

# Factors Influence Passenger Experience on Ride-Hailing Transportation among Young Generation

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## Abstract

Passenger experience is crucial to the success of the ride-hailing transportation industry, because passengers are more inclined to choose ride-hailing transportation companies or service providers that bring them a good experience. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and passenger experience on ride-hailing transportation among students of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). A total of 271 respondents participated in this study. The data were collected by online survey which was conducted through questionnaire and distributed using Google Form. This study analyzed by descriptive analysis, normality test, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis and hypothesis testing by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The survey results show that there is relationship between tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance with passenger experience. Ride-hailing companies or service providers need to improve their service quality to provide passengers with a good experience, in order to attract and retain passengers. In brief, the discussion and conclusion on the significance of this study were presented.

**Keywords:** Passenger Experience, Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance

## Introduction

In today's technology-driven society, the ride-hailing transportation has expanded considerably and is highly welcomed by customers all around the world, including Malaysia. According to the Ubaidillah et al (2019), ride-hailing transportation is a new mode of transportation that connecting passengers with private drivers using the location-sharing system or global positioning system (GPS) via online platforms and application. The Malaysian government legalized ride-hailing services in July 2017, with Grab, MyCar, Riding Pink, Uber, and PICKnGO among the businesses that were accessible at that time (Rao, 2018). Grab, which acquired Uber in March 2018, is the largest and most influential ride-hailing company in Malaysia until today (Daga & Aravindan, 2018; Grab, 2018). According to the report published by the Statista (2020), the number of passengers using ride-hailing transportation in Malaysia has steadily increased from 1.67 million passengers in 2017 to 4.65 million passengers in 2020 and is forecasted to reach 6.0 million passengers in 2023.

However, there are still several issues with the passenger experience while using the ride-hailing services, as a result of ride-hailing companies failing to meet the passenger's expectations. According to a survey called "Sharing Economy: Exploring the Future of

Transport in Southeast Asia" conducted by the Meltwater (2018), it reported that 73% of ride-hailing complaints in Malaysia were related to driver behavior, followed by price reliability (12%), promotions (7%) and waiting for rides (6%). More often than not, the drivers have failed to pick up their passenger on time, and some of them even waste lots of time arriving at the pick-up address (Bekele, 2019). From the previous researches conducted all over the world, it can be concluded that lot of the complaints were about bad driver attitude, dangerous driving, cancelling passenger's booking, and lack of trustworthiness (Jayaraj et al., 2019).

According to Bekele (2019), some of the problems occur mainly due to the inequality between the ride-hailing supply and passenger demand. Meanwhile, this inequality is also one of the challenges facing the effective operation of today's ride-hailing service providers. However, Amponsah & Adams (2016) made their own argument that an increase in supply does not necessarily lead to a corresponding increase in demand and satisfaction. In fact, understanding consumer happiness and service performance may give vital information to ride-hailing firm, thereby assuring the returns on investment made to retain and recruit new consumers.

In the urban transportation system, ride-hailing service providers are playing an essential role in offering customized services (Bekele, 2019). This is because ride-hailing transportation not only is the option for those who rely on the public transit, but it is also projected to alleviate traffic congestion in the urban areas. According to Ali et al (2018), the concept of the ride-hailing business is to provide passengers with the efficient and convenient services they need and are always available. To this extent, the quality of the ride-hailing service offered will influence the accessibility and efficiency in operation. In addition, the fierce competition in the ride-hailing industry also encourages related companies to improve the quality of services to meet their passenger needs. Therefore, by providing excellent quality services to their passengers, this can help ride-hailing company to build brand loyalty and maintain their competitiveness in the industry (Hussein, 2016). In view of that, this paper are investigating to answer the following issues: Does the tangibility have relationship with the passenger experiences on ride-hailing transportation among UUM students? Does the reliability have relationship with the passenger experiences on ride-hailing transportation among UUM students? Does the responsiveness have relationship with passenger experiences on ride-hailing transportation among UUM students? Does the assurance have relationship with the passenger experiences on ride-hailing transportation among UUM students?

