

1 **COMMUTER ARRIVAL TIME VALUE FUNCTION IN URBAN RAIL**
2 **TRANSIT**

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1 **ABSTRACT**

2 The passenger distribution of urban mass transit network is influenced by two kinds of
3 choice, route choice and departure time choice. However, the latter choice has been
4 ignored for a long time. For commuters with specified destination arrival time, the
5 departure time choice is actually a trade-off between the perceived crowdedness and
6 arrival time value. To obtain a better understanding of the influencing factors and
7 mechanism of commuter arrival time value, the paper tries to introduce the value
8 function of prospect theory. Several reference point alternatives are discussed and
9 parameters are estimated with the empirical data from Shanghai, China. Results show
10 that commuters show asymmetrical response to gains and losses, being more sensitive
11 to the latter one, which is consistent with prospect theory. The time when a commuter
12 starts to consider departing later and work/school start time are two reference points
13 of arrival time value function in urban mass transit, and commuters are reluctant to
14 switch their departure time even when they arrive at reference points. The optimal
15 simplified value function fits the data well and hits as much as 86.45% of the sample.

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20 *Keywords:* Urban Rail Transit, Departure Time Choice, Arrival Time Value, Prospect
21 Theory, Value Function, Reference Point

1 INTRODUCTION

2 Thanks to its speediness, punctuality and large capacity, urban rail transit is becoming
3 the backbone of many cities' transportation. Especially during morning and evening
4 peak, it undertakes a large number of middle- and long- distance trips of commuters.
5 However, overcrowding has become the common problem for these cities at the same
6 time. For example, the proportion of crowded sections within Shanghai Metro
7 Network in China during peak hour is 15.19%, and the most crowded section's
8 demand-capacity ratio is as high as 1.67. To alleviate this situation, efforts should not
9 only be put to enhance capacity from the supply side. From the demand side, dynamic
10 passenger distribution needs to be clearer. The passenger flow of each section within
11 the network is accumulated by the passengers departing at various moments with
12 diverse routes. So the passenger distribution is influenced by two kinds of choice,
13 route choice and departure time choice. However, commuter departure time choice
14 has been ignored by most of previous studies (1-3) or assumed to be given (4-6).

15 Departure time choice was focused in road traffic since the 1980s. Its core
16 issue is to establish the relation between the time uncertainty caused by congestion
17 and commuter arrival time value, both in econometric modeling (7-10) and dynamic
18 user equilibrium analysis fields (11-13). But in urban rail transit, with the increase of
19 passengers, the travel time of trains doesn't change. Instead, it leads to the
20 aggravation of in-vehicle crowdedness and the extension of time for passengers to
21 board and alight. Thus, what affects commuter departure time choice in urban rail
22 transit is no longer time uncertainty. It is the additional psychological pressure caused
23 by in-vehicle crowdedness that really works. The other essential factor in the choice
24 of departure time is arrival time value, which is also known as schedule delay penalty.
25 With switching departure time, passengers will experience different in-vehicle
26 crowdedness and arrival times. The departure time choice of commuters with a
27 definite work start time is actually a trade-off between the perceived crowdedness and
28 arrival time value.

29 Over the past decades, research efforts in urban rail transit have gradually
30 placed emphasis on departure time choice behavior of passengers for overcrowding
31 reduction. Tian and Huang (14) regarded that crowding cost and early arrival penalty
32 are compared by passengers when they choose trains. However, this study only gave a
33 conceptual description about early arrival penalty, without a certain function. Both
34 early arrival and late arrival penalties are considered in the model proposed by Tian et
35 al. (15). Schedule delay penalties are expressed as linear functions and assumed to be
36 proportional to the difference between actual arrival time and work start time. The
37 linear function form was also used in the subway commuter departure time choice
38 model proposed by Wu and Huang (16). Nevertheless, the values of parameters in
39 actual network haven't been estimated by any one of them. Harada et al. (17), Iwakura
40 and Harada (18) developed a departure time choice model for commuter trips in
41 Tokyo metropolitan area. The utility function of Logit model took the time earlier than
42 work start time as one variable. Estimation result showed its parameter is negative.
43 Ieda et al. (19) proposed that commuter arrival time choice behavior is affected by late
44 arrival penalty. It is assumed to be a non-linear function of the difference between the

1 actual arrival time and work start time. Late arrival penalty increases with the
2 difference, while the rate of its growth decreases gradually. Soyama et al. (20) divided
3 the value of arrival time into two parts, deviation penalty and late arrival penalty. The
4 former one is assumed to be a quadratic function of the difference between the actual
5 arrival time and the preferred arrival time, while the latter one is a quadratic function
6 of the difference between the actual arrival time and work start time.

