FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION TO USE THE BOLT APP IN BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

Bangkok stands as a vibrant centre of tourism and economic activity in Thailand, boasting a large metropolitan population where efficient transportation is paramount. A plethora of transportation systems, including trains, buses, electric trains, vans, motorcycle taxis, and taxis, cater to the diverse travel needs, spurred by urban sprawl. However, public transportation, notably taxis, often presents challenges, with taxi refusal alone constituting 37.10% of complaints, affecting 33,718 individuals (Transportation Statistics Group, Planning Division, 2014). Technology permeates modern life, offering convenience and efficiency. The proliferation of smartphones and internet connectivity has revolutionized daily routines, business practices, and communication channels. Consequently, the emergence of ride-hailing applications addresses the demand for streamlined transportation services in urban landscapes.

This study aims to scrutinize the marketing factors pivotal in influencing user adoption of the Bolt application in Bangkok. By elucidating these factors, the research endeavours to offer insights for refining service provision and aligning it with the evolving preferences of Bangkok's populace. Through this investigation, the study aims to enrich the academic discourse on the marketing dynamics shaping service utilization in the ride-hailing sector, with a focal point on Bangkok's distinctive milieu.

Keywords: Marketing factors, decision-making in service usage, Bolt application

INTRODUCTION

Currently, Bangkok serves as a city of tourism and a significant economic hub of Thailand, resulting in a high population density within the city. This demographic factor underscores the importance of transportation, which, in modern times, is characterized by a diverse array of options including trains, buses, electric trains, vans, motorcycle taxis, and taxis. The necessity and demand for travel have led to a phenomenon known as urban sprawl, a pattern of uncontrolled expansion, which poses challenges for management and the provision of equitable and accessible public utilities and services. Among the various issues encountered by users of public transportation, particularly with taxis, the most common complaint is the refusal of taxi drivers to pick up passengers, accounting for 37.10 percent of all complaints from a total of 33,718 individuals [1].

In the present day, it is undeniable that technology plays a significant role in our daily lives. Everyone utilizes technology to facilitate convenience in every aspect of life, from the moment we wake up until we go to bed. Therefore, technology has become essential for humans, especially for those living in urban areas where daily life is characterized by haste and a constant race against time. The rapid advancement and growth in computer technology and internet network systems have profoundly changed the way we live, conduct business, and communicate. This technological progress has led to the development of smartphone applications capable of providing various types of ride-hailing services [2].

The Bolt application is an on-demand ride-hailing app that has entered a market already occupied by established players such as Grab and Lineman. Bolt distinguishes itself by attracting customers with prices that are on average 20% lower than its competitors. However, Bolt currently offers only car ride services, unlike its competitors that provide a variety of services. Bolt's availability is not yet widespread across all areas and provinces in Thailand, with services primarily concentrated in Bangkok. This focus on Bangkok is strategic, as some residents may not own personal vehicles or prefer not to use them due to the city's notorious traffic congestion, making ride-hailing services a convenient alternative for commuting.

Using Bolt is similar to other ride-hailing applications. Users select their pickup location and destination, and upon choosing the destination, the app displays the fare options. Users can then choose the type of vehicle they prefer and wait for the app to match them with a driver. After the ride, customers have the option to rate the service by giving stars. Currently, Bolt offers seven types of vehicles to choose from: Taxi, Motorcycle, Economy, Ladies, Bolt Comfort, and XL. Those interested in using the service can download the app on both Android and iOS platforms.

For this reason, researchers have taken an interest in studying the marketing factors that influence the decision to use Bolt's services among users in Bangkok. Given the highly competitive nature of the ride-hailing app market, it is crucial to understand the factors that affect the decision-making process for using the Bolt application in Bangkok. The findings of such a study could guide improvements and business development to align with consumer needs, enhance satisfaction, and encourage continued use of the service.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Demographic theory
Demographic theory is the study of population changes, including size, structure, and distribution of populations. This is important because differences in various aspects of the population will result in different purchasing of goods and services. The concept is as follows:

Demographic characteristics defined as data used for market segmentation[3], making it more effective in identifying target markets and easier to measure than other variables. These include:

1. Gender: Males and females tend to differ in their attitudes and behaviors.

2. Occupation: Individuals with different occupations have varying needs for products and services.

3. Age: Consumer groups of different ages have distinct preferences and tastes, which change as individuals age, allowing for responses to the specific needs of each age group.

