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SERVICE QUALITY OF PUBLIC TAXI OPERATED BY THE TAXI COOPERATIVE IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

SUPATTRA PRANEE,¹ VARUNLUCK PAKJAIDEE AND CHISAKAN PAPAPANKAID

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study the service quality of public taxis operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand. The findings relating to service quality of the public taxis operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand were classified in four dimensions, as follows. 1) Product factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall service quality of the product. The overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.53$ S.D. = 0.80). 2) Price factor; the majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of service in terms of price. The overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.19$ S.D. = 0.83). 3) People factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of the service people. The overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.33$ S.D. = 0.87). 4) Promotion factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of service in terms of promotion. The overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$ S.D. = 0.85).

Keywords: service quality, public taxi

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the customer's viewpoint, the essential issue is the quality of service that service providers deliver to customers to create an impression of excellent service. The result from the delivery of better services is customer satisfaction and contributes to a good relationship with customers, as well as to encouraging these customers to purchase or use the products continuously. This is so-called customer retention and involves building long-term customer relationships that lead to customer loyalty to a product or service.

Service refers to intangible things that the service provider or vendor delivers to the customer or buyer. The importance of attributes of service have two levels: the first level is the importance of service towards the customer. The goal is to give the customer a good service to keep them happy and to ensure that they will use the service in future. The second level is the importance of service towards the service provider. The goal is to maintain existing customers (customer retention) as loyal customers together with the search for new customers (customer acquisition). Therefore, service providers need to do whatever it takes to find new customers because it creates prosperity for the organisation as well. Several new customers added are considered advanced indicators (Ayudhya, 2004, p. 14–15).

In the past, taxi service in Thailand charged a service fee by bargaining a fare between taxi drivers and passengers. There were about 13,500 taxi cars, in that time there was over demand for the services that made a call to increase in the taxi service unlimitedly and opened opportunities for taxi drivers' careers. Later, in 1992, the meter taxi became a popular form of transport because it was convenient and it applied a meter system instead of a bargaining style as in the past. However, it has caused problems arising from a meter taxi service noticed by many complaints through the centre of the protection of passengers. From statistic records, only five months during the 2014 fiscal budget year (October 2013–February 2014), the Department of Land Transport has received complaints of 10,070 cases about taxi service

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through the centre of the protection of passengers. The major complaints were about taxi drivers turning down passengers, expressing themselves verbally in a disrespectful manner, driving carelessly, not carrying passengers to the destination as agreed, and not using the meter fare (Phuket, 2014). Therefore, the related organisation including the Department of Land Transport has continually invited entrepreneurs to attend the seminar to clarify the rules and regulations but these issues still exist. Hence, the taxi service operators must be aware and resolve these problems to enhance the popularity of taxi service and to remain sustainably part of Thai society.

This research aimed to study the service quality of public taxis operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand and would be useful for the improvement and development of taxi cooperatives in Bangkok. In addition, the study surveyed suggestions and solutions that meet the needs of passengers of taxi cooperatives in Bangkok to improve the quality of public taxi services in the future.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives

To study the service quality of public taxi that operate by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand.

Research Methodology

Population

Group of users who used public taxi that operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand.

Sample

The sample was a group of users who used registered public taxi operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand which could not determine the exact numbers of the population. Thus, the researchers then utilised the formula that was suitable for estimating the unknown amount of population. It was expected that the error must be less than 0.5 and at a confidence level of 95 percent (Vanichbuncha, 2002, p. 26). The number of samples received from the formula was 385. However, to prevent incomplete questionnaires, the researchers added 4 percent of the sample size for this reason, equalling 15 respondents. In total, the sample size in this study was 400 people. Then the researcher utilised the two-stage sampling method, which was convenience sampling and questionnaire as a research instrument to collect data from 400 users.

Research Instruments

This study was the quantitative research and the researchers used the questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was composed of four parts, as described below:

Part 1: Personal information of respondents; the researchers developed a checklist section by utilising descriptive statistics and then interpreted data in terms of frequency and percentages.

Part 2: Public taxi users' behaviour; the researchers developed a checklist section by utilising the frequency method and then interpreted the data in terms of percentages.

Part 3: Service quality of public taxi service; the researchers developed a checklist section by utilising the frequency method and then interpreted the data in terms of percentages.

