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THE INFLUENCE OF TARIFFS ON PASSENGER CHOICE OF TRANSPORTATION MODE IN A SUBURBAN CONNECTION

Summary*. For trips to the suburban area, passengers who do not own a vehicle typically use either a bus or a suburban railway. The main purposes of such trips are usually work, education, tourism and leisure, medical treatment or healthcare services, visiting relatives and friends, and similar activities. In most cases, passengers plan their trip before departure, which includes choosing the mode of transportation, departure and arrival times, trip duration, transportation costs, and other factors. All these factors differently influence the passenger's final choice of transportation mode.*

This study investigates the impact of tariffs on the passengers' choice of suburban transportation mode under conditions with an equivalent road and railway connection from the departure point to the destination. During the study, the tariffs were compared for transportation by road and railway suburban transport for different travel distances within the suburban area.

The main task of the research is to identify the primary factors that passengers consider when selecting a mode of transport and to establish the conditions under which passengers are more likely to choose suburban railway transport.

The article also determines the ratio of travel costs by road and rail modes of transport within suburban traffic and calculates the change in this ratio with increasing travel distance. Furthermore, the influence of other factors on passengers' choices was determined through surveys. The research results allow for more effective setting of transportation tariffs, rational use of strategies for the developing the transportation enterprise, and more accurate forecasting of transportation revenue. Choosing the optimal tariff promotes an increase in demand for railway transport, helps maintain competitiveness in the transportation market, and provides an opportunity to attract new users. The organization of a rational pricing policy ensures effective management of the carrier's income and considers the opportunities and interests of passengers and the transportation company

Key words: *suburban railway transport, suburban railway tariffs, optimization of transportation in suburban connection.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Successful and efficient passenger transportation is inextricably linked to determining the optimal tariff. A rational tariff policy ensures the enterprise's stable development and operation and maintains existing positions in the transportation market. The formation of general tariffs for suburban railway transportation is relatively straightforward and predictable. The ticket cost depends on the number of tariff zones traveled during the trip, which are determined by the transportation distance. The described tariff formation method allows passengers to calculate the cost of their planned trip easily and minimizes

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additional unplanned expenses for users of transportation services. It, in turn, increases trust in railway transport and helps retain the passenger customer.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The approach to forming suburban tariffs in railway transportation is outdated and almost entirely excludes an individual approach to the passenger. Today, the tariff for suburban passenger transportation does not depend on the time of day, day of the week, season, or the frequency of the passenger's trips, which complicates the carrier's ability to respond to external changes. The choice of an optimal transportation tariff is a multifactorial and complex process, as it must balance the economic efficiency of the transportation enterprise and also consider the social needs of the passenger. Transportation costs constitute a significant part of the monthly income for many passengers, so the ticket price affects their standard of living and economic stability. Given the relevance of fare-setting issues for both passengers and carriers, it is necessary to analyze the impact of tariffs on the choice of transportation mode in suburban connections.

The aim of the research is to identify the main factors influencing passengers' choice of railway transportation and to determine the conditions under which passengers prefer suburban rail transport in the context of competition with road transportation.

The research tasks are:

- to calculate the ratio of travel costs between road and railway transportation in suburban connections for trips of different distances;
- to assess the impact of tariffs, safety, passenger comfort during the trip, and schedule management on the passenger's choice of suburban transportation mode;
- to identify and prioritize the main passenger demands regarding improving service quality and amenities.

The object of the research is the key factors influencing passengers' choice of transportation mode in suburban transit.

The research subject is fare formation and the impact of tariffs on passengers' choice of suburban transportation mode.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RECENT RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The formation of suburban tariffs and their impact on passengers arouses interest in the scientific field and has been studied by many researchers.

In articles [1–3], it was noted that the fare is an essential element of transportation organization, which influences demand, revenue, and the social accessibility of passenger transport services. According to the conclusions, there is a clearly expressed inverse relationship between fares and demand for transportation: the higher the fare for a particular type of transport, the lower the demand for its services. Additionally, fare formation should be carried out not only from a profitability perspective but also considering the needs of all population segments and ensuring social fairness.