In the nutshell, it is very important for ride-hailing companies to understand the passenger's experience when using the services provided. This will help them to have better understanding on the passenger expectations and formulate necessary improvements and upgrades to deal with this. Aside from that, it aids passengers in comprehending the dimension of service quality that influence their experience of using the service. This is pointed to study the factors that the passenger experience on ride-hailing transportation among UUM students. Therefore, this study will have focused on four main factors that influence the ride hailing passenger experience such as the tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and assurance.

## **Literature Review**

### **Tangibility and Passenger Experience**

Yator (2012) stated that the customers' impressions of tangible service qualities can be influenced by facilities like trained personnel. Zeithaml et al (2018) described tangibility as a symbolic of the company's quality and image as well as convenience and safety for customers (Chung & Al-Khaled, 2020). Furthermore, this assessment of tangibility encourages the customers to keep track of quality in order to maintain consistency in improving and delivering physical elements. As a result, organizations strive to make a pleasant and lasting the first impression on each client as well as encouraging them to seek repeat service (Azudin et al., 2018). Meanwhile, Wahid et al (2017) advocated that all the tangibility aspects should be given great attention as such aspects have an impact on customer loyalty and can result in increased revenues for the company. Thus, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: Tangibility has significant effect on passenger experience.

### **Reliability and Passenger Experience**

Bowman & Turnquist (1981) related reliability with timetable conformance instead of service regularity. Cham (2006) defined reliability as stability and availability of travel characteristically at a given site that affecting the decision-making of those drivers and passengers. This definition captures the differences in viewpoints that exists between the drivers and passengers. Based on Parasuraman et al (1988), the SERVQUAL model's reliability dimensions comprised with quality, dependability and accuracy of promised service manifestation (Salameh & Hassan, 2015). Sharma & Das (2017) said the performance of reliability in ride-hailing transportation service is very critical because the passengers are more likely to arrive at their destination with ideal duration (Zulkiffli et al., 2020). It is also understood that a service would not be considered as reliability unless it sticks to a schedule and is consistent as there are the aspects of reliability (Gittens & Shalaby, 2015). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: Reliability has significant effect on passenger experience.

### **Responsiveness and Passenger Experience**

Responsiveness is generally considered to be one of the main components for high-quality service. Based on the Agbi & Adekunle (2020), responsiveness has been examined from two main different perspectives, including the speed and timeliness. So, responsiveness comprises of processing speed and service capabilities to respond to its customer instantly, and with a short waiting time. To this extend, when the service provider communicates with its customers to answer their inquiry and fulfil their requests promptly, it is said to be responsive (Jahan, 2019). As the results of these previous studies, it is great to improve responsiveness in their operation, which includes assigning well-trained personnel, especially in positions that interact with customers. In addition, the service providers must consider responsiveness from the customer's perspective rather than from the company's perspective in order to maintain its competitiveness in the industry (Jahan, 2019). By achieving high responsiveness, this can help service providers stand out from competitors and to be success. Hence, it can be hypothesized that:

H3: Responsiveness has significant effect on passenger experience.

#### **Assurance and Passenger Experience**

According to Jahan (2019), the assurance is significant for the companies where the consequences of using the service are uncertain and the risks are higher. Therefore, for the ride-hailing company, assurance is a significant aspect that passengers consider when evaluating the company or service provider. The confidence and trust may be reflected in the people who connect the passengers with the organization. Based on Azudin et al. (2018), assurance is the element of service provided by the service provider or employees of the company, and it discusses the understanding and chivalry of representatives who are suitable for depicting trust and certainty. This further pointed out that the service is perceived by what is obtained by passengers and how they obtain it. Therefore, assurance is perceived by passengers as an essential element of service quality that affects passengers to measure the quality of service provided by the company or service provider. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that:

H4: Assurance has significant effect on passenger experience.

#### **Research Methodology**

##### **Research Design**

This study has employed quantitative approach to test the hypothesis in the research framework (Figure 1). The type of investigation in this research is the correlational study because it was carried out in order to determine the most relevant factors linked to the variables of interest. The study was conducted using cross-sectional. The survey strategy is used which is questionnaires were distributed in order to collect the data. The collected data are then analyzed by SPSS and the results are then generalized to the entire population.

