Status of the New Centralized Public Transport Terminal in Batangas City: Inputs to the Travel Industry Program

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the status of the Grand Terminal in Batangas City in terms of availability and schedule of trips, accessibility and convenience, security used to measure safety of passengers, determine the problems encountered in the terminal, and to propose an action plan for the improvement of Batangas City Public Terminal. Descriptive design was utilized using survey questionnaires as instrument in gathering data from the respondents. Based on the results, the respondents were satisfied with the availability and schedule of trips. Majority of them also agreed that the place is accessible and convenient. Safety and security of the terminal was also observed by some of the respondents. This study will help improve the services and facilities of Batangas City Public Terminal for the convenience of the passengers. The researchers are recommending for the extension of operation; construction of food establishment; providing safety, security, and health assistance, roof construction, and providing of information billboards.

Keywords: Public Transport Terminal, Batangas City, Travel Industry

INTRODUCTION

The researchers shall commence this study by defining tourism and transport. Tourism is the commercial organization and operation of vacations and visits to places of interest. It is also the practice of travelling for recreation according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Transport systems encompass numerous modes and types of transport. They feature complicated and dynamic routes determined by governmental policy and planning as well as underlying political factors (Duval, 2007)

Based on the given definition, the researchers came up with this definition of transport in the context of tourism. Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation.

In tourism sector, transportation plays an important 'flow' function in the tourism value chain. It links tourists at their origin with appealing stocks of environmental and cultural assets at the destination (Reilly, et al., 2010). In the United States, schedules, fares, and routes of intercity buses were closely regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) until passage of the Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982, which eliminated most regulations except those pertaining to safety. In this deregulated environment, intercity bus lines have continued to consolidate and trim their schedules and focus primarily on trips of less than 250 miles. Greyhound Lines is now the dominant intercity bus service provider in North America with over 40,000 daily departures in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Although the primary market segment is to serve visiting friends and relatives,

several diverse target markets including lower-income groups and riders under the age of 24 or over the age of 65 are providing to be fertile ground for future growth (Cook, et al., 2010).

Road trips are expected by everyone particularly tourists. Travel by car the largest of all segments in the ground transportation sector of the travel and tourism industry. Therefore, it is no wonder that the highways and byways play such important roles in tourism. In many cases, cars bring people to places that are otherwise inaccessible. Mountain resorts, ski destinations, dude ranches, and more spas are just few examples. This generates a lot of money, and in certain places the local economy depends almost completely on the auto tourist. (Walker & Walker, 2010)

From a more macro-perspective view, tourism mobility is connected to broader empirical research on spatial interaction and diffusion models. Spatial interaction models are used to predict spatial choices reflected in flows of goods or people between origins and destinations, expressing trade-offs between the accessibility of alternative destination opportunities and the perceived intrinsic 'attractiveness' of these opportunities. Such models have been heavily used in retail shopping planning and predictive capacities with respect to expenditure patterns and can be generated with rather basic data such as population, travel times (or distances between settlements), and retail floor space (Theobald, 2005).

In preparation for new corporate ventures, re-routing was implemented in Batangas roadways affecting Public Utility Jeepneys including Alangilan, Lipa, Balagtas, Mabini and Lemery bound. The newly established Grand Terminal in Barangay Balagtas now accommodates different transportation services. Adding to its efficiency are safe passages and roads in all parts of the city, including those roads in the rural areas (Bagon, 2012). The transportation sector, specifically passenger transportation or passage, plays the important role in the industry, since without accessible way to travel, there is no tourism. This sector comprises all entities involved in the transportation of people and goods, from a point of origin to a destination point. Also included in these sectors are all land transportation entities, from the smallest units, such as tricycle associations, to the large bus companies such as Philtranco, Victory Liner and BLTB, and trains. Train terminals, bus depot, gasoline stations, highways, railroads, roads, bridges, and the maintenance of these are essential to this sub-sector (Claravall, 2010).

It was found out that most of the respondents prefer to travel in a bus line company of Supreme and N. De La Rosa Liner which obtained the same frequency of 38 out of 200 passengers. Batangas province is one of the places greatly rely on bus companies as a means of transport. As far as the total number of buses operating in Batangas Grand Terminal is concerned, Supreme and N. De La Rosa Liner are the largest group of bus lines offering transport service to and from Lipa, Quezon, San Juan, Rosario, Ibaan, Padre Garcia, Turbina, Lucena, Alabang and Bicol region (Carandang, 2013).