In the work [4], authors noted that forming fare policies within the suburban transportation ticketing system is a less-studied issue. Additionally, integrating Ukraine's transport sector into the EU requires modern forms and methods of economic management to accelerate and activate cooperation.

In the paper [5], it is noted that despite the expected profit from passenger transportation, which directly depends on the fare, it is necessary to consider the impact of transportation costs on the mobility level of the population. According to the development programs of many densely populated cities, transportation prices are affordable for users and do not cover all transportation costs. Additional funding for suburban transportation is provided through city and regional budgets or contracts with companies and enterprises interested in such services. It is worth noting that the financing of suburban passenger transportation is outlined in the current Directive 2012/34/EU of November 21, 2012 [6], which does not provide for cross-subsidization of suburban services at the expense of freight operations, a practice that is

still carried out in Ukraine. To comply with technical interoperability specifications and ensure transparency and control over transportation, cross-subsidization of suburban services in Ukraine will not be implemented after accession to the EU.

The study [7] was dedicated to passenger behavior when choosing transportation modes in urban and suburban transport connections. Chinese researchers found that in Shanghai, most passengers are price-sensitive regarding transportation fares. Suburban transport users prefer cheaper railway services, even if it increases travel time. Cheap railway fares are part of a strategy to reduce car traffic, which will encourage the development of cycling, improve environmental conditions, decrease noise levels in the city, and enhance road safety.

The scientific work [8] was dedicated to studying the factors that influence the integration of railway transport into urban transportation. The authors identified 27 factors that passengers may consider when choosing a mode of transport. Road, railway, and personal transport were selected for comparison in this study. The results demonstrated that tariffs significantly impact the choice of transport mode. However, the most influential factors were the waiting time before departure and the frequency of vehicle arrivals.

It is also worth noting that studies [9, 10] propose affordable railway tariffs for all users, with the possibility of free travel for specific categories of citizens. The fare may vary depending on the importance and capacity of the route. The main idea is to encourage residents of the city and suburban areas to refrain from using their private vehicles when commuting to work, school, leisure activities, and so on. It allows for improved traffic management and the road network. In addition, rail transport, characterized by strict adherence to the schedule, will enable passengers to plan their time more efficiently and make the journey more predictable.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN MATERIAL

As noted in paper [11], suburban transportation has faced many problems that reduce its competitiveness and negatively impact passengers' choice to travel by rail. The main task is to create favorable conditions to attract passengers to railway services. The low cost of railway transportation and the slow growth of tariffs play a key role in passengers' selection of the mode of transport.

In 2025, there was a slight increase in tariffs for suburban railway transportation, which had been in effect since 2023. As an example, we will consider the tariffs for suburban services of the Lviv Railway (Fig. 1) [12, 13].