##### **Sample, Population, Unit of Analysis**

The entire population of this study consist of 32,686 students at University Utara Malaysia in the year 2021. Sample of 271 respondents were drawn in this research. This study employs non-probability sampling where this research used convenience sampling. The unit of analysis is individual university students.

##### **Measurement of Variables**

The operationalization and measurement of the variables under study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

*Measurement*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Passenger Experience	The extent to which passenger experience can be defined is when passengers see that a company or service provider has made available service and product that meets the requirements of the passengers. The passengers experience is influenced by service quality.	6	Adapted from Hussein, (2016)
Tangibility	Tangibility dimension can be described as an equipment, personnel semblance and the physical quality of the facilities.	4	Adapted from Chia et al. (2019)
Reliability	Reliability is the transportation service must be honour obligations, consistent and maintaining the commitment towards the customers	4	Adapted from Chia et al, (2019)
Responsiveness	Responsiveness refers to the willingness of the service providers to respond to its customers and provide them with the required services in a timely and flexible manner.	4	Adapted from Chia et al, (2019)
Assurance	Assurance refers to employees or service providers' courtesy, knowledge, as well as ability to convey confidence and trust to the customers, which has a significant relationship with passenger experience in ride-hailing transportation services.	4	Adapted from Chia et al, (2019)

**Data Collection and Analysis**

A total of 271 questionnaires were distributed to university students in Malaysia in this study. The researchers able to get 271 returned questionnaires that were distributed to the target respondents. This study is conduct by sending the Google link to the university students via online platform like Newseeds UUM and WhatsApp group. The survey is taken two weeks to reach the 271 respondents. Therefore, 271 questionnaires were used for further analysis. Regression Analysis was performed to test the hypothesis under study.

## Data Analysis

### Demographic Profiles

According to the survey, the female respondents were higher than male respondents accounting for 60.5% and 39.5% respectively. Respondents who are aged 22 to 25 years old are the highest contribution in this study by 72.7%, followed by respondents who are aged 18 to 21 years old with 21.4%. The study shows that majority of respondents are undergraduates (93.4%) while only 6.6% are postgraduates. Furthermore, majority of the respondents' income is less than RM 1,000 (70.8%), followed by respondents whose income is between RM 1,001 and RM 2,000 (20.7%), respondents with income between RM 3,001 to RM 4,000 (1.5%) and respondents whose income is more than RM 4,001 (0.7%). Furthermore, Grab Car is the ride-hailing transport that is favored by the largest number of respondents (60.5%), followed by respondents stated that their favourite ride-hailing transport is SAPU (26.2%), respondents stated that they like MyCar as a means of ride-hailing transport (9.2%) and respondents indicated that they prefer other means of ride-hailing transport (4.1%). Moreover, 72.3% of respondents stated that they travelled by ride-hailing transport for 1 to 3 times per month, 21.8% for 4 to 6 times per month, 4.8% for 7 to 10 times per month and 1.1% for more than 11 times per month.

### Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 2 has demonstrated R<sup>2</sup> with the value of 45.9% of the total variance of passenger experience. This implies that four variables such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and assurance collectively explain 45.9% of the passenger experience. The result shows that these four variables such as tangibility ( $\beta = 0.295$ ,  $t = 5.579$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), reliability ( $\beta = 0.206$ ,  $t = 3.151$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), responsiveness ( $\beta = 0.189$ ,  $t = 2.843$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and assurance ( $\beta = 0.152$ ,  $t = 2.437$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) have significant effect towards passenger experience. Hence, all hypothesis under the study (H1, H2 H3 and H4) were accepted. In general, the model is significant which  $F = 56.405$ ,  $P < 0.05$  indicating that the independent variables explain a significant amount of variance in the dependent variable.

