

A STUDY ON PASSENGER SATISFACTION TOWARDS FERRY SERVICE OPERATED AT KUALA PERLIS

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ABSTRACT

According to the development of the transport industry, the concept of quality has become apparent. This study analyses the quality of ferry terminal towards passenger satisfaction. By using survey questionnaires, data from the passengers using Kuala Perlis ferry terminal has been collected and analysed. The questionnaire collected passengers' demographics information, services information, facilities and expectations from the service provider. This study was aimed to provide a valuable insight to an organization that operates the Kuala Perlis terminal regarding passenger satisfaction. A total of 150 questionnaires were collected and the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to investigate the current status of passenger satisfaction and to determine the relationship between terminal facilities and passenger satisfaction. The result found a strong relationship between the terminal facilities and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Ferry terminal facilities, customer service, passenger satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, Langkawi Island is considered as a standout amongst famous holiday destinations. Langkawi can be reached by air and by sea and the most popular entry point by sea is through the Kuala Perlis ferry terminal. Therefore, a study on customer satisfaction towards this terminal is imperative. Ibrahim and Ahmed (2011), indicate that the accessibility and great quality offices at ferry terminal can likewise be referred to as one of the factors that would influence the fast development of tourism at this terminal.

Generally, customer's level of satisfaction towards support facility can be valued based on five important criteria, namely comfort, security, cleanliness, adequacy and function. In accordance with that, for ferry terminal, the aspect of 'comfort' are highly emphasized and should be managed properly because it influences tourists' level of satisfaction. This matter was clarified by MORI (Market and Opinion Research International) Social Research Institute (2002), which outline that comfort is related to environment, while 'security' aspect refers to a guarantee that the facility is safe to be used by tourists. If there is a guarantee on safety, tourist confidence when using the facility involved will increase. After that, 'cleanliness' aspect also needs to be considered in determining tourists' level of satisfaction towards support facility.

Adequacy aspect refers to facility availability that is related to the total number, size or quantity that suit with the number of customers. Facilities prepared are also constantly placed with the right means, suitable with the number of tourists or consumers expected. Lack of facilities will create an undesirable feeling and consequently invites dissatisfaction or complaint among tourists (Moscardo, 2001). While 'functionality' aspect in

tourism supports facility on the other hand, is associated with the applicability of facility prepared (Seubsamarn, 2009). Functional facilities like toilet, telephone, chair and rest table that exist at a tourist's spot including in ferry terminal, airport, bus station, are the welcoming doors for the tourists. Although they only functioned as support facilities, they can leverage on the tourists' level of satisfaction. Customer's satisfaction level towards support facility in main tourism destinations needs to be valued from time to time.

In Malaysia, Langkawi Island is regarded as one of the most popular tourist destinations. Several studies on tourism level of satisfaction on tourism support facility in the island were already done by Zainuddin et al. (2006), Ayob et al. (2009), Fah and Kandasamy (2011), and Che Rose et al. (2012). Since 85 percent of the tourists to Pulau Langkawi uses sea route through ferry terminals in Kedah and Perlis (Zainuddin et al., 2006), the focus on the assessment should be carried out on the support facility level at the terminals. In this matter, Ibrahim and Ahmad (2008) emphasize that there are various issues about the quality of products and services provided whether at the entry point or in tourism destination that were found in Kedah including in Langkawi Island. Issues involved are toilet cleanliness, damage of facility which disrupted the functionality due to vandalism, poor maintenance, lack of facilities, security and discomfort to tourists and others.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The most common problems face at Kuala Perlis ferry terminal are traffic congestion and lack of safe parking spaces for vehicles. Users need to face the traffic jams that were caused by the small size of the road and small drop off area (Azman A.R, personal communication, September 16, 2017; Badrulhisyam M. personal communication, September 25, 2017). Therefore, this

research is to identify the relationship between Kuala Perlis ferry terminal facilities and customer satisfaction. Besides that, this research also attempts to identify the ferry operators' actions to ensure customers' satisfaction.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The aim of this research is to study the level of customer satisfaction towards Kuala Perlis ferry terminal. The research objective is to determine the current status of customer satisfaction with ferry operation at Kuala Perlis and to examine the influence of terminal facilities towards customer satisfaction at Kuala Perlis Terminal.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions have been identified:

1. What are the current situations on customer satisfaction on the facilities at Kuala Perlis Terminal?
2. Will facilities at ferry terminal influence tourist satisfaction?

