

# Measuring Public Perceptions of Transportation Services in Indonesia's City through Social Media

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines public perceptions of transportation services in Indonesia's big city through social media such as news channels, social networking sites, Facebook, and Twitter. The objectives are twofold: first, extract the pros and cons of public perceptions through mainly social media; second, such perception can be useful inputs for the government to provide a better service for society. This qualitative research applies five SERVQUAL indicators to analyze transportation services with two opposing perceptions: positive and negative. The five indicators are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The finding demonstrates that most people deliver positive perceptions rather than negative complaints. The wordclouds analysis supports this thesis. The majority of public comments always mention these words: friendly, easy, safety, cheap, complete, good, rapid, and clean. Nonetheless, some protests still exist because the words "jam, accident, not maintained well, and lack of punctuality," are discovered. In addition to positive inputs, negative inputs can be utilized by the government to improve service quality.

**Keywords:** public transportation, perception, service, social media, bus, train.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Measuring public perceptions through social media is one of the significant and swift ways to receive their suggestions and complaints. Their comments in such media are frank and sincere without any fabrication. This way is also useful for the government to obtain inputs without any coercion, a high budget, or formal face-to-face meetings. Actually, all people cannot deliver their opinions frankly to policy-makers through formal meetings, because these meetings may be restricted and tense. Meanwhile, through social media, they can freely deliver their aspirations and express personal emotions to the government directly

without any intimidation.

Public transportation is one of the crucial public service issues in recent world development. By providing public transportation, the government automatically supports the green movement and reduces potential pollution. Indeed, society can obtain transportation benefits because they can reach all public routes without any inconvenience. The use of motor vehicles has a significant impact on global climate change. So, when sustainable public transportation is developed, social, environmental, and economical aspects need to be considered[1]

Therefore, [2] argue that the existence of public transportation is beneficial for the passengers in

minimizing the costs of freight, but many people are reluctant to use public transportation because the costs incurred are still considered to be high. Based on their empirical study in three Indonesian cities (Bandung, Medan, Surabaya), [2] posit that sacrifice, service quality, and perceived value affect the behavioral intention of paratransit passengers, so the management of paratransit service providers should manage all of these factors proactively.

The development of public transportation around the world has its differences [3]. In Dubai, the innovation of the Dubai Metro in the Gulf region has made good progress with the existence of the complete automation of services and with driver-less trains [4]. In China, the sector innovation capability can be enhanced in a learning environment that balances domestic innovation and international technology transfer. The government should strategically leverage various resources for innovation [5]. In Thailand, the performance of transportation increased between 2005 and 2010. This has had positive effects on the country's economy [6].

Some South Asian countries have improved various aspects of their transportation system, beginning with national-level transportation policies. Sustainable transportation is not merely about mobility but is also about creating safe, convenient, and environmentally friendly transportation systems. Some fundamental actions are needed such as driver and passenger safety regulations, vehicle emissions test centers to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and beneficial public-private partnerships [4]. In Indonesia, freight transportation has a significant impact on regional developments such as in the north zone of Aceh. Indeed, it will be an essential input to the Aceh government to encourage the establishment of a road network to accelerate freight transportation for the development of new economic zones [7].

Transportation facilities are also essential for human activities to establish relationships among them. One of the transportation developments is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system or what is so-called as "busway". It aims to reform conventional public transportation into new public transportation, which is easily accessed, convenient, safe, and on-time. Large cities in Asia have unique transportation because the countries have high population density and different modes of transportation. Currently, Indonesia, as one of the most populous countries in Asia, has increased transportation accessibility in several cities such as Surakarta, Jakarta, Bandung,

and Yogyakarta. As one of the fascinating cities, Surakarta provides not only Javanese cultural excursions but also has industrial and educational centers. Consequently, the number of citizens and traffic jams are increasing [8]. To provide for good traffic flow, the government needs innovations to create better transportation, spatial planning, and citizen behavior [9].

Considering the explanations above, public transportation in Asia has some obstacles. For example, public transportation is not maintained well, the government is unable to understand public needs in providing public transportation and the different interests of public and private sectors, and the service is still far from meeting the community's needs. Based on these reasons, this paper is written to reach three objectives. The first objective is to extract pro and con perceptions on public transportation services through news channels, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. The second is to measure public suggestions and complaints, whether positive or negative. The third is to employ these perceptions in government considerations to develop service quality in the future.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the rapidly changing world, social media is a straightforward way for the government to communicate and interact with citizens. Information can spread and move freely through the internet platform. Such media has been influencing changes in the mass communication culture in Indonesia [10]. Information and communication technology (ICT) cannot be separated from human life. They are proliferating with the support of internet media Web 2.0. As a tool, the internet eventually changes the way people communicate. It can create a digital community that lives and coexists with organic physical communities.