7 In the researches mentioned above, most of them assumed that arrival time
8 value is a linear function of the difference between commuter actual time and their
9 work start time. Only a little study considered the preferred arrival time as a reference
10 point, but the function form was still predetermined. Although these works provide
11 valuable insights into commuter departure time choice, they do not identify the
12 commuter's asymmetrical response to gains and losses arising from his/her actual
13 arrival time relative to reference points they may have. And the determination of
14 reference point still needs more discussion.

15 Prospect theory was proposed by Kahneman and Tversky (21) in 1979 based
16 on the assumption that people are "bounded rational" (22) instead of "complete
17 rational", owing to their limited cognitive ability, inferential capability and
18 information acquisition. According to the theory, a commuter is assumed to maintain
19 the same choice as long as his/her actual schedule delay is contained in the
20 indifference band. Otherwise, the commuter will adjust the departure time through
21 some procedures. Moreover, the commuter reacts asymmetrically to gains and losses.
22 The commuter exhibits risk aversion for gains and risk seeking for losses. Thus, the
23 value function is normally concave for gains, commonly convex for losses. The
24 theory has been already introduced to commuter departure time choice in road traffic.
25 The study by Chang and Mahmassani (23) has confirmed that the indifference band of
26 tolerable schedule delay is the most important criterion governing the day-to-day
27 responses of commuters to congestion. Jou and Kitamura (24) developed a
28 four-segmented value functions with the earliest arrival time, the preferred arrival
29 time, and the work start time for a given commuter as reference points. Using the
30 maximum likelihood method. Jou et al. (25) estimated the value model with the
31 survey data of auto commuter departure time decision. Limited to the tool, the value
32 function is simplified to a linear form. Results indicated that the commuter behavior is
33 consistent with the theoretical postulates of prospect theory. However, it cannot
34 examine the concavity and convexity of the function. Senbil and Kitamura (26)
35 proposed two decision frames that comply with the prospect theoretic propositions.
36 The empirical results suggest that prospect theory is applicable in commuter departure
37 time choice. The value function is convex for losses and concave for gains.

38 Although the mechanisms of commuter departure time choice in road traffic
39 and urban rail transit are similar, the trade-off element is totally different, which is
40 time uncertainty in road traffic but in-vehicle crowdedness in urban rail transit. Since
41 there is no related research on commuter arrival time value function in urban rail
42 transit, this paper aims at examining the applicability of the value function of prospect
43 theory to the commuter departure time decision-making and discussing the decision
44 frame and reference points of value functions with empirical data.

1 The remainder of the study is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly
 2 introduces the characteristics of value function of prospect theory and proposed a
 3 decision frame as well as several alternative reference points. Section 3 analyzes the
 4 survey data of Shanghai Metro commuters. The relations among alternative reference
 5 points are also discussed in this part. Section 4 estimates the models with different
 6 reference points and examines whether the arrival time value functions are in
 7 accordance with prospect theory. Section 5 provides conclusions.

9 **METHODOLOGY**

10 The value function of prospect theory is used to evaluate each possible result,
 11 reflecting the subjective value of different results. It is assumed to be a random
 12 function due to the cognitive limitation of commuters. The properties of the value
 13 function are summarized as follows:

- 14 1. Defined on the deviation from the reference point;
- 15 2. Generally concave for gains and convex for losses;
- 16 3. Steeper for losses than for gains.

17 Property 1 shows that the value function focuses on the magnitude of change
 18 from reference points, so the selection of reference points is critical. On the other
 19 hand, the mathematical form of the value function should comply with Properties 2
 20 and 3.

