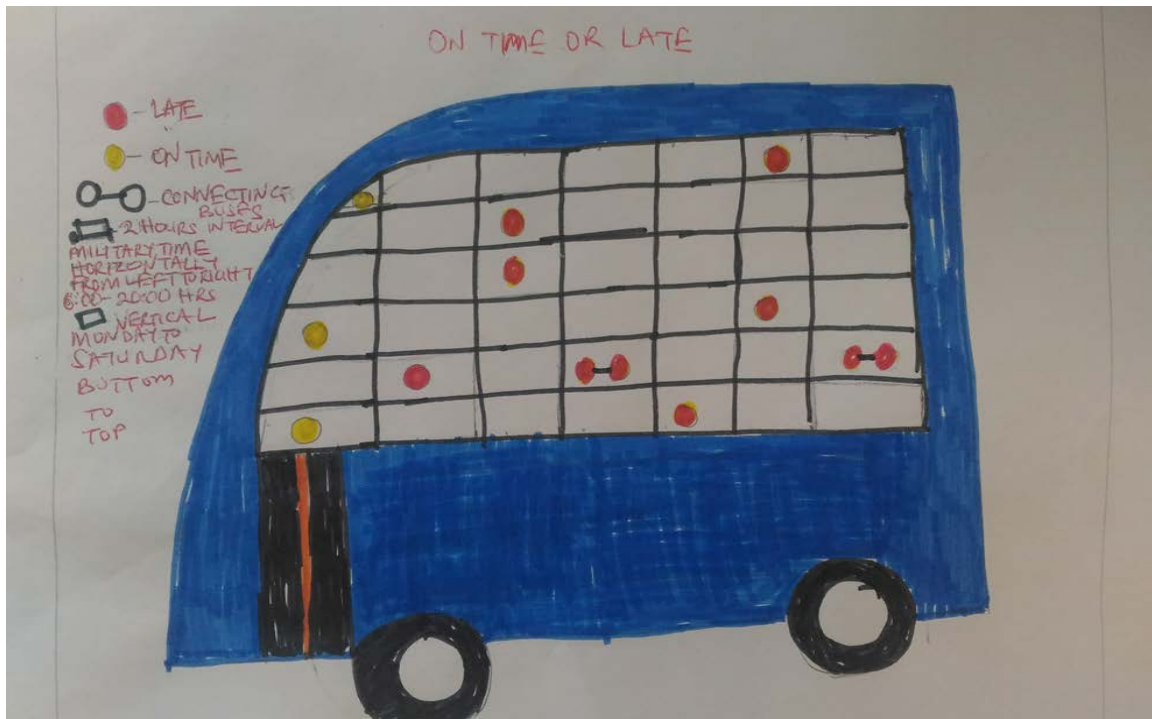

Week Three: Who Drove the Bus?

On the third week, data collection was on whether the bus was driven by a female transit operator or a male transit operator. By male and female, I mean the biological/ physical representation of a male or female. This was done for my sheer pleasure and curiosity. Data collection occurred over a period of six days. I recorded my observations of the gender of the transit operator on an app on my android phone called "do it later". My data were placed under two headings, man and woman. The number of times a woman drove the bus was counted. The number of times a man drove the bus was counted as well. On this particular week, the bus was boarded eighteen times. There were three times when a female transit operator drove the bus. The other fifteen times, the bus was driven by a male transit operator. A detailed description of how I gathered the data will be outlined next. This will be followed by the rationale behind my visual representation. Then, my drawing will be presented.

On Monday, the bus was boarded four times. Male transit operators drove the bus three times, while a female transit operator drove the bus once. The bus was driven by male transit operators the four times I boarded on Tuesday. Wednesday, the bus was boarded twice. A male transit operator drove once, and a female transit operator drove once. The bus was boarded three times on Thursday and was driven by male transit operators. On Friday, the bus was driven by male transit operators three times and once by a female transit operator. The two times the bus was boarded on Saturday, it was driven by a male transit operator.

Visually, the data were represented with shapes. Circles with dots were drawn to represent the female transit operator. Squares with lines were used to represent the male transit operator. Each line on which the shapes are placed represent different days of the week (Monday to Saturday) from left to right. I chose to use two colours, red and black, against a white background because I felt it was aesthetically beautiful. The bigger circle with the dots and the bigger square with the lines represent my interpretation of the data. I placed the circle within the square to show that there were more male transit operators than female transit operators.