Social media have a critical role in public transportation. They are a useful way to know what is needed by society when people want to use public transportation. Stefansson & [4] argue that there are three critical components in smart transportation management: smart goods, smart vehicles, and smart infrastructure. Such components embrace some factors which have effects on supply chain performance. Moreover, [8] examine the service quality of public transportation, which should have four essential dimensions: comfort, tangible, personnel, and reliability.

Most scientists agree that social media have

significant impacts on government and political affairs, although they continue to criticize them. The most cities around the world have been using social media services for regulatory purposes with variations in the use of such media due to different regional and cultural characteristics[11]. Social media are helpful to make policy processes more inclusive and to re-build some confidence between governments and citizens[12]. Likewise, [13] argue that social media have a significant impact on organizational communication processes because they afford behaviors that were impossible to achieve in combination before these new technologies entered the workplace.

In Spain, social media is important for local governments because it establishes a relationship for democratic participation through Facebook and Twitter, and it develops smart cities. They suggest that further improvements are still needed. These are mainly related to the interaction among citizens via these networks[14]. Meanwhile, in American municipalities, social media are somewhat underutilized by local governments with a third of respondents not using them [14].

An innovative approach to e-participation which is based on “passive crowdsourcing” by government agencies. It uses the extensive political content continuously created in numerous Web 2.0 social media by citizens without government stimulation to better understand their needs, issues, opinions, proposals, and arguments concerning a particular domain of government activity or public policy[15]. Other benefits of social media, decision-makers can use social media to improve communication with society and allocate resources more effectively for better public services[16].

In the Middle East, a growing use of social media among citizens, governments have not succeeded in taking full advantage of social media[17]. Governments fail to engage citizens to design and deliver more efficient and collaborative services. In the same way, Kuzma (2010) investigates 50 Asian governments’ social media. The findings point to the fact that only 30 percent of Asian governments take full use of Web 2.0 social media technology for communication and information dissemination. It means that governments are missing opportunities to serve their citizens and reach the growing number of internet users. Consequently, governments have to develop an overall strategic plan for all agency levels to participate in social networks.

In China, Chinese government agencies should

enhance their organizational capabilities to fit with the external environment in the social media age[18]. They have to take a systematic strategy to transform institutional structures, decentralize power, streamline the processes, change organizational culture, and enhance collaboration to address the changes in society. The government agencies also need to improve their staffs’ skills for using social media. In society, the government should make efforts to bridge the digital divide, encourage more participation in society, and restore citizens’ trust in the government. In Korea, social media use patterns and strategies in the context of government-to-citizen (G2C) and government-to-government (G2G) relationships in Korea’s public sectors[19]. They put forward that the government’s direct networking strategy for targeting citizens does not necessarily motivate their participation in the government’s social media activities, but it plays an instrumental role in reinforcing G2G relationships.

In the participation context, the positive relationship between social media use and political participation in the Middle East and America[20]. More than 80 percent of the coefficients are positive. Nonetheless, social media use has a minimal impact on participation in election campaigns. It indicates that greater use of social media did not always affect people’s likelihood of voting or participating in a campaign. In Indonesia’s Jakarta case, the transformational leadership’s political will and social media use through YouTube are the keys to advancing local government transparency and facilitating citizen engagement with government reform initiatives[21].

Johannessen, Sæbø, & Flak (2016) picture the way that stakeholders manage social media to communicate with society. Their findings demonstrate that the communication preferences of stakeholders vary according to their salience level. Stakeholders with higher salience are less likely to participate in social media, while those who are less salient will use every available medium to gain influence. In terms of public transportation, [22] found that Indonesia’s Trans Jogja has not fulfilled all sustainable public transport indicators (economic, social, and environmental), so it needs hard work to develop this system. The Trans Jogja should learn from Swedish public transport, Varmlandstrafik AB, that reform of public transport authorities is essential to develop policies.

Previous studies point to the fact that no research study has been able to measure the public perceptions on public transportation in one of the big

Asian cities, namely Surakarta City, through social media. Styles can be applied using the style palette available

**3. SERVQUAL METHODOLOGY**

This paper applies qualitative research [9], [23], [24] by adopting the case study as the research approach ([23]–[26]). Thus, this paper selects Surakarta City for the case because it represents the best prototype of public transportation among other cities in Indonesia. Surakarta has another common name, “Solo”, which is also used in this paper.