4. Income: Consumers with lower and middle incomes constitute a larger market than those with higher incomes, necessitating market segmentation based on income.

5. Education Level: Individuals with higher education levels tend to consume higher quality and more expensive products and services compared to those with lower education levels.

From the concepts above, demographic characteristics can be used to segment the market and define the target market as follows: gender, age, marital status, occupation, and average monthly income. These elements enable marketers to clearly differentiate consumers and can be utilized to segment the population for study in business contexts.

Consumer Behavior
Consumer Behavior refers to the process or behavior in the decision-making of purchasing, using, and evaluating the outcome of products or services by buyers. Studying the characteristics of consumer behavior is important due to the differences in behavior affecting the choice of purchasing and using different products and services.

Consumer Behavior defined as the process consumers use in making purchase decisions, or the behavior exhibited by individuals in deciding to use products or services, which includes various factors that influence the decision-making process[4].

The marketing mix (7C)

The marketing mix (7C) is a strategy for online marketing communication that can enhance website efficiency for success, divided into 7 types as mentioned [5][6] as follows:

1. Context refers to the initial presentation of the website's image, such as the use of graphics and website colors.

2. Content means the substance or material content on the website, which is an overview of details. This also includes links to other parts of the website.

3. Community refers to the website's community that facilitates contact and connection between users, companies and users, and between companies, specifically within the website's electronic format that gathers information on a particular topic and allows interested users to exchange opinions through electronic media.

4. Customization means responding to individual user needs that can suggest changes to the website. It involves designing the website according to user demands, with the company managing the format to best meet the user's needs for products and services.

5. Communication refers to the communication on the website that builds relationships through any form of contact. For communication to be effective, there must be a response between the sender and the receiver.

6. Connection refers to linking relationships.

7. Commerce means business trade and relationships. Currently, businesses that operate through the internet, known as online businesses, are becoming increasingly popular due to their convenience, speed, and appealing visuals, which stimulate purchasing and lead to the growth of online business.

From the concepts above, marketing tools can be adapted to reach consumers more effectively, among other applications.

OBJECTIVE

1. Study the impact of demographic factors on the marketing mix (7Cs).

2. Study the impact of demographic factors on the purchasing behavior for products and services of the Bolt application.

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Identify the demographic factors that influence the use of the Bolt application in the Bangkok area.
2. Understand the level of importance of demographic factors.
3. Recognize the consumer behavior factors that influence the choice to use the Bolt application in the Bangkok area.
4. Determine the relationship between demographic factors and the decision to use the Bolt application in the Bangkok area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do the marketing mix factors (7Cs) influence the behavior of using the Bolt application?
2. Do demographic factors influence the behavior of using the Bolt application?

METHODOLOGY

In the study on factors related to the repeat purchase behavior of Bolt application users in the Bangkok area, detailed as follows:

Research Scope

1. The population used in the study consists of consumers residing in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

2. The sample group used in the research comprises individuals who use the Bolt application service in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area to 400 individuals, using the convenience sampling method.

3. The location for data collection is within the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

4. The scope in terms of time frame is from August to October 2023.

5. The scope in terms of variables:

Independent variables include demographic factors such as gender, occupation, age, income, and education level.

Dependent variables include the marketing mix factors (7C), namely context, content, community, customization (responding to user needs), communication, commerce, and connection.

Data Collection

The tool used for data collection is a questionnaire divided into 3 parts as follows:

1. Part 1: General information about the respondents, including gender, occupation, age, income, and education level.

2. Part 2: Information regarding the behavior of using the Bolt application service.

3. Part 3: Information about the marketing mix (7C) that influences the decision to use the Bolt application service in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

The criteria for interpreting meanings are based on the importance rating scale provided by the respondents (Likert, 1961).

Average Score	Level of Importance
4.21 – 5.00	Most Important
3.41 – 4.20	Very Important
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Important
1.81 – 2.60	Slightly Important
1.00 – 1.80	Least Important

RESULTS

The study of the demographic status of the respondents, including gender, occupation, age, income, and education level, found that out of the 400 respondents in the sample group, the majority were female, totaling 184 individuals, accounting for 46.00 percent. This was followed by males, numbering 154 individuals, representing 38.50 percent, and LGBTQ+ individuals, numbering 62, accounting for 15.50 percent. The most common occupation was students, with 290 individuals making up 72.50 percent. The age group with the highest representation was 19-22 years, with 298 individuals, comprising 74.50 percent. The most common income bracket was less than 15,000 baht, with 270 individuals, representing 67.50 percent. Regarding education level, the majority held a bachelor's degree, with 192 individuals, accounting for 48.00 percent of the respondents.