Part 4: Suggestions; the researchers developed an open-ended section by using the content analysis method.

RESULTS

Part 1: Personal information of respondents

There were 400 respondents, who were users of public taxi from taxi cooperatives. 57.90 percent of them are female, mostly aged 20–24 years old, that accounted for 34.90 percent; 80.10 percent were single, the majority were students/university students, equivalent to 54.70 percent, 64.20 percent of them had a Bachelor's degree, and 27.60 percent had an average income of 5,001–10,000 Baht.

Part 2: Information about public taxi users' behaviour

From the survey, 65.9 percent of users of public taxi from taxi cooperative used service from Monday to Friday, during the daytime from 11:00–17.00 hours, which represented 48.7 percent; 45.5 percent of them used the taxi service for going for vacation/shopping. The average number of service used was 3–5 times per month, which accounted for 59.3 percent; 50.6 percent were travelling alone, and average fare per each service was 61–100 baht or accounted for 68.3 percent of respondents.

Part 3: Information about the service quality of public taxi service

This study used a questionnaire for collecting data on 400 respondents and the findings are as follows:

Service of taxi cooperative	N (400)	Level of service quality		
		Mean	S.D	Opinion level
1. Product factor				
1.1 Sufficient amount of taxi cab to service		3.59	0.76	High
1.2 Conditions outside and inside the cab are new and clean		3.60	0.81	High
1.3 Installation of major equipment required by law such as meter, radio communication, fare table and sign for "free" or "hired"		3.55	0.85	High
1.4 Licence plate and the identification of the driver are placed in the right position and are clear		3.50	0.78	High
1.5 Condition of taxi reaches standard (lifespan up to nine years)		3.43	0.82	High
2. Price factor				
2.1 The fare is charged by the meter at the current specified rate and is appropriate and a fair price		3.15	0.82	Moderate
2.2 The fare is accurate and reliable		3.13	0.82	Moderate
2.3 The fare is charged to passengers as shown on the meter		3.29	0.85	Moderate
3. People factor				
3.1 Taxi driver dressed cleanly and neatly		3.41	0.84	High

3.2 Taxi driver has a good personality, is polite and trustworthy		3.17	0.83	Moderate
3.3 Taxi driver is able to communicate and provide information to passengers properly		3.29	0.92	Moderate
3.4 Taxi driver has knowledge and expertise in travelling the route		3.40	0.89	Moderate
3.5 Taxi driver is well-mannered and follows traffic rules and regulations		3.41	0.88	High
4. Promotion factor				
4.1 Service provision for taxi app and call centre		3.50	0.86	High
4.2 Time and place facilities		3.50	0.85	High

1. Product factor: the opinions of respondents towards the product dimension of public taxi service were as follows:

- 1) Sufficient amount of taxi cab to service; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.59$ S.D. = 0.76)
- 2) Conditions outside and inside the cab are new and clean; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.60$ S.D. = 0.81)
- 3) Installation of major equipment required by law such as meter, radio communication, fare table and sign for “free” or “hired”; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.55$ S.D. = 0.85)
- 4) Licence plate and the identification of the driver are placed in the right position and are clear; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$ S.D. = 0.78)
- 5) Condition of taxi reaches standard (lifespan up to nine years); most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.43$ S.D. = 0.82)

2. Price factor: the opinions of respondents towards the price dimension of public taxi service were as follows:

- 1) The fare is charged by the meter at the current specified rate and is appropriate and a fair price; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.15$ S.D. = 0.82)
- 2) The fare is accurate and reliable; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.13$ S.D. =0.82)
- 3) The fare is charged to passengers as shown on the meter; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.29$ S.D. = 0.85)

3. People factor: the opinions of respondents towards the people dimension of public taxi service were as follows:

- 1) Taxi driver dresses cleanly and neatly; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.41$ S.D. = 0.84)
- 2) Taxi driver has a good personality, is polite and trustworthy; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.17$ S.D. = 0.83)
- 3) Taxi driver is able to communicate and provide information to passengers properly; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.29$ S.D. = 0.92)
- 4) Taxi driver has knowledge and expertise in travelling the route; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.40$ S.D. = 0.89)

5) Taxi driver is well-mannered and follows traffic rules and regulations; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.41$ S.D. = 0.88)

4. Promotion factor: the opinions of respondents towards the promotion dimension of public taxi service were as follows:

1) Service providing of for taxi app and call centre; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$ S.D. = 0.86)

2) Time and place facilities; most of the respondents were satisfied with the service and the overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$ S.D. = 0.85)

Part 4: Issues and suggestions of public taxi service

Most of the respondents identifying key issues in the provision of public taxi services were vehicles accounted for 39.5 percent, followed by taxi call centre/app accounting for 34.9 percent and taxi drivers for 25.7 percent, respectively.

