

QUALITY OF SERVICE AND PASSENGER PERCEPTION OF THE TAXI SERVICE IN CHANGLUN

¹Lee Kuo Hsing and ²Dr Mohd Rizal bin Razalli

¹ College of Business, School of Technology Management and Logistics,
University Utara Malaysia, 06010, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

² Department of Logistics & Transportation, School of Technology Management & Logistics,
University Utara Malaysia, 06010, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
Email: ¹196138@student.uum.edu.my, ²rizal@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to measure the service quality of the taxi service in Changlun. In order to have a good grasp of passenger's perception of taxi service quality of Changlun in Kedah, a proper method used to reflect passenger's opinion accurately. A questionnaire survey conducted to know their opinion about the taxi service quality in Changlun. The quality service of the public transportation in Malaysia is lower compare to other developed country. This study aims to improve the public transportation service and improve passenger's satisfaction to the taxi service in Malaysia.

Keywords

-Quality of service, passenger, satisfaction, service reliability, efficiency

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is a country which is still under developing, the transportation system is not mature yet especially in the border town like Changlun. Changlun is a town in Kedah, which is very near to Thailand. Taxi is one of the main public transports in Changlun. Although Changlun have public bus service, but some places do not have bus station and the only way for you to reach there is the taxi service. There is a need to measure the service quality of the taxi in Changlun so that the standard of the service can be better.

1.1 Problem statement

The taxi in Changlun do not have taximeters, they will decide the taxi fare by the destination the passenger want to go. Some of the passengers have encountered the taxi driver that charge them high fares in the middle of the night. This is very unfair to the

passengers; the authorities should take action and solve these problems as soon as possible. The authorities should set the regulation that is compulsory for every taxi to use taximeters. This is to prevent some taxi driver take advantage to charge high fares to their customers.

Some passengers complain that the taxi is in a poor condition, and the driver still using the car to fetch customer, they feel that it is not worthy to take the taxi. It is regarding to the cleanliness of the taxi and the stinks smell in the taxi. The driver's attitude is also very significant to ensure the high quality of service. Some driver refuses to take their passengers to the destination they want.

1.2 Research question

- i. What is the taxi service quality in Changlun?
- ii. What is the actual level of customer satisfaction on the taxi service?
- iii. What is the perception of passenger on the taxi service in Changlun?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The taxi service in Malaysia is below satisfaction in general. In 2008, Malaysia was rated as the worst among 23 countries in terms of taxi service quality. Many claim that if the public transport is being improved, they are willing to use it instead of paying for outrageous petrol prices and tolls and ending up stuck in traffic jams. (Abdalla Nurdeen Kamba, Riza Atiq O.K.Rahmat & Amiruddin Ismail, 2007). This is one of the reasons to improve the quality of the taxi service. If the quality of the taxi service improves, then

the passengers will take the taxi, and it will benefit the taxi driver.

2.1 Service Quality (SERVQUAL)

Service quality is a concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate in the research literature because of the difficulties in both defining it and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging on either (Wisniewski, 2001). Service quality can be defined as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990). Measurement allows for comparison before and after changes, for the location of quality related problems and for the establishment of clear standards for service delivery. (Shahin, 2005). Service quality is a central issue in services marketing. In the healthcare industry, different hospitals provide the same type of services, but they do not provide the same quality of services (Youssef, Boyd & Williams, 1996). The technical quality can be determined what the customers actually received from the service.

2.2 Taxi service in Malaysia

The taxi market in large cities has been one of the prototypical examples used by economist on the inefficiency of the governmental regulation and of the power of the market to regulate an industry so as to maximize social welfare (Carins, & Liston-Heyes, 1996). Changlun is a town that is located at the northern part of Malaysia, but there are no authorities to regulate the taxi fare, and most of the taxis do not have taximeters. This problem should be concerned because there are many citizens who are relying on the taxi service. Especially those tourists who come from Thailand, they do not have their own vehicles, so there probably have negative image of the taxi service in Malaysia.