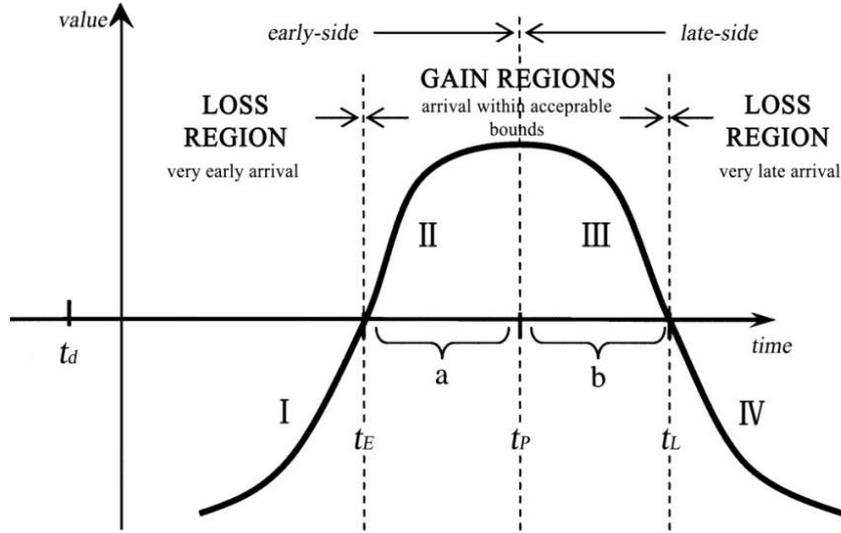
22 **Reference Points**

23 In the value function, the reference points are divided into two categories, zero-value
 24 position and extreme-value position. A commuter experiences the maximum gain
 25 when his/her arrival time is in the extreme-value position, the corresponding moment
 26 of which is defined as the preferred arrival time (t_p). A commuter is assumed to
 27 maintain the same choice as long as his/her actual schedule delay is contained in the
 28 indifference band according to prospect theory. The demarcation points of the
 29 indifference band are defined as zero-value positions. When a commuter arrives at
 30 these moments, there is neither gain nor loss. The lower limit position is called the
 31 demarcation point of too-early arrival (t_E), when the upper limit position is called the
 32 demarcation point of too-late arrival (t_L). Most of studies regard the acceptable
 33 earliest arrival time (t_{e1}) as t_E and work start time (t_w) as t_L (24-26). In view of that
 34 more commuters are allowed to be later than work start time, the acceptable latest
 35 arrival time (t_{l1}) is introduced as an alternative to t_L . Based on the concept of
 36 indifference points, this paper adds the time when a commuter starts to consider
 37 departing later (t_{e2}) and the time when a commuter starts to consider departing earlier
 38 (t_{l2}) as alternatives to t_E and t_L , respectively.

40 **The Proposed Decision Frame**

41 This decision frame has been developed by Jou and Kitamura (24). The demarcation
 42 points of too-early and too-late arrival are reference points, and the preferred arrival
 43 time is a “pseudo” reference point. A gain occurs when the commuter arrival time is
 44 within the range of two reference points (segments II and III), similarly, a loss occurs

1 when the commuter experiences an arrival time which is beyond this range (segments
 2 I and IV). When a commuter arrives at reference points, then the net value is zero.
 3 When his/her actual arrival time is the preferred arrival time, the value reaches the
 4 maximum (Figure 1).
 5



6
 7
 8 **FIGURE 1 Arrival time value function.**
 9

10 An arrival is defined as an early-side arrival if $t_a < t_p$; and is defined as a
 11 late-side arrival if $t_a > t_p$. The reference point for an early-side arrival is t_E , and for a
 12 late-side arrival is t_L . The segmented value function can be written as

$$13 \quad V(t_a) = \begin{cases} \beta_1(t_E - t_a)^{\alpha_1} + \varepsilon_e^L & (t_d < t_a \leq t_E) \\ \beta_2(t_a - t_E)^{\alpha_2} + \varepsilon_e^G & (t_E < t_a \leq t_P) \\ \beta_3(t_L - t_a)^{\alpha_3} + \varepsilon_l^G & (t_P < t_a < t_L) \\ \beta_4(t_a - t_L)^{\alpha_4} + \varepsilon_l^L & (t_a \geq t_L) \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