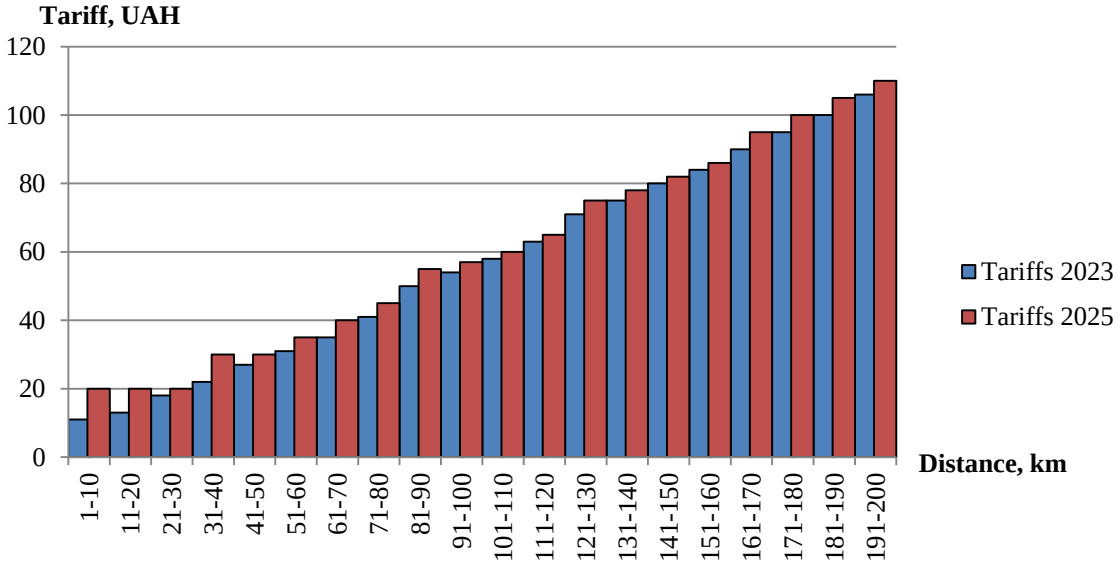

Fig. 1. Comparison of tariffs for suburban transportation by Lviv Railway for 2023 and 2025

Table 1 has been created based on the graph (Fig. 1), which shows the tariff percentage increase for each zone.

The table is formed for travel distances of up to 200 km, although according to regulatory sources, suburban transportation by railway in Ukraine is considered to be within a distance of up to 150 km. The reason for this is insufficient rolling stock to carry out railway transportation. Therefore, several suburban routes are combined into one with an increased travel distance.

Table 1

Difference in fares for suburban railway transportation on the Lviv Railway for the years 2023 and 2025

Distance, km	Tariff, UAH		Change of tariff, %	Distance, km	Tariff, UAH.		Change of tariff, %
	2023	2025			2023	2025	
1–10	11	20	+81.82	101–110	58	60	+3.45
11–20	13	20	+53.85	111–120	63	65	+3.17
21–30	18	20	+11.11	121–130	71	75	+5.63
31–40	22	30	+36.36	131–140	75	78	+4.00
41–50	27	30	+11.11	141–150	80	82	+2.50
51–60	31	35	+12.90	151–160	84	86	+2.38
61–70	35	40	+14.29	161–170	90	95	+5.56
71–80	41	45	+9.76	171–180	95	100	+5.26
81–90	50	55	+10.00	181–190	100	105	+5.00
91–100	54	57	+5.56	191–200	106	110	+3.78

As shown in Table 1, the tariff increase for most zones ranges from 2 % to 15 %. However, for trips covering a distance of 1–20 km, the increase exceeds 50 %. The purpose of this increase is to bring the transportation cost closer to the fare for a single trip on public transport, since in many cases, stations and stops for the first and second tariff zones are located within the city and have similar routes to urban transport.

In the article [14], the proportion of passengers choosing road transport for travel was determined and graphically depicted (Fig. 2) depending on the ratio of the travel cost of road and rail transport.

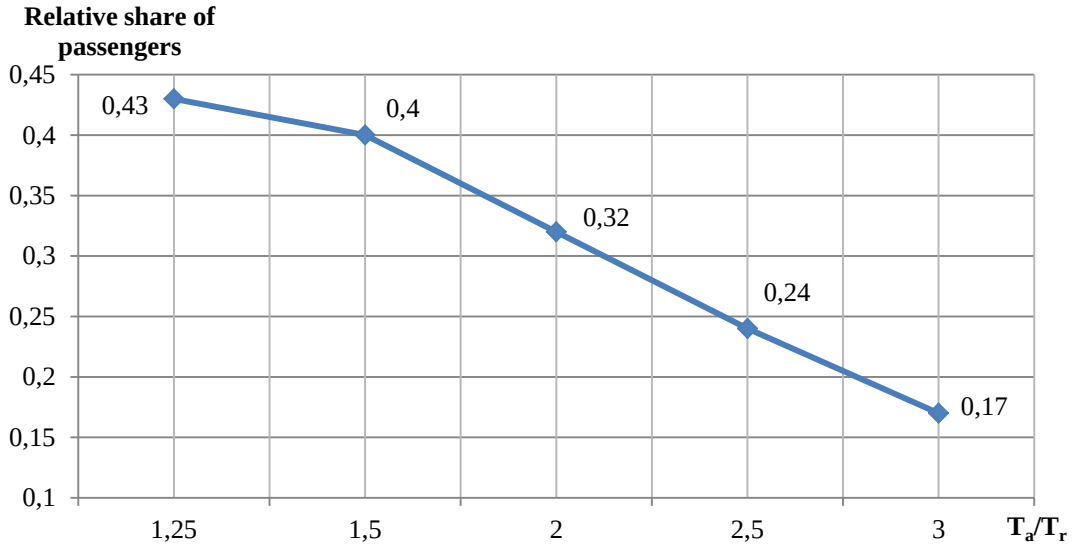

Fig. 2. The relative share of passengers choosing the road transportation depending on the ratio of fares for road and railway transportation [14]: T_a – tariff for road transport; T_r – tariff for railway transport