2.3 Reliability

Reliability of transportation system can be defined as the ability of the system to adhere to a schedule or maintain regular headways and a consistent travel time; in other words, as the on-time/punctuality performance and headway evenness (Chen, 2009). This study measure the service quality of the taxi service from various aspect, we will measure its efficiencies from the punctuality of the taxi driver to pick up its passengers and the time they take to reach

the destination. For taxi drivers, their work environment include the cabin of the vehicle and its contents, namely the passengers, the physical feature of the roads they travel, the conditions in which they drive including the time of day and the weather.(Lam ,2003). Every aspect will influence the service quality of the taxi, so we will consider the performance of the driver too. Taxi drivers spend a large amount of time driving, which increases their risk of crash involvement beyond that of private motorists who spend less time on the road (Firestone, Mihaera, & Gander, 2009). The safety of the passengers is very significant and the taxi driver bears a lot of responsibility when they are driving their customer to the destination.

2.4 Responsiveness

The term ``responsiveness" has been used in research literature from a number of management areas including time-based competition, business process reengineering, flexible manufacturing, agile manufacturing and mass customization. Much of the literature has focused on how to improve aspects of responsiveness in manufacturing industry. Frey (1988) proposes a set of performance measures as a tool to help managers identify the actions needed to provide customers with products that are superior to the competitors. This set comprises performance measures for cost, quality and responsiveness. Responsiveness usually referred as the ability of a department within a firm to respond to changes in customer needs or in market conditions.

2.5 Assurance

Assurance, the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence (competence, courtesy, credibility, security) was important for services targeted at the individual customers necessitating considerable contact between the employees and customers. Services targeted at the customer require more assurance than those targeted at their possessions. Further, more assurance will be needed for services with intangible act. With renewed scrutiny of the profession's provision of its existing services and the profession's continued efforts to provide innovative, non-traditional assurance services, we must know the expectation gap very well. For providers of new assurance services and for the profession, it is both strategic and timely not only to challenge our understanding of the existing expectations gap, but also to anticipate the *potential* for new expectations gaps arising from new service.

2.6 Empathy

The concept of empathy, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “the power of projecting one’s personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation”, or as “the ability to see another person’s world through their eyes”, involves the deep understanding of another person’s emotions, thoughts and body movements (Aldridge and Rigby, 2001). The extent to which staff empathises with social inclusion policy and disadvantaged groups was identified by Wilson and Birdi (2008) as a potentially relevant phenomenon in investigating the role of public library staff in delivering socially inclusive services, and their attitudes towards that role in theory and practice.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire survey conducted on the passengers of the taxi have been done to measure the quality of the service and to know the passengers satisfaction to the taxi service. The questions will includes the gender of the respondents, their race, age and their experience taking taxi in Changlun. Besides that, the questions about the taxi fare, cleanliness, condition of the car and driver’s attitude also will be included. On the other hand, the questions include satisfaction level of the passengers to the taxi service in Changlun. The questions also cover the willingness of the driver to fetch the customer to the place they want to go. Besides that, secondary data like journal, research paper and online article collected to gather more information on this research paper.

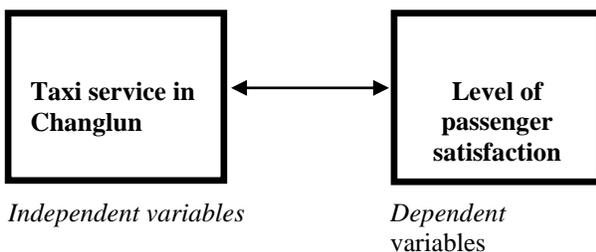


Figure 1: Research model framework.

The framework shows the relationship between the taxi service in Changlun and the level of passenger satisfaction. The relationship is directly proportional. When the service quality of the taxi service in Changlun is high and meets the passengers needs then it will increase the satisfaction level of the passenger. When the taxi service quality is poor, the passengers will not willing to buy the service anymore.

4.0 FINDINGS

Figure 2 The total mean for five dimension of service quality



Figure 2 shows the mean for five dimension of the service quality, which are empathy, assurance, responsiveness, reliability and tangibility. From the perspective of the respondents, the result shows that the mean for empathy is 3.4. That means the satisfaction level is somewhat satisfied and it shows that the taxi service provider can improve the empathy of the service to increase the satisfaction level of the passengers. On the other hand, the mean for assurance of the taxi service is 3.55, which is satisfied. It shows that the majority of the passengers satisfied with the assurance of the taxi service.

