

A STUDY OF SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OF SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

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DECLARATION

“I declared that this report is the results by my own work except certain explanations
And passage where every part of it is cited with sources clearly stated in References”

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my beloved parents and siblings. Big appreciation to my family who always give me supports in term of moral, motivation, advice and financial. It will not be easy for me to go through the completion of my PSM without their concern and support. Their unconditioned love and encouragement have allowed me to strive and push myself beyond limits that never thought would be possible. With their support, I was able to complete this research paper smoothly. Thank you for always supporting me.

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the service quality and customer satisfaction on public transportation of Selangor, Malaysia. The main objective of this study is to study the dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction on using public transportation. Second, to identify the determine factor that contributes customer satisfaction on public transportation. Lastly, to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction on public transportation. Hence, this study's aim is to develop a valid and reliable tool for assessing customer satisfaction, and service quality elements toward public transportation services. The data collection for this research is through quantitative explanatory method. A survey with 170 respondents in Selangor was conducted to obtain data and information about the problems that occur. The results will be analyse through multiple regression, pearson correlation, and anova. The finding show reliability affects customer satisfaction in the perceived usefulness of public transport. Future research is suggested to apply other variables such as flexibility, accessibility and empathy abstracted from this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher had covered the background study of the research topic which is the study of service quality dimensions that affects customer satisfaction and in addition, the researcher included about the public transportation services sector. Besides, problem statement, scope and limitation of study, methodology of research, research question and research objective were also presented in this chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The transport system is of paramount importance to all of society. Transport refers to a vehicle carrying someone or something from one place to another place, usually over long distances than if on foot. Technology has introduced a variety of vehicles, including land, water, and air. However, through the technology rapidly development division vehicles have become a necessity for connecting people from one destination to another. However, the increasing number of vehicles from time to time cause the number of vehicles on the road is increasing. This situation has caused a traffic distraction and road accidents that cause discomfort to the users themselves. Thus the existence of the public transportation system is an alternative to the scenario that existed.

The public transport system in place has been a positive and negative impact on the consumer, the economy and the country. However, the availability of public transportation can reduce traffic error, the risk of accidents and to save costs to consumers.

The public transport system covering all transport systems in which passengers do not move using their own vehicles. In addition, public transportation is a vehicle that is shared with other users when boarded to go to any one destination. Public transports are usually regulated as common carriers and are usually configured to provide scheduled service on fixed routes without reservation. Most of the passenger transit move within the local area of their homes and places of work, shopping or education. Public transport services also regarded as one of the alternatives for help and traffic congestion, especially in the cities. Therefore, the use of this service should be enhanced to help reduce road congestion and road accidents. However, there are other factors that cause people choose public transport.

In Malaysia, there are many types of public transport services company to the community for connect them to the place of choice. However, public transportation in Malaysia is claimed by the customers as unsatisfactory. This situation because of the services quality rendered lower than those obtained satisfaction. Services quality is closely related to the satisfaction of the users themselves. This situation occurs because the current user transaction services in general will make an evaluation of the service rendered such service whether positive or negative impact on the customer according to their speed and ease of transaction has been completed. Meanwhile, the services quality can also be defined according to both what and how the product or service being delivered. Customers using the service quality attributes such as reliability, efficiency, performance, durability, and others to assess the technical quality. Then, quality function has more to do with how the technical quality is transferred to the user. Service quality attributes such as responsiveness and access will be important in helping to judge the quality customer service meeting function.

If see the comfort and convenience of the user, prefer to use their own transport as compared with the existing public transport. However, problems occur when the number of vehicles increased from time to time. Among them is the problem of traffic congestion and accident rates increase when there is a growth in the use of the vehicle. This resulted in users experiencing problems of time, cost of gasoline, dissatisfaction, and so that limited daily activities and cause users to experience problems to destinations such as work and education institutions. Therefore, as an alternative to avoid the incident users have chosen to use public transport to avoid the problems that occur and to save costs. But the attitude does not stop there, this situation because when services are used not achieve the desired level of customer satisfaction will make an assessment in order to improve the level of satisfaction.

There are various factors that influence consumers in making an assessment, including quality of service. This is because, basically related to service quality and customer satisfaction. If the quality of services rendered in good condition and problems related to high will not happen. Therefore, this study will determine service quality and customer satisfaction among public transport user in Selangor. Service quality dimensions will be measured using factors such as assurance, tangibles, reliability, and responsiveness.