14 where t_d =departure time; t_a =actual arrival time; t_p =preferred arrival time; t_E = the
 15 demarcation time of too-early arrival, with the acceptable earliest arrival time (t_{e1}) and
 16 the time when a commuter starts to consider departing later (t_{e2}) as alternatives; t_L =
 17 the demarcation time of too-late arrival, with work start time(t_w), the acceptable latest
 18 arrival time (t_{l1}) and the time when a commuter starts to consider departing earlier
 19 (t_{l2}) as alternatives. The subscripts e and l represent early-side and late-side,
 20 respectively, and the superscripts G and L represent gain ($V > 0$) and loss ($V \leq 0$),
 21 respectively. The error terms are assumed to be normally distributed with zero means
 22 and heteroskedastic variances. Parameters $\beta_i (i=1,2,3,4)$ are weights which represent
 23 the importance of gains or losses to that commuter. β_2 and β_3 should take on
 24 positive values, and β_1 and β_4 should take on negative values. Parameters
 25 $\alpha_i (i=1,2,3,4)$ represent the rate of change in gain or loss to that commuter. If the
 26 value function is symmetrical, it implies that $a=b$ and t_p is the midpoint of t_E and
 27 t_L . Then the value function can be simplified into two regions. At this time, $\beta_1 = \beta_4$, α_1

1 = α_4 , and similarly, $\beta_2 = \beta_3$, $\alpha_2 = \alpha_3$. Otherwise, each parameter needs to be estimated
 2 respectively.

4 Estimation

5 The parameters are estimated by applying the binary probit model (27). The
 6 probability of switching departure time is expressed as a function of arrival time value.
 7 An important assumption of this paper is that a commuter is reluctant to switch his/her
 8 departure time, so the utility of the binary probit model not only includes arrival time
 9 value, but also includes a reluctance factor.

10 A commuter will maintain his/her departure time when the utility is greater
 11 than zero, and the commuter will switch the departure time when the utility is
 12 negative. So the probability of these choices can be written in equation (2) and (3)

$$13 \quad p(NS) = p(d = 1) = p(U(t_a) > 0) \quad (2)$$

$$14 \quad p(S) = p(d = 0) = p(U(t_a) < 0) \quad (3)$$

15 where $p(NS)$ = probability of not switching departure time; $p(S)$ = probability of
 16 switching departure time; $d = 1$ if the commuter maintain his/her departure time, and
 17 $d = 0$, otherwise. The utility of the probit function is given in equation (4)

$$18 \quad U(t_a) = \begin{cases} \gamma_1 + \beta_1(t_E - t_a)^{\alpha_1} + \varepsilon_e^L & (t_d < t_a \leq t_E) \\ \gamma_1 + \beta_2(t_a - t_E)^{\alpha_2} + \varepsilon_e^G & (t_E < t_a \leq t_P) \\ \gamma_2 + \beta_3(t_L - t_a)^{\alpha_3} + \varepsilon_l^G & (t_P < t_a < t_L) \\ \gamma_2 + \beta_4(t_a - t_L)^{\alpha_4} + \varepsilon_l^L & (t_a \geq t_L) \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

19 where γ_1 = reluctance factor for early-side arrival; γ_2 = reluctance factor for late-side
 20 arrival.

22 DATA ANALYSIS

24 Data Source

25 A survey was conducted to collect data on urban mass transit commuters' departure
 26 time choice for morning commutes from June 27th to July 18th, 2017 in Shanghai,
 27 China. 1400 questionnaire was mailed to commuters randomly, and 596 of them are
 28 valid (valid rate = 42.8%). 470 commuters traveled by metro to go to work or school
 29 in the first trip on the latest weekday. The survey consists of four parts:

- 30 1. socioeconomic properties, including gender, age and job;
- 31 2. travel information, including the frequency and time period of travel by metro in
 32 one week, the aim of the first trip taking metro on the latest weekday;
- 33 3. departure time choice information, including specified destination arrival
 34 time(work/school start time), the acceptable earliest and latest arrival time,
 35 preferred arrival time and the time when he/she starts to consider departing later or
 36 earlier;
- 37 4. intention for departure time switching, including the actual arrival time of the
 38 latest weekday and whether he/she would switch the departure time next weekday.