Evidence reveals that in 2011 Surakarta’s Werkudara Bus obtained an award from the Museum Rekor Dunia Indonesia (MURI) as the only city in Indonesia which has a tourist bus with two floors. In 2016, Indonesia’s ministry of transportation recognized Surakarta’s Tirtonadi Terminal as the best national service standard. In 2017, Surakarta City earned the award from the central government in the field of traffic governance for the tenth consecutive time.

This paper considers customer expectations of service to measure the service quality of public transportation. Therefore, one service quality measurement model that has been widely applied is the SERVQUAL model introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1994) and Zeithaml, [9], [27]). SERVQUAL is the most frequently utilized approach for measuring service quality. It has been used to compare customers’ expectations before a service encounter and their perceptions of the actual service delivered [9]. The SERVQUAL instrument has been the predominant method used to measure consumers’ perceptions of service quality. According to [28], it has the following five main driving factors.

**Tangibles:** Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

**Reliability:** Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

**Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

**Assurance:** Competence, courtesy, credibility, and security.

**Empathy:** Caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customers.

For data gathering, this paper collected the public comments from a variety of sources: 169 news channels, 45 blogs, 78 tweets from different

accounts, and 152 comments from different Facebook (FB) accounts. Such comments are both in Indonesian and English languages. Nevertheless, this paper will select relevant comments which are suitable with five SERVQUAL indicators. Therefore, in the analysis, the paper does not include all comments. In addition to that, this paper also uses the wordclouds.com online application to enrich the analysis.

For each indicator, the public perceptions are classified into two different positions: positive (pos) and negative (neg). The former denotes the pro side while the latter indicates the opposing side. The conclusion depends on which perceptions are supported by many comments, whether positive or negative.

**4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Before the paper examines the public transportation service with the five SERVQUAL indicators, it is good to explain in a broad picture the common words which are frequently used on social media, news, and blogs to describe public transportation in Surakarta City.

Picture 1 consists of two different images which were analyzed by the wordclouds.com online application. On the left side is the image in the Indonesian language; while on the right side, it is in English. The left side demonstrates that the words “new, safety, cheap, friendly, easy, and solution” are the most often used on social media, news, and blogs. Opposing comments are still found in some words like “jam and long”. Meanwhile, the right side reveals these words which are frequently used on the internet (i.e., “service, new, good, and rapid”) for the positive perceptions and a few words like waiting and problem as the negative perceptions. It indicates that most people deliver their pro rather than contra perceptions of public transportation in Indonesia’s big city.



**Picture 1. Wordclouds of Public Transportation Issues in Surakarta City**

This paper provides the gathered data of public perceptions from news channels, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter to examine whether this finding is accurate. The data is classified into five service quality indicators developed by [9]: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. For each indicator, data is categorized into two opposing sections: “pos” as a pro and “neg” as contra.

#### **4.1 Tangibles**

Pos. In 2016, the municipal government of Surakarta replaced 20 old BST buses with new fleets. The new buses have a rather bigger space than the old ones. The change is part of a service to provide cozy public transportation (solo.tribunnews.com, 04.11.2016). Wicaksono at aryowicaksono91.blogspot.com (2012) and the Komunitas #Kotasolo at komunita.id (22.07.2016) reported that the BST is very comfortable to use. This can be proven by the excellent facilities, friendly drivers and crews, its punctuality, the good design of the chairs, the good music sound system, AC, and the CCTV record.

“As if we wanna stay for a long time inside the BST while our eyes are enjoying sightseeing the city view,” at pabelan-online.com (30.12.2011).

“This bus has complete facilities such as AC, soft seats, medical drugs, trash can, tape, and the like,” Hermawan said at solopro.id (22.11.2017).

In terms of the Werkudara Bus, passengers are enjoying the trip when they can freely look out from the second floor (archive.li, 14.03.2012; kabarpenyumang.com, 09.03.2017). Sathya at pegipegi.com (03.07.2017) reported that Werkudara is cozy. In the lower bus, it has TV CIP chairs, and karaoke services. While the upper bus provides comfortable plastic chairs and a tour guide.