According to the graph in Fig. 2, less than 35 % of passengers would choose road transportation if the trip cost is twice as high as an equivalent train trip. If the trip cost is 2.5 times higher, less than 25 % of passengers would use road transportation. It should be noted that, according to statistical data [15], in recent years, the volume of suburban transportation by road transport surpasses that of rail transport by a factor of 2.9 to 3.7, as shown in Fig. 3.

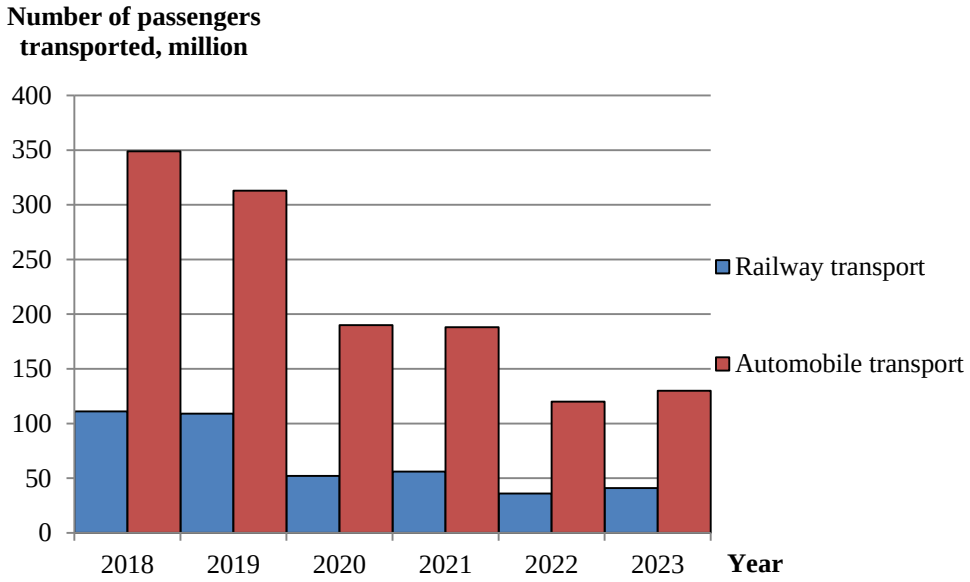

Fig. 3. Comparison of suburban transportation volumes by road and railway in 2018–2023

For comparison of tariffs for both types of transportation in suburban connection, Fig. 4 presents the average fare for road transportation in 2023 and 2025, and the ratio of tariffs between road and rail suburban transport is shown in Table 2.