Table 2

#### Regression Analysis

Model	B	Beta	T	Sig.
(constant)	0.539		2.591	0.010
IV1	0.302	0.295	5.579	0.000
IV2	0.207	0.206	3.151	0.002
IV3	0.177	0.189	2.843	0.005
IV4	0.147	0.152	2.437	0.015
R square	0.459			
Adjusted R square	0.451			
F value	56.405 p=0.000			

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Tangibility and Passenger Experience

The study found that there was a significant positive relationship between tangibility and the passenger experiences on ride-hailing transportation. It means that if the tangibility of the ride-hailing service offered is good, the passenger experience will be good, and vice versa. Tangibility has been defined as the physical quality of equipment, personnel appearance, and



facilities (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Previous studies have shown the positive relationship, Man et al (2019) found that tangibility had a significant impact on passenger satisfaction in ride-hailing sector in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is because the physical features of service can provide a unique experience for passengers, resulting in the creation of unique image for the service providers (Shah, 2020). The study by Bekele (2019) showed that tangible qualities, namely ride-hailing application, also has a positive influence on customer experience by reducing the effort of passengers and the time to find a driver. Furthermore, Watchareebhorn (2016) also found significant relationship between tangibility and passenger experience, in which the professionalism of the driver can satisfy customers through improving communication and understanding of their expectations. In addition, customers will become more satisfied if the ride-hailing facilities are well-presented, with clean vehicles both inside and out, and any physical attributes related with the service. Following these findings, it posited that tangibility is sufficient to demonstrate that the service provider is customer-focused and concerned about their well-being (Mudenda & Guga, 2017).

#### Reliability and Passenger Experience

This research shown that there is significant positive relationship between the reliability and passenger experience on ride-hailing transportation. It can be seen and proven from prior studies that there is a relationship between passenger experience and the reliability of services, fares and service providers (Man et al., 2019). The passengers will be satisfied and have a high return rate if the actual service is reliable since it allows them to arrange their travel plans properly (Mudenda & Guga, 2017). The passengers have a positive response to the services provided if the ride-hailing drivers provide reliable services by providing services as promised. In this perspective, customers feel satisfied when hen they get picked up and arrive at their destinations on time, as promised by the ride-hailing drivers. This is consistent with Man et al (2019); Bekele (2019) who studied the service quality aspects in the ride-hailing sector and its influence on passenger satisfaction. Moreover, the study by Bekele (2019) implied that passengers are satisfied when the ride-hailing service providers or companies offered a reasonable service fare. To explain further, it is also important for the ride-hailing service providers to be concerned with the transparency of the fee paid by their customers, which includes the effort to compute fares based on the company's fare structure and the distance travelled. The previous study revealed that the Global Positioning System (GPS) may alleviate the difficulties of traditional taxis, such as driver unreliability, passenger refuse, and expensive prices, according to (Ruamchart, 2021).

#### Responsiveness and Passenger Experience

Based on this research, there is a significant positive relationship responsiveness with passenger experience on ride-hailing transportation. Some researchers said that, passenger experience was found to be positively influenced by service quality as assessed by responsiveness (Ziyad et al., 2020; Agbi & Adekunle, 2020). Responsiveness was assessed by the drivers' capability to provide timely service. This includes the capability of ride-hailing drivers to use an alternative route to their destination in the case of traffic congestion, and to get passengers to their destinations on time (Man et al., 2019). In addition, passengers experience with the ride-hailing service provider is good if they can access the most updated coordinates of the driver, as well as any delays or unavailability of drivers to deliver services via the application interface (Shah, 2020). According to Kleijnen et al (2007), responsiveness

also can referred as reserving a ride-hailing service without regard to the time and location. This is because the passengers would have the ability to book ride-hailing service at any time and from any location. Additionally, booking using ride-hailing application enables passengers to know the availability of service providers in the area and pick the ride-hailing drivers that are nearest to them. Through this, it is more time-saving and convenience for the passengers (Shah, 2020). Furthermore, passenger experience can be raised by enhancing the driver availability and prompt response towards requesting passenger. Hence, responsiveness was determined to be critical in determining passenger experience in ride-hailing industry (Ziyad et al., 2020).