Key issues in the provision of public taxi services

The most three important issues in public taxi service operated by the taxi cooperative that were necessary to rectify immediately were:

1. Taxi drivers refusing to take passengers accounted for 61.5 percent
2. Taxi drivers taking the detour route accounted for 14.3 percent
3. Taxi drivers expressing themselves verbally in a disrespectful manner represented 5.8 percent

Suggestions of public taxi services

- Taxi drivers should provide a service to all passengers
- Taxi drivers should be careful when driving and must follow traffic rules and regulations
- The taxi cars should be clean and in good condition
- Taxi drivers should return precise change to passengers
- Taxi drivers be polite to passengers

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This research aimed to study the service quality of public taxis that are operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand. The researchers surveyed the group of the users of public taxi operated by taxi cooperative in Bangkok area. The sample was a group of users who used registered public taxis operated by the taxi cooperative in Bangkok, Thailand. The exact size of the population could not be determined. Thus, the researchers then utilised the formula that was suitable for estimating the unknown amount of population. It was expected that error must be less than 0.5 and at a confidence level of 95 percent (Vanichbuncha, 2002, p. 26). The number of samples from the formula was 385. However, to prevent incomplete questionnaire, the researchers added four percent of the sample size for this reason, equalling 15 respondents. In total, the sample size in this study was 400 people. Then, the researcher utilised the two-stage sampling method: convenience sampling and questionnaire as a research instrument to collect data from 400 users.

The findings of this study found that: 1) product factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall service quality of the product. The overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.53$ S.D. = 0.80); 2) price factor; the majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of service in terms of price. The overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.19$ S.D. = 0.83); 3) people factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of service people. The overall average was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.33$ S.D. = 0.87); 4) promotion

factor; most respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of service in terms of promotion. The overall average was at a high level ($\bar{X} = 3.50$ S.D. = 0.85). Moreover, the study found that the three most important issues in public taxi service operated by the taxi cooperative that were necessary to rectify immediately were: 1) taxi drivers refusing to take passengers accounted for 61.5 percent; 2) taxi drivers who took a detour route accounted for 14.3 percent; and 3) taxi drivers expressed themselves verbally in a disrespectful manner represented 5.8 percent. Furthermore, there were suggestions relating to the public taxi service, including: 1) taxi drivers should provide service to all passengers; 2) taxi drivers should be careful when driving and must follow the traffic rules and regulations; 3) the taxi cars should be clean and in good condition; 4) taxi drivers should return precise change to passengers; and 5) taxi drivers should be polite to passengers.

This study was complied with the research of Prompreechawut (2006) who studied the service characteristics of meter taxis in Bangkok. The researcher interviewed 300 people who used meter taxis in Bangkok and the data was analysed using percentages. Moreover, it was consistent with the research of Klongklaw (2009), who studied factors influencing the acceptance technology of service to provide for passenger taxis in Bangkok. The purpose was to understand the taxi passenger behaviour in Bangkok and any factors that had an influence on their technology acceptance. Furthermore, it was in accordance with the research of Semchuchot (2007), who studied the demand characteristics of taxi services in the Bangkok Metropolitan area in terms of attitude, cause and motivation that people prefer to call a taxi through the taxi radio centre and hire a taxi at the road, including the estimation of customer numbers who use taxis in Bangkok. Also, it was consistent with the study of Natthaphon Sornsoongnern (2013), who studied the taxi calling system that relied on GPS modules, which could be monitored by web traffic. Furthermore, this study was in accordance with the research of Mittanonsakul (2011), who studied attitudes towards and the problems of taxi drivers in providing service to persons with disabilities. In addition, a study of quality of service was also consistent with the research of Pranee (2014), who studied guidelines for quality management in the health spa business in Ranong.

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