WHO DROVE METROBUS?

HOW TO READ
▨ – MALE
⊙ – FEMALE
| – DAY OF THE WEEK (HORIZONTALLY FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) MONDAY TO SATURDAY
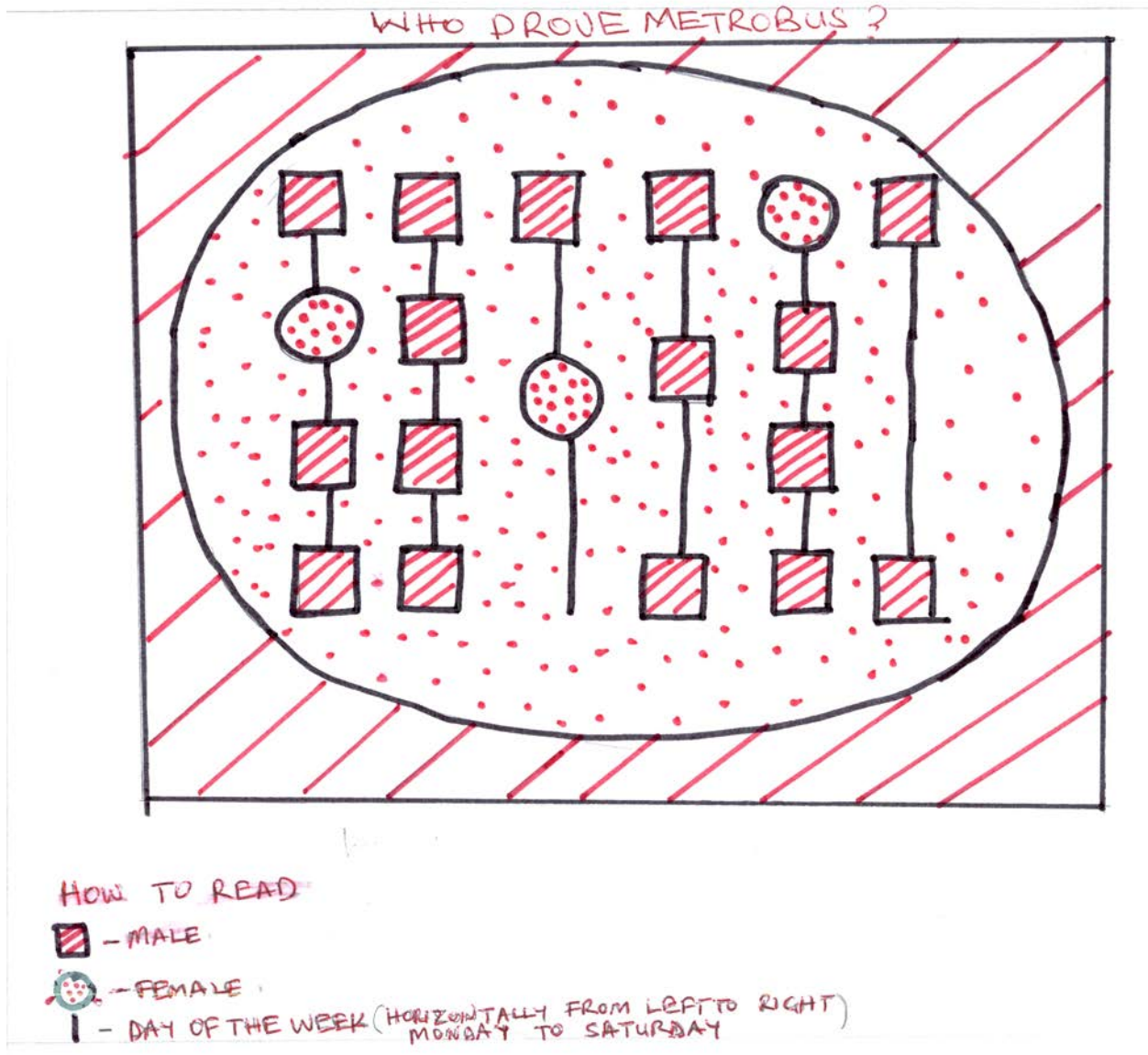
Findings and Discussion

In this section, the findings from the data analysis will be discussed. Findings from each week will be discussed individually. This will begin with week one and end at week three.