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Relatively, this study will provide favourable information for the management of Kuala Perlis ferry terminal to focus further on customer satisfaction. This study will also be favourable to the government authority as it will inform them the level of customer satisfaction towards the facilities at Kuala Perlis Terminal. This would allow them to direct their limited resources to address the identified problems. Besides that, this study will add to the limited pool of literature on domestic ferry transportation in the Southeast Asian region (Arof & Nair, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Port/ Terminal

A terminal is where stacking and emptying of individuals or products happen in a transport terminal or a prepared terminal (Fah & Kandasamy, 2011). In general, one might say that marine terminals are stops or stations for boats and pontoons. In any case, it must be noticed that a marine terminal is not an unmistakable station for the boats. Marine terminals simply frame a piece of the port where merchandise and payload can be stacked into a ferry and be discharged from a ferry, when it goes to the port (Fah & Kandasamy, 2011). These terminals usually offer some facilities for load or unload cargo from the vessel (Fah & Kandasamy, 2011). Marine terminals are exceptionally prominent and shape a vital need with regard to the loading part (Arof & Awis Khadzi, 2018) (Karam et al., 2014).

The port or harbour is an extremely busy spot. Notwithstanding such a significant number of individuals, there is likewise the pulling and offloading of freight that should be done since payload sends additionally a noteworthy segment of ports (Karam et al., 2014). In addition, a port is also an economic unit that provides the transfer of services, which comes after the production of the physical products. The number of transfer services is known as 'port' results. According to Karam, Karampela, Kizos & Spilanis (2014), in the competitive environment, ports do not have to compete for location and operating

efficiency but also based on the information they get from the supply chain provider.

Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is the main point of customer purchase purpose and confidence (Kotler, 2000). Consumer satisfaction information is among the most gathered point of marketing results. Inside associations, the accumulation, examination, and spread of this information communicates something specific about the significance of keeping an eye on clients and guaranteeing that they have a positive involvement in the organization's products and ventures (Kotler, 2000).

Basically, Manani et al., 2013 reveal that fulfillment is the best marker of how likely it is that the association's clients will make additional buys at later stage. Obviously, there are two fundamental components that formed the essence of customers fulfillment, which are what foreseen or expected and what gotten or delighted in by voyagers (Manani et al., 2013). Correlation between both of these components thus creates a yield which is referred to as fulfillment (Manani et al., 2013). Fulfillment winds up noticeably significant and wonderful experience for customers. Next, encounter emphatically urges travelers to visit the rebuilding of a vacationer goal (Singh, 2006).

Terminal Facilities

Ampleness refers as a perspective on port offices accessibility, which is related to the size or amount that suits with a number of clients (Amalia & Litinas, 2007). Offices are additionally having been arranged likewise and it is harmonized with the quantities of client expected (Singh, 2006). An absence of the offices will influence the eccentric circumstance and make the client feels not fulfilled. (Seubsamarn, 2009). Offices work with facilities involving latrines, phones, seats and rest tables that exist on a client spot.

METHODOLOGY

Closed Ended Questions

In this study, closed-ended survey questionnaires have been distributed among respondents. Each answer can be given with a number to enable a measurable understanding to be evaluated. Clearly, there should be adequate decisions to completely cover the scope of answers. For this study, the researchers utilised the plan of Importance Question and Likert Question as to quantify the variable related with the entrepreneur's endeavour.

Fundamentally in significance addresses, the respondents are generally solicited to rate the significance of a specific issue, on a rating scale of 1 to 5. Respondents ranked the quality of services from high to low or from the best to the worst by utilising the scales of five or seven. Likert-Scales are given scores or dole out a weight to each scale, typically from 1 - 5. The motivation behind the Likert-Scale is to aggregate the scores of every respondent (the reaction normal), and the intent of the Likert-Scale is that the statement will represent different aspects of agreement with the statement given in the survey questionnaire.