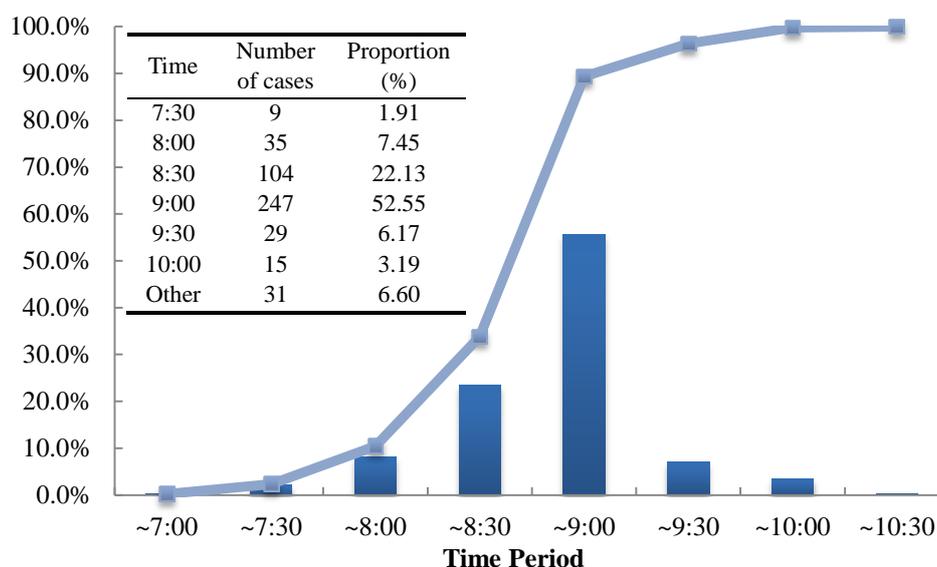
1 Socioeconomic and Travel Characteristics

2 The socioeconomic and travel characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.
 3 Most of respondents are female (56.38%), and are aged between 18 and 40 years old
 4 (88.51%). 91.91% of commuters in the sample travel by metro more than 3 times in
 5 one week, which proving that they are familiar to Shanghai Metro network. Their
 6 aims of the first metro trip on the latest weekday are mostly going to work (97.66%).

7
 8 **TABLE 1 Commuters' Socioeconomic and Travel Characteristics**

Variable		Number of cases	Proportion(%)
Gender	Male	205	43.62
	Female	265	56.38
Age	< 18	7	1.49
	18 -40	416	88.51
	41-60	46	9.79
	> 61	1	0.21
The frequency of travelling by metro in one week	1-2	38	8.09
	≥ 3	432	91.91
The time period of travelling by metro in one week	Only weekdays	124	26.38
	Weekdays and weekends	346	73.62
The aim of the first metro trip on the latest weekday	Go to work	459	97.66
	Go to School	11	2.34

10 Departure Time Choice



13
 14
 15 **FIGURE 2 The distribution of commuters' work/school start time.**

16
 17 As shown in Figure 2, 94.09% of respondents indicate their work/school start time is
 18 during 7:30-9:30am. Most of commuters start work or school at 9:00am (55.55%),

1 followed by 8:30am (22.13%). Since commuters' first trips on weekdays are during
 2 morning peak period, 6:00am is taken as the origin moment. Other moments are
 3 represented by relative time according to this origin moment in Table 2.

4
 5 **TABLE 2 Key Points of Commuters' Departure Time Choice**

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std. deviation
Work/school start time (t_w)	169.38	60.00	270.00	28.70
The acceptable earliest arrival time (t_{e1})	145.47	30.00	235.00	32.75
The acceptable latest arrival time (t_{l1})	177.75	60.00	330.00	32.87
Preferred arrival time (t_p)	159.16	55.00	240.00	29.80
The time when a commuter starts to consider departing later(t_{e2})	139.86	30.00	230.00	32.26
The time when a commuter starts to consider departing earlier(t_{l2})	173.73	70.00	280.00	32.18
The deviation relative to work/school start time				
$t_w - t_{e1}$	23.91	5.00	150.00	15.18
$t_{l1} - t_w$	8.37	0.00	150.00	13.31
$t_w - t_p$	10.22	0.00	50.00	6.39
$t_w - t_{e2}$	29.53	5.00	120.00	14.42
$t_{l2} - t_w$	4.34	-20.00	90.00	12.88