Therefore, a study on service quality and customer satisfaction towards public transportation in Selangor, Malaysia will be conducted. This review will focus on several dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction means to measure and evaluate the service quality of public transport services. At the end of this study will make assessment and analysis of information obtained through surveys.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The transportation has become one of the most importance need for everyone to run daily life. People use transportation for everyday tasks. Transportation used by people to go work, school, and desired destination. Nowadays, transportation has been divided by two types which are public transportation and private transport. Previous research consequently found that increasing travel demand and preferences in using private transport is causing rapid motorization in the developing counties and massive traffic jam (Ellaway *et al.*, 2003; Hafezi and Ismail 2011). People are more prefer on private transport because of many factors. One of them is public transport still could not compete with the attractiveness of private car or motorcycle, such as inflexibility, no direct access, longer travel time, and unsafe when travelling. People prefer private car because of attractiveness of the modern car (Beirão & Sarsfield Cabral 2007; Hafezi and Ismail 2011).

The main focus of this study is on public transport services where users often encounter problems such as security, and management. These conditions include the quality of the service provided. Public transport should become part of a solution for sustainable transport in the future. However, in order to keep and attract more passengers, public transport must to have high service quality to satisfy and fulfill wide range of different customer's needs (Oliver 1980; Anable 2005). Antonucci, L. et al. (2014) applied in their study an explorative factorial analysis and a structural equation model and they found that the passengers are very sensitive to the level of the service organization and to the way the service is delivered. In Malaysia, most of the public transportation has low quality of services. Users are also often faced with timeliness of management problems to reach the destination. If service quality is in good condition the customer will get greater satisfaction in using the service. However, in this case the passenger experience dissatisfaction to find weaknesses in the quality of services provided during the transport.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research questions is the first requirement for this research project to question the issues and the problems. The research questions of this research will be:

1. What are the dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction on using public transportation?
2. What is the determine factor that contributes customer satisfaction on public transportation?
3. What is the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction on public transportation

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research was to study on how public transportation sector can improve their services hence can attract people to use public transportation instead of private transportation. Therefore, the primary purpose was listed as below:

1. To study the dimensions of service quality that influence customer satisfaction on using public transportation.
2. To identify the determine factor that contributes customer satisfaction on public transportation.
3. To investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction on public transportation.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

For method use in this study, the researcher use a quantitative method. Quantitative methods are those research methods that use numbers as its basis for making generalizations about a phenomenon or findings. These numbers originate from objective scales of measurement of the units of analysis called variables. The researcher use quantitative method because of the data gathering instruments contain items that solicit measurable characteristics of the population. Besides, the method function as a standardized or pre-tested instruments guide data collection thus ensuring the accuracy, reliability and validity of data. The researchers also can repeat the quantitative method to verify or confirm the findings in another setting. This reinforces the validity of groundbreaking discoveries or findings thus eliminating the possibility of spurious or false conclusions. In addition, the data obtained using quantitative methods are organized using tables, graphs, or figures that consolidate large numbers of data to show trends, relationships, or differences among variables. This fosters understanding to the readers or clients of the research investigation.

1.6 SCOPE & LIMITATION

This study was conducted purposely to identify service quality dimensions influencing customer satisfaction on public transportation. This study accessed each and every single factor that has been discussed. Moreover, the researcher would like to identify the determine factor that contributes customer satisfaction toward public transportation services. This is because the researcher wants to analyses the most influence factor that affects customer satisfaction on public transportation. However, the researcher conducted this research in Selangor city areas especially at public transport station such as Klang Central, Shah Alam Terminal and Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport located in Subang, Selangor. The researcher randomly selects the respondents within Selangor areas.

For limitation of the study, there are some limitation that faced by the researcher while completing this research paper. Firstly, the researcher is facing with the time constraint which is the researcher was given only a few months to complete all the research. A very limited time was taken for conducting this research because of other classes need to be focused in between the research. Therefore, the period is insufficient for the researcher to find more relevant information regarding to the research topic and the selected respondent was unspecific and not wide.

Next is the limitation about the cost while completing this research study because as a student, money needs to be used for other daily personal usage. The researcher required a large amount of money in completing the research. Besides, the researcher focused on the maximum data collection for the respondent to done the research successfully. The methodology to evaluate this study was through appropriate statistical analysis of data obtained from questionnaires conducted by online surveys, printed or by hand. The researcher assumed that majority of the respondents had the adequate knowledge and experience about the topic researcher was proposed and the respondent may had less experience regarding this study.

1.7 SIGNIFICANT OF RESEARCH

The study on the service quality dimensions influenced customer satisfaction on public transportation benefited the organization such as government and public transportation companies to study about view of consumers toward public transport service experiences. The government and public transport companies also benefited through this study since the study covered the satisfaction level of customers on public transportation services. Thus, the organizations will be able to improve their service quality and benefits that preferred by the consumers.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter was structured as the introduction for this study. It was introduced the topic of the study including the background, problem statement, research question, research objectives, scope and limitation of the study as well as the importance of the research. The literature review was discussed in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presented literature review about the research on consumer preference in public transportation at Selangor. The researcher also mentioned literature review on the factors that influencing consumer preference on using public transport. The definition of each term also will be presented in this paper.