The effects of the New Grand Terminal brought a great opportunity for the transportation business as the number of passenger increases. This resulted to a good profit since the terminal opened. However, there is a need for an effective management, facilities and services to further improve the operation of the Grand Terminal for the benefit of Batangas City, its people and visitors (Magluyan, 2013).

Just like any city in developing countries, informal public transport modes play a major role in mobility especially of the urban poor and the vulnerable sector of the society. Metro Manila has a peculiar mix of different public transportation services including buses, GT/FX Express, jeepneys, tricycles (motorcycle with sidecabs), and "pedicabs" (bicycles with sidecars). These modes are predominantly operated privately and are poorly regulated

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by government. (Guillen, 2012)

Public transport has been a hot issue in social economic and political settings particularly since the mid 20th Century in Sri Lanka, although it does not seem to be taken as a part of a comprehensive vision of a sustainable livelihood approach. It is also notable that less emphasis was paid to take User Perceptions with the view to influence and guide the policies of Public Transport. Most studies carried out in the past have shown rather segmented approaches and thus failed to visualize transport as an integral part of the development process of a given physical setting. The inseparable linkage of public transport with the sustenance of livelihoods especially of the lower income categories needs to be envisaged at depth and any policy forum should essentially take their views and suggestions into account if such policies are to be led to viable solutions (Chularathna, 2007).

The rich interaction capabilities of public terminals can make them more convenient to use than small personal devices, such as smart phones. However, the use of public terminals to handle personal data may compromise privacy. The system enables users to access their applications and data securely using a combination of public terminals and a more trusted, personal device. A key feature of the system is that it works with unmodified applications. A prototype implementation of the system has been publicly released for Linux and Windows. The results arising from a pilot usability study based on this implementation are presented (Sharp, 2007).
Since population in Batangas is overflowing, the demand for public transport is higher than the previous years. The researchers decided to conduct this study to know the effects of putting up a Grand Terminal to the transport industry not only in Batangas City but also in the nearby towns and its municipalities. Also the researchers wanted to know how it affects the communities in different ways.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to identify the status of the recently established centralized public terminal transport in Batangas City as input to the tourism industry program of the local government. Specifically, it identified the availability and schedule of trips, determine the effects of centralized public terminal transport to the tourists in terms of accessibility and convenience, determine the security measures used to ensure safety of passengers, problems encountered by the tourists in the centralized public terminal, and propose an action plan for the improvement of the transport system.

METHODS

Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive design of the study to determine the effects of establishing the New Centralized Public Terminal to Travel Industry specifically in land transportation of Batangas City.

Participants

The participants of this study are the 50 tourists from different parts of the province and nearby location regardless of gender, civil status, and occupation. The researchers used quota sampling in determining the number of samples.

Instrument

The researchers utilized the Survey Questionnaire in order to identify the availability and schedule of trips, determine the effects to the respondents and security measures, based on their objectives. First part of the questionnaire is all about availability and schedule of trips. The second part tackles about accessibility of the place and convenience on the part of the commuters. Safety, security, and health facilities of the terminal are the contents of the last part of the questionnaire.

Procedure

The type of questionnaire that will be used in this research is patterned from the questionnaire found by the researchers on the internet. The researchers will then distribute the questionnaires personally to the respondents before the scheduled departure of buses on peak hours of trips. The answered questionnaires were retrieved.

Data Analysis

Weighted mean and ranking were used to identify the availability and schedule of trips; to determine the effects of centralized public terminal transport to the tourists in terms of accessibility and convenience; to determine the security measures used to ensure safety of passengers and to identify problems encountered by the tourists in the centralized public terminal. Ranking is a descriptive statistics that shows positioned importance of an item.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Assessment on the Availability and Schedule of Trips (N=50)

Availability / Schedule of Trips	WM	VI	Rank
1. The Centralized Public Terminal provides continuous availability of bus trips.	3.22	A	3
2. Every town or municipality of Batangas has specific PUJs available for the commuters.	3.24	A	2
3. Buses and PUJs are still available during weekends.	3.40	A	1
4. Trips of buses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	2.54	A	5
5. Buses arrive and depart on time. They follow their proper schedule.	2.82	A	4
Composite Mean	**3.04**	**A**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 –Strongly Disagree

Table 1 presents the assessment on the availability and schedule of trips. It can be seen from the table that the respondents agreed that there is available and schedule of trips in the centralized grand terminal in Batangas City having a weighted mean of 3.04. All items yield high mean ranging from 2.54-3.40 interpreted as "Agree".