Table 1. Example of Likert-Scale in Questionnaire Design

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderately	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

The survey questionnaires consist of three sections:

Section A: Demographic

Section B: Facilities Provided

Section C: Services Provided

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the instrument used to examine the appropriate response from the question that has been administered through the poll. From the crude information, it will be divided to generate important information to help answer the enquiries and research objective.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

A Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software will be utilised for scrutinizing this quantitative information. After the information is gathered, they will be organised and analysed. The tools in the SPSS used for this purpose are reliability statistics, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

Data Collection Technique

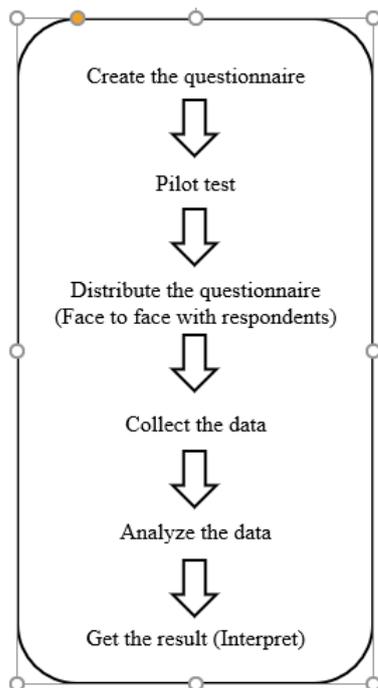


Figure 1. Flow of Data Collection Technique

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.896	.900	20

Based on the result shown in Table 1, Cronbach Alpha for the reliability test is 0.896, which is more than 0.7 and it is considered good in consistency.

Descriptive Analysis

Based on Table 2, it shows the descriptive statistics for two independent variables that were included in the questionnaire which is jetty facilities and customer service. The table also shows the data from 150 valid samples without missing variable. All of these variables were measured using the 5- point Likert scale which is; 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree and 5- Strongly Agree. From the table, customer service has the highest mean value of 3.8600 compared with the ferry terminal (jetty) facilities, at just 3.7200.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Jetty facilities	150	3.7200	.63584
Customer service	150	3.8600	.56794
Valid N (listwise)	150		

Hence, it shows that customer service is slightly favoured by customers to meet their satisfaction as compared to the terminal facilities. However, the mean obtained by jetty facilities is also high and can still affect customer satisfaction if they are not adequately provided. Other than that, the standard deviation shows the highest value of the jetty facilities of value 0.63584 while the lowest value of standard deviation from this research is 0.56794, which is customer service. If the value of standard deviation is small, the data are close to the mean or average of the data set, while the data are getting away from the mean or average when the value of the standard deviation is large.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

	Customer satisfaction	Jetty facilities	Customer service
Pearson Correlation	1	.889**	.389**
Customer satisfaction Sig.(2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000
N	150	150	150
Pearson Correlation	.889**	1	.504**
Jetty facilities Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
N	150	150	150
Pearson Correlation	.389**	.504**	1
Customer service Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
N	150	150	150

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the degree of association for two variables, which are independent variable and dependent variable. From the data, jetty facilities and customer service were the independent variables while customer satisfaction acts as a dependent variable. The correlation coefficient is at least -1 and the largest value is 1. If 0, then there is no correlation at all while correlation 1 means a perfect correlation. This means that if it is closer to 1 or -1, the relationship between two variables is strong. In fact, this can be a simple guide, that a correlation number above 0.5 indicates a strong correlation and below 0.5 indicates a weak correlation. Based on Table 3, the ferry terminal (jetty) facilities has the highest value of p that is 0.889 and it is closed to 1.

Therefore, it has a positive relationship between the customer satisfaction and this variable will influence the dependent variable. Hence, it can be concluded that P is the most significant variable to make the customer satisfaction increases in terminal ferry operation at Kuala Perlis. This section also answered research question 2 which is "Will facilities at ferry terminal influence tourist satisfaction?".

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from this research, most of the passengers are found to be satisfied with the facilities at the Kuala Perlis ferry terminal. Therefore, the service provider should take responsibility for the seating arrangement in order to provide more comfort to all passengers at the ferry terminal. On the other hand, the findings also reveal that there is a strong relationship between port facilities and customer satisfaction. It can be observed from the Pearson correlation result at Table 3.

Toward top-notch benefits, the ferry service provider ought to comprehend customer request, needs, and desires. Next, they should centre on how to convey the most advantageous administration that addresses the issues of the customers. Tackling issues that happened during visits actively can prompt more fulfilled customers. Enabling staff regarding correspondence and choice

aptitudes can help the organization in enhancing its administration quality.

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