### **Assurance and Passenger Experience**

The study found out that there was a significant positive relationship between the assurance and passenger experience on ride-hailing transportation. Assurance are measured from the security of the passengers and the strong skill of the drivers was a key contributor towards passengers' satisfaction (Shah, 2020). Furthermore, there are also other study that have positive relationship between assurance and passenger experience. According to Man et al. (2019), it has been reported that the drivers were prompt in picking the passengers at the intended place and ensuring that the passengers arrived on time and securely. Additionally, the assurance of the ride-hailing services provided also influenced by the drivers' talent, knowledge of driving techniques, traffic rules and regulations. According to Shah (2020), the service provided by the drivers is important because it may be able to help ride-hailing firms close gaps in service quality delivery. Overall, the drivers are also a major contributor towards safety issues. This is because drivers would cause the safety problems due to the elements of weariness, conserving time, using a mobile phone while driving as well as the health issues. Hence, ride-hailing service providers should have a greater level of ability and awareness in terms of security and safety. The ride-hailing drivers must be trained and given instructions on how to operate the cab in a secure and safety manner.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings have indicated that there are positive and strong correlations between passenger experience and tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance ( $r > 0.5$ ). In addition, all predictor variables can significantly influence the ride-hailing passenger experience ( $P < 0.05$ ). Among all significant independent variables, tangibility has the greatest impact on passenger experience as it has the largest t value in coefficients table. Then there is reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. In other words, the passenger would be easily satisfied by the physical attributes provided, such as the driver's attire, the interface of application, clean and tidy interior, and safety equipment. At the same time, the passengers believe that their wants or needs can be met if the service is delivered as promised, the fee is fair, the security is impeccable, and the drivers are trustable and can provide prompt service. In addition, the passengers like guaranteed service (assurance).

### **Implication**

The implications of this study are classified into two categories, which are the theoretical implications and practical implications. Theoretically, this study can broaden existing knowledge regarding to the ride-hailing service by giving more proofs that have demonstrated the association between passenger experience and tangibility, reliability,



responsiveness, and assurance. As this study applied RATER theory and the research framework was derived from the underpinning theory, it can explain the impact of service dimensions (that is, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance) not only on ride-hailing passenger experience, but also the customer satisfaction on ride-sharing, or traditional taxi service since the service types are similar.

For practical implications, this finding can provide some knowledge to the organizations, especially ride-hailing companies like Grab and MyCar. Since the service dimension 'empathy' has been excluded in this study, and all predictor variables of this research do have an impact on the passenger experience, the most obvious point is that these service dimensions may be used as a benchmark for measuring service quality and assessing passenger satisfaction when the companies conduct a quick review of the passengers or consumers experience. The positive correlation between other independent variables and passenger experience also indicates a fact to organizations: the more reliable, responsive and assured passengers feel about the services provided, and the better of their experience. Therefore, strategy that focuses on offering more personalized and humanized service is always desired.

Furthermore, this research results are important for them to optimize the passenger experience because they are the individuals who deliver services to the consumers. However, this is related to empowering frontline employee. With highly-trained and responsible frontline employee who also possess the ability to make decisions, many problems happen in the service can be responded and recovered quickly, thereby optimizing the consumer satisfaction (Ardahan, 2007). In this study, the frontline individual would be the ride-hailing driver and the customer service staff of the ride-hailing companies. If these personnel are given additional authority, they will be able to respond to customer requests more quickly. Therefore, knowing which elements influence the passenger experience is important in ride-hailing industry because they can respond effectively and immediately as soon as the service "glitches" occur.

Apart from that, this research results also are important to the policy makers. One ideal situation is that policymakers propose meaningful and sensible solutions based on the facts gathered from the study conducted and implement the plan to maximize the expected results. However, some implemented policies may favor only one party, and ultimately leading to uneven market competition. The most obvious example of the car-hailing industry is the threats face by traditional taxi drivers. This study has indicated that majority of the young generation now are using mobile application (Grab and MyCar) to consume the ride-hailing service or relying on social medias to look for transportation service supply and communicate with the SAPU drivers (which only available in UUM). In addition, application-based car-hailing companies do provide cost-effective service with newer automobile and have become the first choice for the passengers (Zulkifli, 2019). Therefore, traditional taxis will definitely go into history in the near future.

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