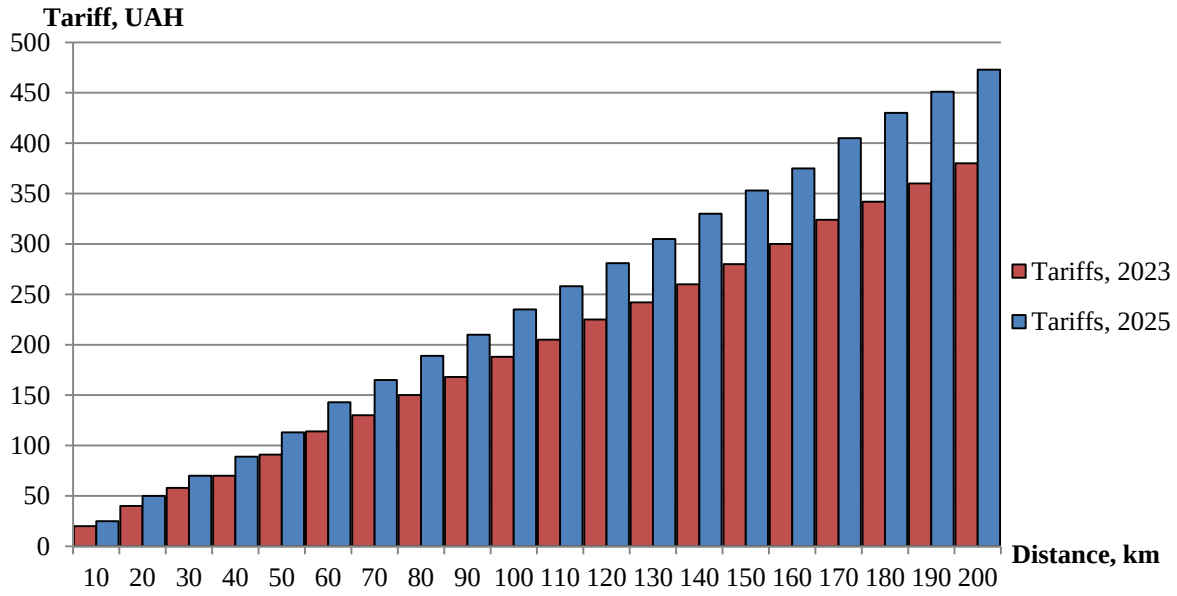

Fig. 4. Average tariffs for suburban transportation by road in 2023 and 2025

Table 2

Comparison of tariffs for suburban transportation

Distance, km	Tariff, UAH		T_a/T_r	Distance, km	Tariff, UAH		T_a/T_r
	Road	Rail			Road	Rail	
10	25	20	1.25	110	258	60	4.30
20	50	20	2.50	120	281	65	4.32
30	70	20	3.50	130	305	75	4.07
40	89	30	2.97	140	330	78	4.23
50	113	30	3.77	150	353	82	4.30
60	143	35	4.09	160	375	86	4.36
70	165	40	4.13	170	405	95	4.26
80	189	45	4.20	180	430	100	4.30
90	210	55	3.82	190	451	105	4.30
100	235	57	4.12	200	473	110	4.30

From Table 2, it can be concluded that when making a trip of up to 20 km in distance, the passenger will not consider the fare for transportation, but will take into account such factors as waiting time for the vehicle, travel duration, and comfort during the trip. For trips exceeding 20 km, passengers will prefer railway transport more frequently if the schedule is convenient and does not require additional waiting time. The conclusions are derived from the analysis of Fig. 2 and Table 2.

The calculations in Table 2 confirm the results presented in the study [15]. An increase in trip distance increases the frequency with which passengers choose railway transport in suburban connections.

A study in which railway users evaluated the cost and comfort of the trip on a 10-point scale and indicated which services and service components they believed were lacking to ensure high-quality transportation was conducted to assess the impact of tariffs on passengers' choice of transportation mode in suburban connections.

In the study, 200 respondents were surveyed using an online questionnaire. Under ideal conditions to ensure statistical representativeness with a 90 % confidence interval and a margin of error of ±5 %, it is necessary to survey 280–300 respondents, depending on the total population of suburban railway passengers. A sample of 200 individuals allows for an understanding of user`s main trends and priorities, as well as conclusions regarding their assessments of comfort and tariffs. Among the surveyed passengers, 58 % are men and 42 % are women, mostly aged between 18 and 50. The purpose of trips among the surveyed passengers is distributed as follows:

- 38 % – personal trip;
- 24 % – commuting to work;
- 22 % – tourism / leisure activities;
- 10 % – trips for other purposes;
- 4 % – commuting to study;
- 2 % – medical treatment or healthcare services.

According to the analysis of the survey conducted, it was established that 94 % of respondents traveled by suburban railway transport within the Lviv Railway.

The results of the tariff and comfort assessment during travel in suburban transportation are presented in Table 3. To organize the results, we will group the evaluations as follows:

- 1–4 – low rating;
- 5–7 – medium rating;
- 8–10 – high rating.

Based on Table 3, diagrams illustrating the distribution of user tariff ratings and trip comfort ratings have been created, as shown in Fig. 5.

The survey results from passengers regarding improvements to services and amenities during the trip are presented in Fig. 6.

