IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES OF MOTORCYCLE-TAXI TO BECOME MORE RELIABLE MODE OF PARATRANSIT IN INDONESIA
(A case study for the city of Surakarta and the District of Wonogiri in Central Java, Indonesia)

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ABSTRACT

Motorcycle-taxi in Indonesia (known more popularly as “Ojek”, pronounced: oh-jack) is one of the modes of paratransit that has not been formally legalized. The Ojek services in Indonesia have many advantages when compared to other modes of public transports; yet, the Ojek services still have some shortcomings, especially on the aspects of safety and comfort for their users. Therefore, it is important that Ojek be formally regulated, especially if the Ojek services may become a reality as a permanent mode of paratransit in Indonesia, for a considerable time into the future. Related with this condition, the purpose of this research is mainly to identify the demand and service characteristics of Ojek in Indonesia, so that they can be evaluated, analyzed, and described to answer one of the research objectives, which is whether the existence of Ojek services in Indonesia is a long-term phenomena or it is merely a temporary and short-term one. This research is also conducted to find the appropriate recommendations for Ojek services during operational services to become more reliable mode of paratransit in Indonesia, to fulfill the need of improved safety and comfort of their users.

The method of analyses used in this research is quantitative descriptive, and it is used to investigate the variables of social-economy, demand characteristics, and service characteristics of respondents, whom were the operators and the users of Ojek. The Analyses are deducted from primary data collected through questionnaires survey and interviews to respondents in the City of Surakarta, representing the users in urban area, and in the District of Wonogiri, representing the users in rural area in Indonesia.

The results of this research on demand characteristics of Ojek comprise of mainly the dominant profile of Ojek users and dominant Ojek transport demand. The results on service characteristics of Ojek comprise of mainly the dominant profile of Ojek operators and other Ojek dominant service characteristics.

The similarities on dominant profiles among Ojek users in the urban and rural area are: (1) majority of users are still in their productive ages, (2) men use more Ojek as feeder transport, while (3) women use Ojek more as origin-to-
destination transport. Their differences are: (1) Ojek services in the city are utilized more by younger generation (16 to 25-year old group range), while in the rural area the more adult ages (> 36 year old) are the predominant users; also the differences between those in the urban and rural area are in (2) their levels of education, (3) conditions of vehicle ownership, (4) their positions among family, and (4) their levels of income.

The similarity on characteristics of dominant transport demand among Ojeks in urban and rural area is that majority of the users are utilizing Ojeks for their journey from work to home, especially among those of feeder transport users. However, significant differences are observed among those of urban and rural users, and they are: (1) the purposes of travelling among the non-feeder users, (2) time of transport demand in a day, (3) frequency of usage, (4) distance of travelling, (5) cost of single journey compared with the other available public transports, and (6) reasons of usage.

In term of Ojek operators, the dominant characteristics for those in urban and rural which are similar are (1) operators age, (2) their level of education, (3) duration of employment as Ojek operators, (4) average income as Ojek operators which is higher than the local minimum wage, (5) status of Ojek owner, and (6) having side jobs while working as Ojek operators. The differences are that no younger operator (16 to 25 year of age) prevails in urban area, while the side jobs while operating Ojeks are more plentiful in rural areas.

Other similarity in term of Ojek vehicle usage in urban and rural areas is that majority of motorcycles used are of the model for women (bebek) and the vehicles are generally < 5 years old. The differences are found that larger motor vehicle volumes are utilized in rural area more than those in urban area.

The dominant service characteristics of Ojeks in urban and rural areas that are similar are: (1) Ojek service is available at any time, (2) Ojek will appear at any location where public transportations is limited or difficult, (3) Ojek is used also for short travel distance, < 1.0 km, (4) Ojek service can be easily obtained at certain Ojek “terminals”, while many customers had been requesting Ojek by phone, and this means people have been trusting Ojek for their transportation mean, (5) Ojek operators who gather at mode-transfer locations are generally more traffic obedience than those gather away from the mode-transfer locations. The difference in Ojek services characteristics between urban and rural areas is on accident potential, which is very much related to the field service conditions.

This research concludes that the existence of Ojek in Indonesia is a long-term phenomena, and this is due to the prevalence of factors determining Ojek existence, which are: (1) the factor of planning for regular public transport routes in Indonesia, which is still insufficient regarding the maximum walking distance; in many areas people still have to walk too far to reach the nearest public transportation service, (2) the factor of government ability, which is often very limited to provide good transportation facilities and infrastructures throughout the region, (3) the factor of Ojek operation, which is financially feasible and it does not need government subsidy, (4) the factor of people economic condition, which has resulted their need of cheaper transportation rather than comfortable ones, (5) the factor of limited employment available, especially for the low-educated people and the elderly. The existence of Ojek has proven to become the
solution for the above factors, and Ojek has the potentials to overcome transportation deficiencies as feeder transport for distances < 5 km in urban areas with flat terrain, and for distance < 10 km in rural areas with hilly terrain.

The results of this research also recommend several operational service procedures in the form of local ordinances to regulate Ojek. In the aspect of tariff, it is recommended that users know clearly beforehand the cost they will have to pay for Ojek service, including the possibility of applying argo-meter. In the aspect of safety, it is recommended that the operator carry driver license (type C – General), and the passengers use helmet of SNI-standard, while also first aid facilities and life insurance be made available for every passenger. Other safety recommendations are: the Ojek operators use uniform to represent their organization, and a system of complaint service be made available for the users. For the comfort aspects, it is recommended that safety helmets of SNI-standard and clean rain coats be provided; also a center of Ojek information services and certain rules-of-conduct for operators while attracting customers be established. Recommendations for gender aspect are the availability of women drivers and special design in vehicle structures for woman passengers.

Key words: Ojek, motorcycle-taxi, paratransit, urban transportation, rural transportation, behavior of transportation users and operators, City of Surakarta, District of Wonogiri
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