The mean for the responsiveness is 3.49, it shows that most of the passengers satisfied with the responsiveness of the taxi service overall. The passengers most satisfied with the reliability of the taxi service, the mean for reliability is 4.06, the passengers are not worry about the reliability of the taxi service and have confidence on it. The tangibility of the taxi service got the lowest mean, which is 2.41, majority of the respondents dissatisfied with the tangibility of the service. The taxi service provider should make their service more attractive and appealing to enhance the satisfaction level of the passengers.

5.0 DISCUSSION

This study has focus on measuring the taxi service quality in Changlun. Besides that, perceptions of the passengers have collected through questionnaire. This study will improve the poor dimension of the taxi

service quality. The taxi service quality is a vital determinant of passenger's satisfaction, as passenger's satisfaction will influence the confidence of the passenger to the taxi service. There are more passenger using the taxi service every year, it is significant to provide high quality of service to the passengers. Taxi service is one of the public transports that play an important role in Malaysia. Thus, the taxi service provider has to satisfy the passenger's need. Therefore, it is important for the taxi service provider to know the actual demands and requirements of passengers to provide better service and focus on the important items. The service quality scale and item are very effective to measure the satisfaction of the passengers. It has found that performance of five dimensions of taxi service in Changlun has highest reliability scale and lowest tangibility scale. The results indicate that the main task of taxi quality regulation should be the management of driving operation, and improve service quality can enhance satisfaction of the passengers.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

In the future, it is suggest that the study should be having more than one department even to the outside company. It means that when a study conducted between both departments, there is having a comparison between both department in terms of the execution for entire department or company, factors that confronted and methods to be solution. The research should be increase the amount of the respondents to make the results more accurate. As the same time, the research can test two different period times for the same respondents to answer the questions. It can show the result from their perspective and different view for the next year. The researcher should have conducted the research in methods of qualitative and quantitative to collects more data in detailed. However, the method which utilized by the researcher in this study is quantitative. Meanwhile, the questions should have prepared earlier by the researcher for this kind of the study to distribute to the respondents. The researcher can take the opportunity to interview the related authority to collect more information.

REFERENCES

Abdalla Nurdeen Kambala, Riza Atiq, O.K. Rahmat, Amiruddin Ismail. (2007). Why Do People Use Their Cars: A Case Study In Malaysia. *Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (3): 117 – 122.

- Aldridge, S. and Rigby, S. (2001), *Counselling Skills in Context*, Hodder & Stoughton Educational, Oxon.
- Carins, R.D, & Liston-Heyes,C. (1996). Competition and the Regulation in the Taxi Industry: *Journal of Public Economics* 59 (1996) 1-15
- Chen.X, Yu.L, Zhang,Y , Guo, J. (2009). Analyzing Urban Bus Service Reliability at The Stop, Route, and Network Levels. *Journal of transportation Research Part A* 43
- Firestone, R.T, Mihaera, K. & Gander, P.H, (2009) Obstructive sleep apnoea among professional taxi drivers: A pilot study. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 41 (2009) 552–556
- Frey, E. (1988), ``The evolution of performance measurement'', *Industrial Management*, September-October 1988, pp. 9-12.
- Lam,T.L. ,(2003) Environmental factors associated with crash-related mortality and injury among taxi drivers in New South Wales, Australia.: *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 36 (2004) 905–908
- Noorfakhriah Yaakub & Madzlan Napiyah, (2011) Quality of Service and Passenger's Perception – A Review on Bus Service in Kota Bharu: *International Journal of Civil & Environmental Engineering IJCEE-IJENS* Vol: 11 No: 05
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and L.L. Berry, "A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research", *Journal of Marketing*, 49, 4, 1985, 41-50.
- Shahin, A. (2005), *SERVQUAL and Model of Service Quality Gaps: A Framework for Determining and Prioritizing Critical Factors in Delivering Quality Services*. Department of Management, University of Isfahan, Iran
- Youssef, M. A., Boyd, J., and Williams, E. (1996). The impact of total quality management on firm's respon- siveness: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Total Quality Management*,7, pp127-144.
- Wilson, K. and Birdi, B. (2008), The Right "man" for the job? The Role of Empathy in Community Librarianship. Final Project Report, University of Sheffield.

Wisniewski, M. and H. Wisniewski, "Measuring Service Quality in a Hospital Colposcopy Clinic", *International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance*, 18, 3, 2005, 217-228