It can be noticed from the table that buses and PUJs are still available during weekends which got the highest rank having mean of 3.40 and was agreed by the respondents. It is followed by every town or municipality of Batangas has specific PUJs available for the commuters which has weighted mean of 3.24. However, the low-

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est in rank and was also agreed by the respondents is trips of buses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week having a weighted mean of 2.54.

This implies that weekends are the busiest of all the days of the week because people travel mostly on weekends for the reason that this is the time for them to go back to their respective provinces, time for leisure activities, and time for vacation. PUJs are widely accessible in the terminal. Although, there are times that their availability is not extremely reliant. When traffic gets heavy in some places, some PUJs are disappearing at night. The drivers are avoiding it to save fuel and other expenses for them to save earnings for their family. The question that got the lowest rank is all about the availability of trips 24/7, which is not observed in the terminal. Usually, trips last for more or less than 15 hours a day. It starts at 4 in the morning and ends in 7 or 8 in the evening depending on the arrival of departing passengers in the terminal.

Table 2. Status of the Centralized Public Terminal Transport in terms of Accessibility and Convenience (N=50)

Accessibility / Convenience	WM	VI	Rank
1. The public terminal is accessible to majority of the commuters.	3.14	A	6
2. The public terminal's location is easy to find.	3.16	A	5
3. The routing of public and private transport has a direct access to the terminal.	3.22	A	2.5
4. The public terminal has all the availability of trips. (Ex. from Batangas going to Manila and other places in CALABARZON – PUB, from the terminal to other parts of Batangas – PUJ)	3.30	A	1
5. There are available stores or food establishments inside the terminal.	2.74	A	9
6. There are restrooms existing in the terminal premises.	3.22	A	2.5
7. Information office is widely accessible to the public.	2.92	A	7.5
8. There is enough space for the commuters in the waiting area.	2.92	A	7.5
9. Occurrence of arrangement of vehicles according to their destination for the convenience of the passengers.	3.18	A	4
Composite Mean	**3.09**	**A**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree (D);1.00 – 1.49 –Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2 presents the accessibility and convenience of the place. It shows that the Public Grand Terminal is accessible and convenient to all the passengers having a weighted mean of 3.09. It was proved that the terminal has all the availability of trips being ranked first having a 3.30 mean. It was followed by the routing of public and private transport having direct access to the terminal and the existence of restrooms in the terminal premises having 3.22 as the weighted mean. Ranked lowest was the availability of food establishments inside the terminal that was agreed by the passengers containing 2.74 as the weighted mean.

This entails that the place is not that convenient to all the passengers. There is available waiting area for the passengers hence it is not enough to accommodate majority of the passengers. Information office is visible however the authorized personnel is not always available to entertain queries.

Table 3. Security Measures used to Ensure Safety of Passengers (N=50)

Safety & Security / Health Facilities	WM	VI	Rank
1. There is a proper waste disposal inside the public grand terminal premises. Waste management is highly restricted in the area for the sake of the passenger's health.	3.06	A	2
2. Safety is a point of concentration for the students.	3.12	A	1
3. There are medical assistance for the sick, elders, and disabled persons.	2.50	A	5
4. There are visible security guards for peace and order.	2.92	A	4
5. There is the presence of the Transportation Development and Regulatory Office (TDRO) officers in the area for traffic control.	3.04	A	3
Composite Mean	**2.93**	**A**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree (D);1.00 – 1.49 –Strongly Disagree (SD)

Safety and security or health facilities were shown on Table 3 wherein most of the respondents agreed to have safety and security in the public terminal having a weighted mean of 2.93.

It was shown on the table that students are the first priority when it comes to safety that has a rank of 3.12. Proper waste disposal inside the public terminal premises were rank second and agreed by the respondents with a weighted mean of 3.06. Nevertheless, the lowest rank is the existence of medical assistance for the sick, elders, and disabled persons.

This explains that the first priority of the public terminal is the student's safety because majority of the passengers were the students. And the situation that has the lowest rank was the absence of medical assistance for the person with disability because it was observed that there was least number of disabled passengers who travels.