Week One: Greetings on the Bus

The first question of this project was to explore who extended or initiated greeting first on the bus. The reason behind this enquiry was my assumption that I initiated greetings more than the transit operators. As pointed out by Coffel (2015), customer service requires transit operators be courteous. This in turn promotes a friendly atmosphere which leads to customer satisfaction. The Metrobus (2015) employment guide also requires their transit operators to promote this friendly atmosphere. The

analysis of the data showed that the transit operators initiated greetings more than I did. This did not align with my perception that the transit operators did not provide good customer service. Besides, I cannot presume to understand the reasons behind why the transit operators on few occasions did not initiate the greetings. This project was personal. Therefore, I can only ask myself why I felt that the transit operators were unfriendly. It may be a result of personal bias. By holding Metrobus to the standards of London buses, I may have subconsciously assumed that since I perceived their service quality as inferior, their customer service will also be inferior. However, there are certain routes I take more often than others. Therefore, transit operators on some buses have become acquainted with me. This may account for why they initiate greetings before I do. Based on the week data were collected for the project, the transit operators initiated the greetings more than me.

Week Two: Time: On Time or Late

The second question to be addressed in this paper was whether the bus regularly arrived on time or late. Like many people who take the bus, I rely on Metrobus to help me get to appointments on time. The findings show that Metrobus is frequently late. This is frustrating because as Cervero and Wachs (1982) said, transit riders are more sensitive to schedule reliability than almost any other service attributes. Every time the bus shows up late, it leaves me agitated, depending if I have a class in school, an appointment with my supervisor, work schedule, or a visit with a friend. I agree with White, Valk, and Dialmy (2010) who explained that the costs related with arriving late are generally greater than the costs associated with arriving early. Personally, arriving somewhere before the time gives me an opportunity to compose myself. They also explained that personal standards of punctuality are better understood as situational and sociocultural rather than dispositional (White, Valk, & Dialmy, 2010). I agree that personal standards of punctuality are situational and sociocultural. However, I disagree that it is not dispositional. I was brought up to be punctual. My parents taught me that not being punctual is disrespectful. There are times I am aware that some social events will not start on time, but I choose to show up some minutes early or on time because I feel I will be disrespecting the hosts if I am late. My parents also taught me that when you are running late, you should inform people. I observed that the times the bus arrived late, the transit operators did not offer any form of apology. I do not consider that good customer service. If there were bus shelters to provide protection from the elements the lateness of the Metrobus can be tolerated. Waiting under the rain or snow for over ten minutes is unacceptable. The three times the bus arrived on time were in the morning between 6:00 and 8:00. Can this be attributed to the transit operators feeling restful? The subsequent late coming may be attributed to fatigue that sets in as the day progresses. Another explanation may be that the flow of traffic is less between 6:00 and 8:00. Regardless of what period of the day it is, I feel that transit operators should keep to their schedules or apologize when they are late.

Week Three: Who Drove the Bus?

The third set of data was meant to answer the question of whether there were more male transit operators than female transit operators. This was born out of sheer curiosity. The findings show that on the days, time, and routes I boarded the bus, there were more male transit operators than females. Within the context of my Dear Data project, female transit operators are grossly underrepresented in the transportation sector. The Metrobus (2015) employment guide did not explicitly state their stance on the Employment Equity Act. The underrepresentation of women transit operators observed in the third week echoes the report provided by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Labour that stated that women are underrepresented in the transportation sector (Government of Canada, 2016). I can only speculate that it is possible that the transit operator position may be perceived

as a masculine position. Therefore, few women are likely to apply for positions as transit operators. However, another explanation for the underrepresentation of females in the Metrobus system as transit operators can be understood from the work of Hideg and Ferris. Hideg and Ferris (2016) explained that attitudes such as benevolence sexism may undermine Employment Equity Act goals. They explained that men that are benevolent sexist are compassionate towards women because they view women as weak. On the one hand, they are more likely to support Employment Equity policies that allow women gain employment in feminine positions. It may be possible that those recruiting for transit operators' positions on the Metrobus may be benevolent sexists. Another reason may be that women are not interested in working as transit operators for reasons best known to them.