Table 1 Summarizes the average values, standard deviations, and importance levels of the marketing mix (7C) components that influence the decision to use the Bolt application in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

Marketing Mix (7C)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Ranks
Context	3.87	0.43	Very Important	3
Content	3.82	0.54	Very Important	5
Community	3.62	0.65	Very Important	7
Customization	3.89	0.52	Very Important	2
Communication	3.84	0.50	Very Important	4
Connection	3.75	0.53	Very Important	6
Commerce	4.15	0.45	Very Important	1
Total (Average)	3.85	0.40	Very Important	

The research results from Tables 1 indicate that users place the highest importance on the commerce aspect, with the highest average score of 4.15. This is followed by an interest in customization, which has the next highest average score of 3.89.

The results of testing Objective 1, which aimed to study of demographic factors that affect the marketing mix (7C) using Average, Standard Deviation, and Statistical Values of Users' Responses to the Marketing Mix (7C), found that: Gender: There is a statistically significant difference at the .05 level in how gender affects the marketing mix (7C), particularly in the community aspect. Occupation: Occupation significantly influences the marketing mix (7C) across various aspects including appearance, content components, community, customization (responding to individual user needs), communication, connection, and commerce, with statistical significance at the .05 level. Age: Age impacts the marketing mix (7C) in terms of appearance, content components, community, customization, communication, connection, and commerce, with differences being statistically significant at the .05 level. Income: Income levels affect the marketing mix (7C) in terms of appearance, customization, and connection, with significant differences at the .05 level. Education Level: The level of education influences the marketing mix (7C) in appearance, content components, community, customization, communication, connection, and commerce, with statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

The results of testing Objective 2, which aimed to study the demographic factors affecting the behavior of purchasing products and services through the Bolt application using Chi-square statistics, found that:

The frequency of using the Bolt application service is significantly influenced by demographic factors related to occupation and education level, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

The average cost per trip using the Bolt application is significantly dependent on demographic factors including occupation, age, income, and education level, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The summary of the demographic data of the survey respondents reveals that the majority are male, constituting 38.50 percent, females make up 46.00 percent, and LGBTQ+ individuals account for 15.50 percent. The age range is from 15-18 years to over 23 years, with the majority falling within the 19–22year age bracket, representing 74.50 percent of the total sample. The educational levels range from lower secondary education to above a bachelor's degree, with the majority holding a bachelor's degree, accounting for 48.00 percent. The sample includes a diverse range of occupations, including government/public enterprise employees, laborers, company employees, students, and private business owners, with the predominant occupation being students, making up 72.50 percent of the sample. Additionally, the majority of the sample has an income of less than 15,000 baht, representing 67.50 percent.

Objective 1 of the study was to investigate the demographic factors that affect the marketing mix (7C) of the Bolt application. The analysis revealed that:

1. Gender: There is a statistically significant difference at the .05 level in how gender affects the marketing mix (7C), particularly in the community aspect.

2. Occupation: Occupation significantly influences the marketing mix (7C) across various aspects including appearance, content components, community, customization (responding to individual user needs), communication, connection, and commerce, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

3. Age: Age impacts the marketing mix (7C) in terms of appearance, content components, community, customization, communication, connection, and commerce, with differences being statistically significant at the .05 level.

4. Income: Income levels affect the marketing mix (7C) in terms of appearance, customization, and connection, with significant differences at the .05 level.

5. Education Level: The level of education influences the marketing mix (7C) in appearance, content components, community, customization, communication, connection, and commerce, with statistically significant differences at the .05 level.

Objective 2 The study was to explore demographic factors that affect consumer behavior towards purchasing products and services through the Bolt application. The study concluded that:

The frequency of using the Bolt application service is significantly influenced by demographic factors such as occupation and education level, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

The average cost per trip using the Bolt application is significantly dependent on demographic factors including occupation, age, income, and education level, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

These objectives aimed to understand how demographic factors influence both the marketing strategies of the Bolt application (7C) and the consumer behavior towards using its services

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