2.1 SERVICE QUALITY

The meaning of term “service” can be described as an intangible product offered by a business to the public such as banking, consultancy, and transportation. In other definition, service can be defined as a valuable action, deed or effort performed to satisfy a need or to fulfill a demand. So far, many experts express opinions about the definition of a service are: a service is an activity or a series of activities which take place in interactions with a contact person or physical machine and which provides consumer satisfaction (Lehtinen, 1983; Doddy Hendra Wijaya, 2009) .Some researchers define services as process that are produced and consumed with the involvement of customers (Edvardsson, 2007).

Another thought says that it is an experience that the customers feel about the services in consumption process (Tyagi & Gupta, 2008). For further, the input to service as a transaction includes the customer, systems, interpersonal skills and the work environment, whereas the output of a transaction might be the service to a customer; this makes it hard to measure because it includes the customer's perception of the service (Tyagi & Gupta, 2008). Although, according to Gronroos (2000) services are normally intangible in nature, but not necessarily, it takes place at the time of interactions between the customer and service employees or the service provider which are provided as solutions to clients problems.

On the other hand, according to the transcendent view, the "quality" means innate excellence. It is a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement, universally recognizable, and recognized only through experience. In product-based approach, quality is viewed as "a precise and measurable variable" and differences in quality reflect differences in the quantity of some ingredient or attribute so higher quality can only be obtained at higher cost. In user-based approach, quality is compared with the satisfaction. The highest quality means the best satisfaction of consumers' preferences. In manufacturing-based approach, quality is defined as "making it right the first time." It is supply based and concerned with engineering and manufacturing practice. In value based approach, quality is defined in terms of cost and price. It is perceived as a function of price.

There are some major differences between services and goods. The nature of services is intangible whereas goods are tangible. Since services are intangible, measurement of service quality can be more complicated. Service quality measures how much the service delivered meets the customers' expectations. In order to measure the quality of intangible services, researchers generally use the term perceived service quality. Perceived service quality is a result of the comparison of perceptions about service delivery process and actual outcome of service (Grönroos, 1984; Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). Thus, service quality can be described as an assessment of how well a delivered service follows to the client's expectations.

According to Veronica Korale, Jacqueline Mandari and Melissa-Ray Suh (2015), service quality is an attitude formed by long-term overall evaluation of a firm's performance. Service business operators often assess the service quality provided to their customers in order to improve their service, to quickly identify problems, and to better assess client satisfaction. Service quality also has become a critical factor in enabling firms to achieve differential advantages over their competitors. Other than that, many authors maintain that the perception of service quality is the result of a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance perception. Other authors, however, do not take expectations into consideration (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). They are only interested in passenger's perceptions, or even the perception of transport companies and government managers (e.g. Eboli and Mazzulla, 2010; Nathanail, 2008). When analysing service quality in the public transport sector, many researchers (Eboli and Mazzulla, 2010) have substituted importance measures for expectations. However, measuring which service quality attributes are important to customers in order to help them in making decision. Service quality is an attitude formed by long-term overall evaluation of a firm's performance.

According to Zeithaml and Berry (1990), service quality is an extrinsically perceived attribution based on the customers experience about the service that the customer perceived through the service encounter. Service quality assessments are formed on judgments of outcome quality, interaction quality and physical environment quality. Service quality is one of the key dimensions, which are factored into the consumer's satisfaction judgments. Services are produced and consumed at the same time, which makes it difficult to measure; test and as such specific uniform quality can rarely be set. As a result, it is hard to determine how consumers evaluate the service quality. In other word, the heterogeneity of services implies its delivery differs from producer to producer, consumer to consumer and day to day. That is also because the consistency of personnel behavior is hard to ensure since what the consumer receives may differ from what the firm intended to deliver.

2.2 DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Quality of service is an abstract form. It is needed dimensions that can be used as a measuring tool. Generally, there are two types of models in measuring service quality in public transportation. One is the conceptual models such as Schembri & Sanberg's, (2002) presentation of 3 dominant models of service quality: Perceived Service Quality (PSQ) (Gronroos, 1984), Gap Analysis Model (GAM) or SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et.al, 1985, 1988) and analytical way based on Stated Preference analysis that overcome some critical factors linked to the use of scales.