The selection of passenger survey questions was conducted based on the analysis of additional literature and the identification of key aspects that influence passenger satisfaction.

Table 3

Results of the assessment of tariffs and travel comfort by railway transportation users

Assessment	Choice frequency		Assessment	Choice frequency	
	tariff	comfort		tariff	comfort
1	2	6	6	2	12
2	0	8	7	6	12
3	4	8	8	8	10
4	2	8	9	14	6
5	18	26	10	44	4

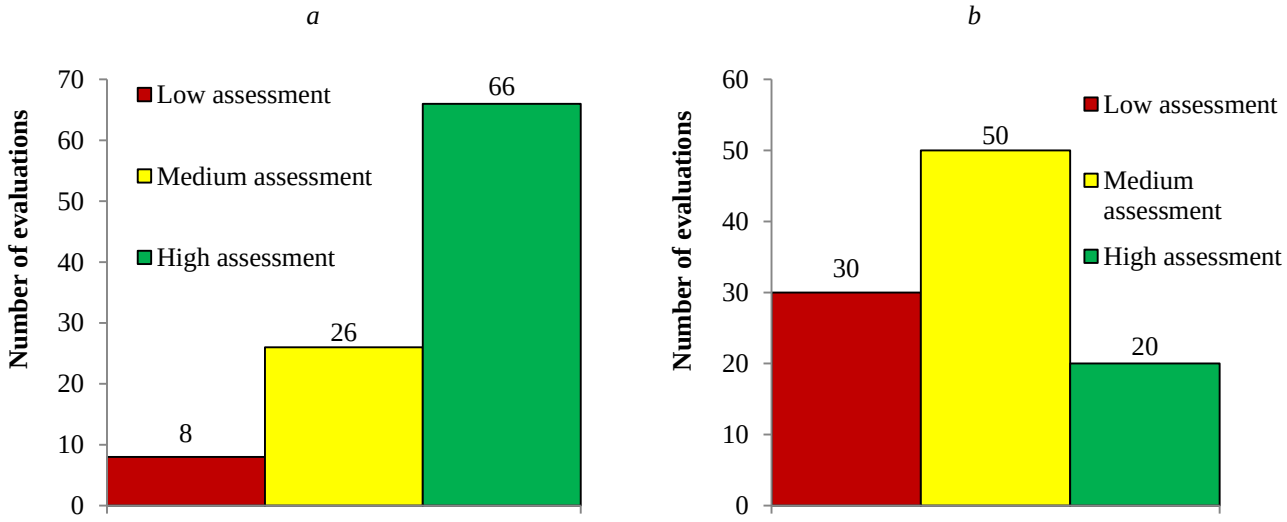

Fig. 5. Distribution charts of ratings: a – tariffs; b – travel comfort

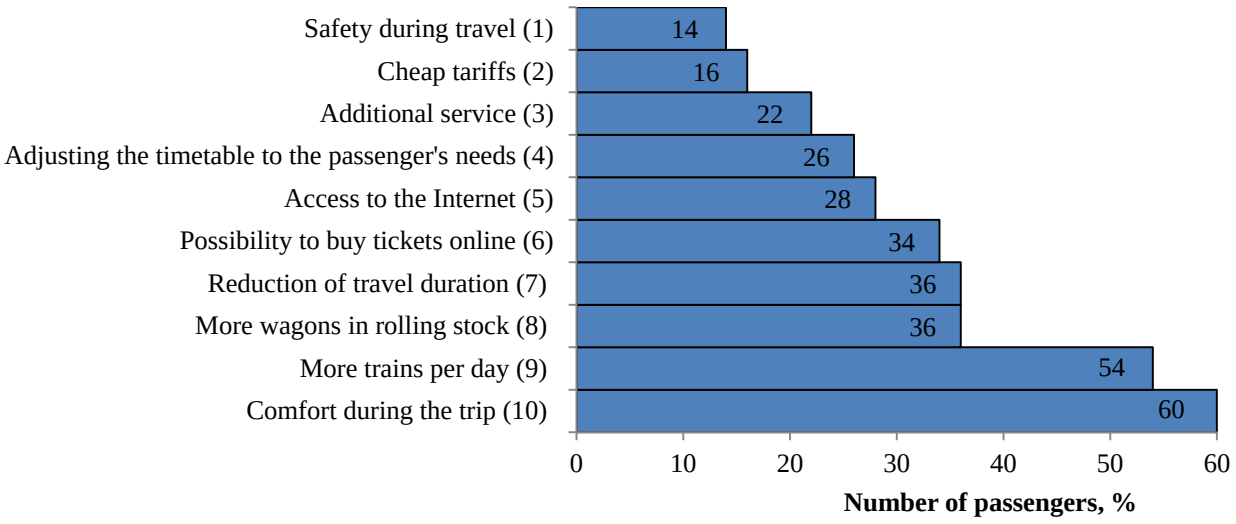

Fig. 6. Diagrams of passenger requests for improving the quality of service and facilities

According to the data presented in Figs 5–6, it can be concluded that less than 10 % of suburban railway transport users rate the fare as unacceptable, 26 % of passengers rated the fare as average, and 66 % gave a high rating. Additionally, only 14 % of respondents expect a reduction in travel costs. It suggests that most users perceive the fares as acceptable, and even a decrease in fares is unlikely to increase users' trust significantly.

Passenger requests regarding the improvement of service quality and facilities, shown in Fig. 6, can be divided into four main categories:

- safety (point No.1);
- tariff (point No. 2);
- comfort (points No. 3, 5, 6, 10);
- traffic schedule planning and management (points No. 4, 7, 8, 9).

The research results show that the most important aspects influencing passengers' choice of transportation mode in suburban travel are effective scheduling, timetable management, and the comfort experienced during the trip. The fare for transportation is in third place, and safety is ranked last.

Additionally, a survey was conducted among railway suburban transport users to compare the influence of fares and trip duration on the choice of suburban transport mode, and the following results were obtained:

- 36 % of passengers will choose a trip costing 60 UAH and lasting 3 hours;
- 64 % of passengers will choose a trip costing 120 UAH and lasting 2 hours.

Such a distribution of passenger responses confirms the previous conclusion regarding the significant, but not dominant, influence of fares on the passenger's choice of transport mode.