Table 4. Problems Encountered by the Tourists in the Centralized Public Terminal (N=50)

Problems Encountered	WM	VI	Rank
1. There are numbers of children roaming around the terminal asking for money.	2.46	S	6.5
2. There are not enough city buses or other means of transportation to take them from the terminal to other destinations within the city.	2.52	O	5
3. There is a high level of humidity within the place.	2.96	O	1
4. During the peak hours, crowdedness creates discomfort for users as the system copes with a temporary surge in demand.	2.92	O	2
5. There is lack of enforcement of pollution and environmental standards.	2.84	O	3
6. There is no public assistance provided for persons with disabilities.	2.80	O	4
7. There are obstructions and illegal structures along the way.	2.46	S	6.5
Composite Mean	**2.71**	**O**	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 –Always(A); 2.50 – 3.49 –Often(O); 1.50 – 2.49 –Sometimes(S); 1.00 – 1.49 –Never(N)

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The table presented above shows that the most common problem that occurs in the terminal is the high level of humidity within the place, which has 2.96 as its weighted mean. Second in rank is the crowdedness that creates discomfort, which has a weighted mean of 2.92. Last in rank is about the children roaming around the terminal asking for money and there are obstructions and illegal structures along the way, with 2.46 as their weighted mean.

Since there is no roof in the terminal, there is no doubt that this is the top problem that occurred in the area. Crowdedness appears only in the evening and sometimes in the morning. Peak hours are the common target of crowdedness. Since there is the presence of TDRO in the area, children asking for money in the place are less compared when there is no presence of the authorities. Obstructions and illegal structures are the hazard cones and the debris of the ongoing construction which is far from the actual location of the buses and PUJs.

Public transit systems are not designed to service low density and scattered urban areas that are increasingly dominating the landscape. The greater the decentralization of urban activities, the more difficult and expensive it becomes to serve urban areas with public transit. Additionally, decentralization promotes long distance trips on transit systems causing higher operating costs and revenue issues for flat fare transit systems.

The infrastructures of several public transit systems, notably rail and subway systems are fixed, while cities are dynamical entities, even if the pace of change can take decades. This implies that travel patterns tend to change and that a transit system built for servicing a specific pattern may eventually face "spatial obsolescence". Public transit systems are often independent from other modes and terminals. It is consequently difficult to transfer passengers from one system to another. This leads to a paradox between the preference of riders to have direct connections and the need to provide a cost efficient service network that involves transfers.

Table 5. Action Plan

Key Result Area	Strategy/Activity	Person Responsible
1. To lessen the level of humidity within the place	• Roof construction	• Terminal Administration
2. To avoid crowdedness which creates discomfort for users	• Proper positioning of buses and PUJs • Enough space for arriving and departing passengers	• Terminal Administration
3. To create an enforcement of pollution and environmental standards	• Proper waste segregation • Existence of garbage bins in every corner of the terminal where there is passenger	• Terminal Administration
4. To cater to the passengers' need to travel at the most comfortable time	• Extend the hours of operation of the terminal • Provide signages and/or billboards with schedule for the information of the passengers	• Terminal Administration

Key Result Area	Strategy/Activity	Person Responsible
5. To supply the passengers' need for food and other products for their convenience	• Building of food establishment or convenience store	• Terminal Administration • Private Sectors
6. To provide medical assistance for the sick, elders, and disabled persons or PWD	• Provide an emergency task force and medical assistance for those passengers who are in need	• Terminal Administration

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the respondents agreed that there is available schedule of trips in the centralized/grand terminal in Batangas City. Most of the respondents agreed that the centralized public transport terminal is accessible and convenient for them. Majority of the respondents agreed that safety and security in the terminal is observed with the presence of the security officials. The most common problem encountered by the tourists is the humidity of the location.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Administration of the Public Transport Terminal in Batangas City may extend their hours of operation. There are certain travellers who prefer to travel at night because of the heavy traffic experienced at daytime. Food establishments and/or convenience store may be placed inside the terminal. Administration may provide an emergency task force to assist passengers who are in need, and medical assistance for the sick, elders, and persons with disabilities. Roof may be constructed to help minimize the humidity in the place for the convenience of the passengers. Administration may provide information about the schedule of trips through billboards. Other researchers may conduct a similar study to further confirm the result of this study.

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