

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Public transportation plays a significant role in national attempts to relieve traffic congestion, to conserve fuel, to enhance the efficiency of highway transportation, and to support security and emergency preparedness activities. In Bangkok, public transportation is varied in terms of operations; both government sector and private sector. They all serve the boundless needs of people in both the economic aspect and for personal activity. Although, public transportation has been developed as there are many modes of transport like BTS, MRT, and omnibuses serving people in the Bangkok area, it happens that this development affects people related to pollution and cost of living. From reports on Traffic problems in Bangkok and Solutions of PH.D.Somkiat, the structure of BTS stations and railway line produces air pollution and landscape blockages. So, the outcome of transportation growth is a concern for the authorities to improve the quality of transportation to satisfy the people's needs, and, limit the drawbacks to society.

Therefore, this research aimed to observe the opinion of people; who were the commuters traveling along three commercial areas of Bangkok; Silom, Pharam Sam, and Charoennakorn, related public transportation provided by the government and private sector. Regarding the attitude of people towards mass transit in Bangkok Metropolis, the study analyzed the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of people in the aspects of service quality, rapidity, safety, convenience and fares in which each transport provides. In addition, this study also observed the factors influencing people's satisfaction in order to increase the popularity and satisfaction of the passengers. The suggestions derived from observation would help government and private operators to improve the transportation system to meet the people's needs.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. What do commuters think about public transportation provided in Bangkok nowadays?
2. What is the favorite mean of public transportation of those who travel along the sample areas?
3. What are the factors that influence people's satisfaction regarding the public transportation service?
4. What are their additional suggestions that may help improve services to meet their needs regarding the public transit system?

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Main Objective:

-To ask opinions of people living in the target areas about public transportation.

Sub-Objectives:

- To find out the mode of transport that people consider as their favorite,
- To analyze the factors influencing people's satisfaction regarding public transportation; and
- To reveal additional suggestions of people to increase the satisfaction with the public transit system

1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Independent variables

In this study, the independent variables are the factors that affect people's attitude towards public transportation; whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied with making use of public transportation. These independent variables are;

- Personal background; age, gender, educational level
- Financial status/ income
- Occupation
- Purpose of travel

1.4.2 Definition

Conceptual definition:

Attitude

The definition of attitude is elaborated as a mental and neural state of readiness to respond that is organized through experience and exerts a directive and/or dynamic influence on behavior.

Satisfaction

The definition of satisfaction can be defined as the gratification of desire; contentment in possession and enjoyment; repose of mind resulting from compliance with its desires or demands.

Passenger or commuters or people

The definition of passenger or commuter or people means one who travels regularly from one place to another, as from suburb to city and back.

Operational Definition:

Attitude

An individual's like or dislike of any services provided by public transportation, mostly based on their own experiences.

Satisfaction

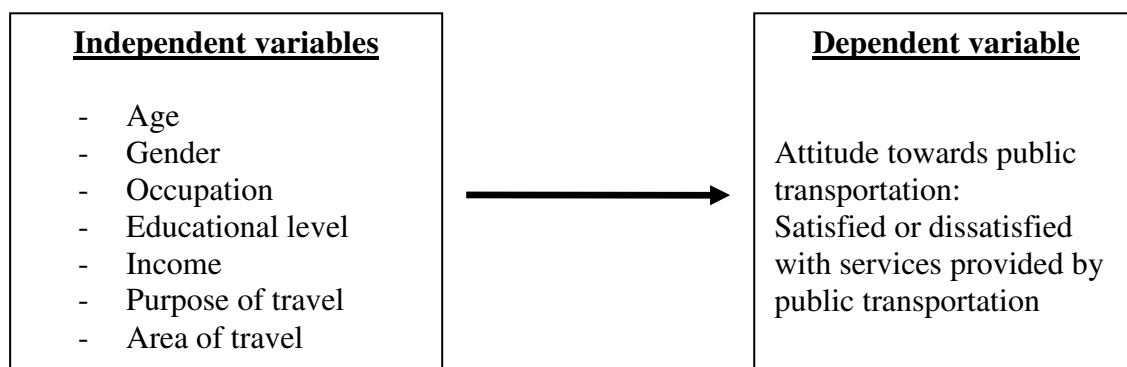
A state of mind in which commuters' needs, wants, and expectations of the public transportation in Bangkok, have been met or exceeded.

Passenger or commuters or people

The persons who travel regularly along sample areas; Charoennakorn, Phra Ram Sam, and Silom for their own interests whether for business, duty or leisure.