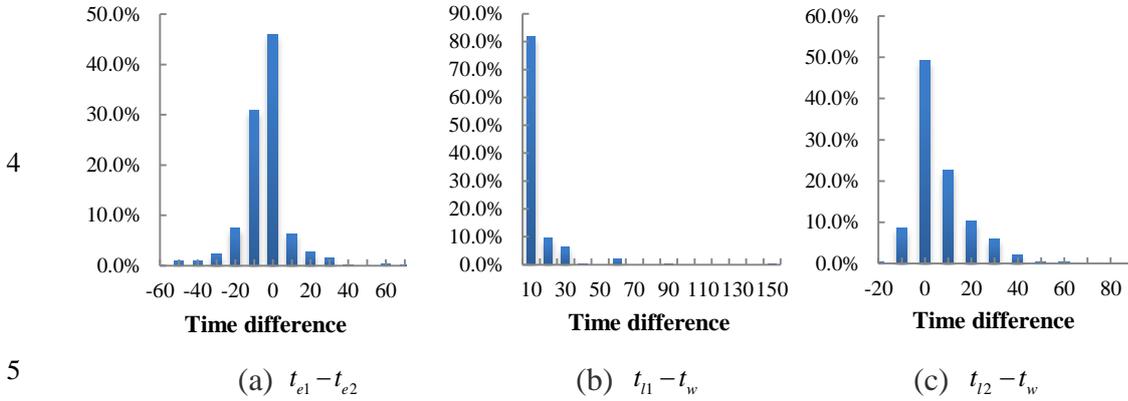
7 * min

8
 9 The average work/school start time of the sample is 169.38min (8:49am), with
 10 a standard deviation of 28.70min. The average acceptable earliest arrival time is
 11 23.91min earlier than work/school start time, while the average preferred arrival time
 12 is 10.22min earlier than work/school start time. 285 respondents (60.64%) are allowed
 13 to be late for work, and the average acceptable latest arrival time is 8.37min later than
 14 work/school start time. So tardiness should be considered in the modelling of
 15 departure time choice modeling as well as arrival time value function. The average
 16 time when a commuter starts to consider departing later is earlier than the average
 17 acceptable earliest arrival time. 88.51% of respondents start to consider departing later
 18 only when time is not later than their acceptable earliest time. On the other hand, 370
 19 respondents (78.72%) start to consider departing earlier when time is still earlier than
 20 their acceptable latest arrival time, which means that most of commuters tend to be
 21 more cautious when they are likely to be late.

22 **Reference Points Analysis**

23 For the demarcation point of too-early arrival (t_E), the difference of two alternatives
 24 is shown in Figure 3(a). The difference of 92.13% respondents is within -20 to 20. For
 25 the demarcation point of too-late arrival (t_P), the difference of the other two
 26 alternatives relative to work/school start time is shown in Figure 3(b) (c). The
 27 difference between the acceptable latest time and work/school start time of 91.28%
 28 respondents is within 0 to 20, while the difference between the time when a commuter
 29

1 starts to consider departing earlier and work/school start time of 93.19% respondents
 2 is within -20 to 20.
 3



7 **FIGURE 3 The difference distributions between reference point alternatives.**

9 **TABLE 3 The Distribution of Commuters' Actual Arrival Times**

t_E	Region I $t_d < t_a \leq t_E$	Region II $t_E < t_a \leq t_P$	t_L	Region III $t_P < t_a < t_L$	Region IV $t_a \geq t_L$
t_{e1}	82 (17.45%)	210 (44.68%)	t_w	100 (21.28%)	78 (16.60%)
t_{e2}	33 (7.02%)	259 (55.11%)	t_{l1}	138 (29.36%)	40 (8.51%)
			t_{l2}	133 (28.30%)	45 (9.57%)

11
 12 For 90.64% of commuters, the absolute difference between actual arrival time
 13 and preferred arrival time is no more than 20min. Most of commuters (45.53%) arrive
 14 before their preferred arrival time, while 37.87% of commuters' actual arrival time is
 15 later. The rest of commuters' arrival time is just their preferred arrival time (16.60%).
 16 Table 3 reveals that no matter which alternative is selected as a reference point, and
 17 most of commuters (65.96%-83.40%) have a gain because their actual arrival time is
 18 within region II and III. Commuters with actual arrival time in region II are more than
 19 those with arrival time in region III. The ratio of these two parts is from 1.52 to 2.59.