Despite the array of challenges bedevilling the use of SERVQUAL, it still remains the generic instrument for measuring service quality across different service sectors. SERVQUAL has also been applied in various countries including the China (Chung-Wei et al., 2012), Ghana (Aidoo et al., 2013), India (Randheer, et al., 2011), Nigeria (Ali, 2012) and the United States (Kilbourne et al., 2004). Furthermore, several researchers have used SERVQUAL to measure service quality in various sectors such as public transport (Aidoo et al., 2013), airline (Sultan & Simpson, 2000), retail banking (Ravichandran, et al., 2010) and internet (Eriksson & Friman, 2007).

Ladhari, (2009), it is recommended that the SERVQUAL model is a good scale to use when measuring service quality in various specific industries but that it is appropriate to choose the most important dimensions of this model that fit to that particular service being measured in order to assure reliable and valid results. In this regard, we will use this model because it takes into account customer's expectation of a service as well as perceptions of the service which is best way to measure service quality in service sector (Shahin, 2005).

According to Kotler (2012) to measure the quality of service quality required a few determinants of quality of services, there are:

- Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities and equipment, the personnel, and the communication devices existing in service-providing places.
- Reliability: The ability to do and provide the promised services in an appropriate, accurate and reliable manner; doing what is expected by the customer and this means that the customer is provided with services on due time and in the way he/she was promised and with no fault.
- Responsiveness: The willingness to help the customer and to provide him/her with instant services. Keeping the customers waiting especially for no good reason, will result in customer's dissatisfaction and negative perception of service quality.
- Assurance: The knowledge and presence of mind as well as their ability to attract the confidence of the customers.

2.3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In recent times all organization has increasingly come to understand the importance of customer satisfaction. It is widely understood that it is far less costly to keep existing customers than it is to wind new ones. For many organizations in the public sector, customer satisfaction will itself be the measure of success. Customer satisfaction is a term frequently discussed in marketing because it is normally used as a key performance indicator of many businesses. It is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or exceed customer expectation. Customer satisfaction along with customer loyalty is becoming a paramount factor in the businesses for their long-term and short-term survival.

According Oktiani Astuti Budiono (2009), satisfaction is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment. It is a situation where the needs, wants, and expectations of customers are

met through consumed products (Nasution, 2010). While Kotler (2012) also defines satisfaction associated with consumer expectations, the satisfaction is feeling happy or disappointed someone who emerged after comparing the performance (yield) of products thought to the performance (or outcome) that expected. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the sense of satisfaction is feeling happy that someone obtained after consuming a product or service which provided by a company or cooperative.

Kotler et al., (2013), defined customer satisfaction as a person's feeling of pressure or disappointment that result from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcome to the expectation. Customer satisfaction, as noted by Tahir, Waggett and Hoffman (2013), is a customer's perspective based on expectation and then subsequent post purchase experience. Thus, if the service delivered meet customer expectations then it will lead to high level of customer satisfaction toward the service. In other words, it is an evaluation of products or service quality level that meets or exceeds the customer expectations. It cannot be denied that a satisfied consumer has a tendency to buy more than a less satisfied one (Novikova, 2009; Angelova and Zekiri, 2011). In a highly competitive market, customer satisfaction is, indeed, a crucial key that builds strong and long-term relationships between the customers and the firm. The measure of customer satisfaction, therefore, has become a vital concern for many companies and services providers to achieve such success (Mohammad, 2012).

Oliver (2010) mentioned that "satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product/service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under-or over fulfillment". Wilson (2012) defined customer satisfaction as the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met the customer's needs and expectations. According to him there are factors that influence customer satisfaction such as product/service quality, perceptions of equity or fairness, price, personal factors (consumer's mood or emotional state), and other consumers and so on. Oliver and Swan (1989) expanded the definition and mentioned

that customer satisfaction is an affective term and they identify five different types of satisfaction, which are pleasure, relief, novelty and surprise.

According to Wilson (2012), a customer can also influence another customer's satisfaction. Martin and Pranter (1989) also mentioned that in countless service environments, customers potentially influence the satisfaction or the dissatisfaction of other customers. In addition to that pleasurable encounters with fellow customers add positively to the service experience and seem to enhance perceptions of service quality as well. For instance, unruly behavior or overcrowding would have a negative effect, whereas a number of good-humored spectators would have a beneficial effect by creating a positive atmosphere. Basically it means that the spectator's role takes on added significance where a large number of people are required to share facilities (Martin and Pranter, 1989).

Customer satisfaction has also become a major contributor for enhancing a service company such as long-term profitability, customer loyalty and customer retention. Many researchers also argue that customer satisfaction has a big impact on customer intentions to repurchase (Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000). Furthermore, satisfied customers spread positive word of mouth and it helps to attract new customers and create long-term business profit. According to (Manani et al, 2013), measuring customer satisfaction provides an indication on how an organization is performing or providing products or services. Therefore, customer satisfaction will be the measure of success to all the organizations including the public sectors as well.