Reflection

When the Dear Data project was introduced in class, I was excited. I felt that this would be an interesting way to collect data on something I considered fun and not academic. The first challenge came when the instructor asked us to collect three different sets of data each week. I had to think of different subjects that would be of interest to me revolving around the Metrobus. I chose to collect data on the Metrobus because I wanted a project that was manageable. I did not want to have all these data that would pose complications to the data collection and analysis. This will explain why my data headings are either yes or no, on time or late, and male or female. I focused on one thing. For example, I was not interested in the facial expressions of the drivers. I was; however, interested in verbal greetings as I got on the bus. I was not interested in greetings of goodbyes or any other conversation the driver may have or may not have had with me. In retrospect, I think facial expressions of friendliness, gestures, other conversations, and good byes should have been recorded.

The second week, I focused solely on whether the bus was on time or early. It would have been interesting to note down the duration of the lateness each time the bus arrived late. On the third week, I observed gender of the transit operators. I should have observed the groups under the Employment Equity Act. The groups include women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. It has been more than a year since I had been using the Metrobus for my transportation needs. Within this period, I had never seen any indigenous peoples or visible minorities driving the bus.

The idea of drawing my data sounded like fun, although I do not consider myself artistic. It was; however, difficult to find ideas to represent my data. The Dear Data project book was helpful. It gave me some inspiration which translated into different drafts of what my drawings might look like. My partner (we each had a partner to bounce ideas off) for the Dear Data project was helpful in informing me which of the drawings he preferred. He made sure that the interpretations of the symbols made sense. For example, he suggested that the way I placed my symbols on the line representing who greeted was confusing.

Another challenge encountered in the Dear Data project was when we were asked to write the paper as a research paper. It made it more formal in that respect. Finding literature to understand topics that were selected out of pleasure seemed to reduce the pleasure aspect of the project. Interestingly, I found literature to support my work, and this made it interesting. The other aspect I found challenging was getting literature on qualitative analysis to justify how the data were analysed. This was due to the fact that I gathered and recorded data in a simple manner. It was difficult selecting a qualitative analysis method for my project.

The Dear Data project has challenged my biases. I still want to know why I assumed the transit operators were not friendly. Something else I realized is that I am a control freak. I like to control things. Hence,

my simplistic data topics and collection. Nevertheless, being simple has its advantages. I realized that I was not overwhelmed by the quantity of data collected. This helped me play with different visual representations before settling for the ones used in the paper.

Conclusion

The Dear Data project has been helpful in helping me articulate my feelings about the quality of service offered by the Metrobus in St. John's. As a user of Metrobus, I have come to realize explicitly that I am not satisfied with the way the bus system operates. The Metrobus needs to improve its service quality especially with regards to punctuality. It will be a worthwhile experience to conduct future research that focuses on punctuality. This will then help Metrobus provide better service, which will lead to greater customer satisfaction. The issue of underrepresentation of women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities needs to be addressed. My findings cannot be shared with Metrobus for ethical reasons because they were not aware that I was observing certain events on the bus. Other avenues of raising awareness of these issues can be pursued. After this project, I will like to gather a group of commuters to help raise awareness on some of the issues that affect us as we use Metrobus in St. John's. The City of St. John's claims that the bus fares were increased to help increase revenue. Revenues are meant to improve the lives of the citizens. The government of St. John's has still yet to provide bus shelters with benches for those who use the bus. If buses are going to be running late, at least there should be some form of protection. Future research will include observations and interviews because I would like to hear the opinions of other commuters on service quality.

The findings in this project can be considered trustworthy. As a researcher, I tried to keep my personal biases aside. The data collection process was uncomplicated. This made the analysis straightforward. The research method which was non-participatory observation was appropriate for the Dear Data project (Leavy, 2017). The three sets of data gathered and the conclusions from the research findings are appropriate (Leavy, 2017). The research process has been transparent. This is evident as I attempted to explain my rationale behind the topics selected, elaborated on my data collection, analysis, and visual representations. The findings in the project cannot be generalized to all commuters because it is based on my experiences with buses, and my perception of service quality.

In conclusion, the Dear Data project has taught me that the data gathered in the three weeks is the beginning of a story, not the end. In my methodology I justified why my project was not critical and transformative. Having gone through this process, I will like to challenge the government of St. John's in their lack of commitment to making lives better for people who use public transportation. Above all, I will challenge myself to stop waiting for people to extend greetings to me, and to question personal biases that affect my perceptions of people.

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