20 Because the majority of commuters have a gain, so they are less likely to
 21 switch their departure times. 391 respondents indicate that they would keep the same
 22 departure time in the next weekday (83.19%). Only 79 respondents choose to switch
 23 their departure time (16.81%), which is much less than the number of commuters
 24 experiencing a loss in arrival time value except when $t_E = t_{e2}$ and $t_L = t_{l1}$ or t_{l2} . This
 25 situation supports the existence of reluctance to switch departure time.

27 **MODEL ESTIMATION RESULTS**

28 To eliminate the impact of outliers, a box diagram of the difference between actual
 29 arrival time and preferred arrival time is depicted. 428 respondents are left with a
 30 difference less than 25min. There are 12 utility functions to be estimated, the main
 31 differences among which are whether the value function included is symmetrical and

reference point combinations. Because the functions are non-linear segmented functions, if a logarithmic transformation is adopted, the assumption of normally-distributed error terms is broken, and then the estimation method is no longer valid. Therefore, the functions are simplified to a linear form by setting $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3$ and α_4 equal to 1.

TABLE 4 Estimation Result of Value Function

	Reference points		Hit rate (%)	DuMouchel index*	Significance	Region	Parameter	Value	t-stat	Region
	t_E	t_L								Hit rate (%)
A	t_{e1}	t_w	85.83	0.6789	0.000	Gain	γ_1, γ_2	0.979	8.257	88.27
							Loss	β_1, β_4	-0.079	-2.976
B	t_{e2}	t_w	86.45	0.6794	0.000	Gain	γ_1, γ_2	0.941	7.515	87.82
							Loss	β_1, β_4	-0.083	-3.209

*DuMouchel index = $\exp(\text{LogLikelihood}/N)$. Higher index value indicates better fit to the data.

A segmented function is identified as passing t-test only when the parameters of each part pass t-test. Unfortunately, none of asymmetrical functions passes t-test. Table 4 shows the estimation result of two symmetrical functions. The reluctance factor is significant in all functions, so the assumption of its existence is acceptable. That is to say, when a commuter arrives at his/her perceived reference points, the commuter would not switch the departure time next time. Their actual indifference points is earlier than t_E and later than t_L . The time difference between actual indifference points and reference points is equal to the ratio of γ_1, γ_2 and β_1, β_4 , which is 12.39min in Function A and 11.34min in Function B. Function B shows better fit to the data both in gain and loss regions, and its DuMouchel index is higher. Its hit rate reaches 86.45%, and fits better in gain region. This function's reference points are the time when a commuter starts to consider departing later and work/school start time. The parameter β_2 and β_3 are positive, while β_1 and β_4 are negative. Moreover, the absolute values of β_1 and β_4 are larger than β_2 and β_3 , which means commuters are more sensitive to losses than gains. Both the signs and the relation of parameters are consistent with prospect theory.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper discusses the applicability of the value function of prospect theory in urban mass transit commuter departure time choice. The proposed decision frame consists of two region, gain and loss. Each region contains two sides, early-side and late-side. On this basis, several alternatives of reference points are analyzed. The empirical study of commuters from Shanghai, China shows that most of passengers' arrival time is in gain region. Commuters are more cautious when they tend to face late-side losses than

1 early-side losses.

2 The existence of reluctance factor is assumed in this paper, which means the
3 utility of switching departure time model not only consists of arrival time value.
4 Estimation results show that this assumption is acceptable. And arrival time value
5 functions are consistent with prospect theory. Commuters are more sensitive to losses
6 than gains. Within all the models passing t-test, the optimal one has a hit rate of
7 86.45%, with a better hit rate in gain region than in loss region.

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