Studies of the European transportation market highlight different passenger preferences. Researchers in the work [16] identify four main factors influencing passenger satisfaction: reliability, comfort, accessibility, and safety. In the study [17], it is described that the most important aspects for users are a sense of safety during the trip, punctuality, and frequency of vehicle movement, as well as the competence and politeness of the staff. It is also worth paying attention to the article [18]. The authors concluded that personal characteristics, such as age, gender, communicative behavior, and others, also influence the transportation mode choice. Additionally, it is necessary to provide benefits for daily trips to encourage passengers to change their mode of transport, which include the already mentioned factors: transportation speed, comfort, safety, cost, flexibility, environmental friendliness, and mobility.

Comparing the situation in Ukraine with the European experience, it is worth noting that passengers in European countries are accustomed to a high level of comfort and access to convenient suburban transportation. It shifts the vector of their demands and expectations, particularly in safety, courteous and competent service personnel, and the provision of personalized services. In Ukraine, within the context of current military challenges, special attention is given to the functionality of transport, since safety, although important, is not the priority compared to the ability to quickly and efficiently ensure passenger transportation in challenging conditions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The work reviews previous studies that describe the impact of transportation tariffs on passengers' choice of mode of transport in suburban connections. The literature review results indicate that affordable tariffs are essential to population mobility and critical for low-income groups.

Effective tariff planning allows for increased competitiveness of a mode of transport and ensures a stable income for the transport enterprise. Regarding the development of the road transport network, low and affordable tariffs positively influence the shift from private transportation to public transportation, which reduces traffic volume, improves environmental conditions and road safety, and lowers overall road maintenance costs. To this end, free or "symbolic" tariffs for specific routes are implemented.

The tariff system for suburban railway transportation is predictable. It depends on the number of transport zones that a passenger travels through, which allows for an accurate forecast of the total

transportation costs. Compared to competing road transportation, railway tariffs are cheaper by a factor of 1.25 to 4.3 times. The study found that, given the equivalent car and railway routes, 32 % of passengers would still choose to travel by car despite the higher cost.