Conceptual framework:

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of opinion of commuters living in three commercial areas: Silom, Pharam Sam and Charoennakorn towards public transportation in Bangkok Metropolis



Definition of Terms:

Concept	Conceptual definition	Operational definition	Indicator
Gender	The condition of being male or female	The condition of being male or female of respondent	Male or female
Age	The period of time that one has lived	The period that respondent has lived	A number of years of the respondent
Income	Amount of money per month one can earn for living	10,000-20,000, 20,000-30,000, 30,000-40,000, 40,000-50,000, 50,000 and higher	10,000-20,000, 20,000-30,000, 30,000-40,000, 40,000-50,000, 50,000 and higher
Occupation	A work or job that one is doing to earn his or her living	Governmental officer, Private company's staff, Business owner, State Enterprise's officer, Students	Governmental officer, Private company's staff, Business owner, Housewife, Students

Educational level	The level of study that one has learned is learning	The highest level of degree or certificate that respondent obtained	Primary school, secondary school, Bachelor's degree, Mater's degree, and higher
Attitude	The opinions and feelings that people usually have about something	The negative or positive opinion and feelings that persons have about public transportation in Bangkok Metropolis which can imply satisfaction or dissatisfaction	Level of agreement; Strongly agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree, Strongly disagree
Public transportation	The mode of travel that includes gasoline and diesel-powered buses, electric streetcars and trolley buses, light rail, heavy rail, including both elevated and subway trains, and suburban and commuter rail	The mode of travel in Bangkok Metropolis includes sky train (BTS), subway (MRT), air-conditioned omnibus, non air-conditioned omnibus, affiliated bus (mini bus), mini-vans	Bus, sky train, subway, conditioned omnibus, non-air-conditioned omnibus, affiliated bus (minibus), minivans

Definitions of terms

Public transportation:

Public transport is the primary form of motor transport that serves people who do not travel in their own vehicles, especially in the developing countries where private car ownership is considerably expensive in terms of the high cost of parking, fuel consumption, maintenance and so on. Public transportation becomes a practical option for people who travel long distances compared to walking and (motor) cycling which are not viable for this purpose. Generally, public transportation often takes the form of omnibuses that may follow fixed routes on a non-reservation basis. The majority of transit passengers travel within a local area or region between their homes and places of employment, shopping, or schools.

Regarding the aspect of fuel conservation, public transport is an alternative mode provided by authorities to people who use private cars. Changes in the gasoline price have caused fluctuations in the share of the total urban travel market in many countries including Thailand; the share of private car use increases when fuel prices stabilize but decrease in periods of fuel crisis. In the U.S. in 1970 - 1990, the number

of work trips made by solo drivers doubled while the number of work trips made by other means of travel declined slightly during the same period. Public transit becomes an alternative mode of travel that government has developed to solve the problem of fuel consumption by private automobiles and to facilitate people to make various journeys (Ferguson, 2000).

Public transportation plays a significant role in national attempts to relieve traffic congestion, to conserve fuel, to enhance the efficiency of highway transportation, and to support security and emergency preparedness activities. The various kinds of public transport all serve the boundless needs of people in both the economic aspect and personal activity.

In Bangkok, public transportation is varied in terms of operation; both for the government and private sectors, which can be explained as per the following details;

- Omnibus: a large road vehicle designed to carry numerous passengers in addition to the driver and sometimes a conductor.
 - Non-air conditioned bus
 - Air conditioned bus
- Sky train or Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS): the elevated metro system in Bangkok, Thailand, operated by the Bangkok Mass Transit System Public Company Limited (BTSC) under a concession granted by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). With 23 stations along 2 lines, it was opened on December 5th, 1999 by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The Sukhumvit line runs northwards and eastwards, terminating at Mo Chit and On Nut respectively; the Silom line plies Silom and Sathon, the Central Business District of Bangkok, terminating at the National Stadium and Saphan Taksin (Taksin Bridge).
- Subway train or MRT: the underground railway transport that was officially opened on July 3rd, 2004 by the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand with the first railway routing 20 Kilometers from Hualumpong train station to Sirikij National Convention Hall.
- Mini van: the local van that is on service to people who travel along the residential areas to the hub or transferring to routes aimed at the commercial areas.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. This study focused on revealing people's opinions about public transportation servicing Bangkok Metropolis which were;
 - Omnibus
 - Omnibus operated by a public agency
 - Omnibus operated by a private agency or affiliated bus company
 - Sky train (BTS)
 - Subway train (MRT)
 - Mini van

2. This study concentrated on the attitude of commuters who used the service of public transport and traverse three commercial areas of Bangkok which were;
 - Pharam Sam
 - Silom
 - Charoennakorn

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study focused on commuters' attitude towards public transit. It aimed to assess the attitude of those passengers traveling through three commercial areas of Bangkok; Silom, Pharam Sam, and Charoennakorn, toward public transportation provided by the government and private sectors. Their attitude was analyzed in terms of their satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the quality of services, rapidity of vehicles, safety when riding on the transportation, convenience in use and fares for services. In addition, it looked at some other factors that might influence passenger' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services in order to provide information to authorities concerned for the improvements to the services to meet the needs of future passengers.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This independent study was divided into five chapters. The first chapter describes the significance of the study, its objectives, scope of the study and the conceptual and operational definition of terms. In the second chapter, a review of the related literature is presented. The third chapter covers the methodology of the study. The results of the study were described in the fourth chapter. Finally, the last chapter summarizes the details of the study and presents the conclusion of the study along with the recommendations for further study.