The survey conducted as part of the study demonstrates high satisfaction with railway tariffs. Less than 10 % of respondents consider the tariffs to be high. However, the most important factors for 60 % of respondents are comfort during the trip and the planning and management of the train schedule, which includes: frequency of service, capacity of the rolling stock, and travel duration. These results confirm the conclusions of foreign researchers, who additionally highlight safety during the trip as a factor, which in many cases is a priority for foreign passengers. Regarding this study, safety was the least important factor for passengers.

Using the obtained results, it was possible to identify and prioritize the main passenger requests regarding improving service quality and facilities. The most relevant requests from passengers include: comfort during the trip, increasing the frequency of transportation, and increasing the capacity of the rolling stock.

Further research on the issue of tariffing for suburban passenger transportation within suburban connections should focus on integrating the Ukrainian transport system into the European one, in compliance with the European Union directives regarding the single market for transport services, ensuring equal conditions for carriers, and creating a competitive environment. According to the current Directive 2012/34/EU requirements of November 21, 2012, cross-subsidization of suburban passenger services at the expense of freight services is prohibited. Considering the consistent losses of suburban transportation and the impossibility of using profits from freight transportation, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive approach to obtain additional funding sources, such as local communities, business representatives, fees, grants, and others. Additionally, upon joining the European Transport Network, a fee for access to infrastructure usage will be established as a mandatory component, which will be paid by the company conducting the transportation.

The creation of new transportation conditions and European integration will introduce adjustments to the calculation of the fare system for transportation, which will inevitably lead to an increase in costs and negatively impact the economic stability of passengers. However, as mentioned, suburban transit is a social transport infrastructure and contributes to economic development, ensuring mobility and accessibility for the population. Considering this, tariffs must, in any case, consider the financial vulnerability of specific population categories. Currently, this issue is regulated both in Ukraine and in the European Union countries.

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ВПЛИВ ТАРИФІВ НА ВИБІР ВИДУ ТРАНСПОРТУ ПАСАЖИРОМ У ПРИМІСЬКОМУ СПОЛУЧЕННІ

Анотація. *Для здійснення поїздок за межі міста пасажири, які не мають власного транспортного засобу, зазвичай використовують автомобільне або залізничне приміське сполучення. Основні цілі таких поїздок – робота, навчання, туризм та відпочинок, лікування або отримання медичних послуг, відвідування рідних та близьких людей тощо. Здебільшого перед відправленням пасажири здійснюють планування подорожі, що передбачає вибір виду транспорту, визначення часу відправлення та прибуття, тривалості поїздки, вартості*

перевезення тощо. Всі ці фактори по-різному впливають на кінцевий вибір виду транспорту. У роботі досліджено вплив тарифів на вибір виду приміського транспорту за наявності рівноцінного автомобільного та залізничного сполучення з пункту відправлення до пункту призначення. Під час дослідження здійснено порівняння тарифів на перевезення автомобільним та залізничним приміським транспортом для різних відстаней слідування, що входять у межі приміського сполучення.

Головним завданням дослідження є виділення основних факторі, на які звертають увагу пасажири під час вибору виду транспорту для слідування, та встановлення умов, за яких вони вибирають приміський залізничний транспорт.

Також у статті визначено відношення вартості проїзду автомобільним та залізничним видами транспорту в межах приміського руху й обчислено зміну цього відношення зі збільшенням дальності поїздки. Крім цього, за допомогою опитування визначено вплив інших факторів на вибір пасажирів. Результати дослідження дають змогу ефективніше встановлювати тарифи на перевезення, раціонально використовувати стратегії розвитку транспортного підприємства та точніше прогнозувати дохід від перевезень. Вибір оптимального тарифу сприяє підвищенню попиту на залізничний транспорт, допомагає залишатися конкурентними на транспортному ринку, а також дає можливість залучити нових користувачів. Організація раціональної цінової політики забезпечує ефективне управління доходами перевізника, а також враховує можливості та інтереси пасажирів та транспортної компанії.

Ключові слова: *приміський залізничний транспорт, приміські залізничні тарифи, оптимізація перевезень у приміському сполученні.*