Similarly, the double-decker Mayapada Bus has two floors, reliable technology, and an automatic transmission. The bus is supported by a Mercedes Benz engine and other furnishings such as 77 seats, LCD, TV, CCTV, and fire extinguishers. There are a limited number of seats for disabled passengers. The bus is entirely closed and air-cooled to allow for long trips (soloraya.solopos.com, 27.05.2018;

merdeka.com, 25.05.2018; solocity.travel). Complete facilities are also placed in the Gatotkaca Bus

Regarding the train, the Solo Ekspres has complete facilities such as executive chairs, AC, TV, toilets, charging ports in each chair, and baggage space, and it is friendly for passengers with disabilities. It can hold at least 393 passengers (ngangsukawruh.com, 05.07.2018; kai.id, 2018). The route is not merely in the airport but also between the Solo’s Balapan station and the Purworejo’s Kutoarjo Station. Even Hermanto Dwi Atmoko, the officer of the ministry of transportation, stated that Surakarta’s railbus is cozy for passengers because it was modernized by the air conditioner (jateng.tribunnews.com, 12.07.2011).

“The vibration of the train is soft so that the passengers feel cozy,” Krisna said at mediaindonesia.com (17.05.2018).

“The AC is cool. The seat is comfortable,” Ilham commented at mediaindonesia.com (17.05.2018).

Many citizens appreciate the existence of public transportation facilities like the bus terminal and skybridge. Budi Karya Sumadi, Indonesian minister of transportation, recognizes the Tirtanadi Terminal as the national best standard because it is quite clean, safe, and cozy. It is just like airports (news.detik.com, 27.12.2016; thejakartapost.com, 28.12.2016). It has standard facilities like air-conditioned waiting rooms, free internet access, prayer rooms, toilets, CCTV, an ATM center, e-ticketing, LCD monitors with the bus departure schedule, lactation rooms, information service, etc. It also has sub-terminals of the bus in different areas (thejakartapost.com, 03.07.2013, Erfananda, 2016; katadata.co.id, 27.12.2016; clapeyronmedia.com, 21.05.2017; jpnn.com, 23.12.2019). In addition to that, after Sumadi chatted with Surakarta’s society on skybridge, Sumadi appreciates this facility because it assists passengers (dephub.go.id, 24.04.2018).

“The skybridge is OK, not hot, free from the rain,” at FB Candi.Sukuh.Karanganyar.

“I am amazed when I see it directly. It is clean and well-ordered. Brokers are not found. It is extremely fabulous,” at FB Dirumahku.Istanaku.

“The terminal is truly cozy. I can find a waiting room for the family. Other facilities

like toilets, prayer rooms, and the like are also the best. It is number one,” at FB Gedung.Wayang.Sriwedari.

Neg. Aida at kompasiana.com (11.10.2014) said that the bus stop is not well maintained, such as the one near the Yarsis Islamic Hospital. The floor is dusty, dull, and full of graffiti. Some chairs and the glass inside the bus stop are broken. Likewise, Lumakto at kompasiana.com (24.06.2015) and solopro.id (22.11.2017) criticize the BST condition because the automatic open-close door was not working so that the door had to be pushed and pulled manually. To lock the door, the crew uses a simple wire. The horn voice is weak. The AC is not cold. The benches are tied with rubber and raffia so as not to jumble into each other.

“Most detection engines of the BST’s Smart Card are broken,” at republik.co.id (06.05.2014).

“The bus stop is not maintained. The street is terrible. The quantity of the bus is less than expected. The bus is not feasible to use. People did not know the bus route. The buses are not maintained well. The frequency of the bus arrival is low,” at tempo.co (2012).

“Clear information is needed on how to use skybridge, particularly for the route to the Balapan Station,” at FB Graha.Saba.Buana.

#### **4.2 Reliability**

Pos. According to [28] and Aosgi at surakarta.go.id (2017), by using the Moovit application through the smartphone, the BST’s passengers know when the bus arrives at their position and how long before the bus reaches the next bus stop. Thus, Djoko Setijowarno, the transportation analyst, said that other cities could adopt the public transportation management of Surakarta because it has good management and complete resources including traffic light governance (republik.co.id, 08.11.2011). Setiawan at mapcomm.co.id (2012) recognizes that the BST is cozy, safe, clean, and punctual. Aida at kompasiana.com (2014) appreciates that it has cold AC when the weather is hot. It is cheaper transportation than others. No street artists were discovered. Thus, Aosgi at surakarta.go.id (2016) said that the BST could solve the passengers’ complaints on the time certainty.

“It can decrease the use of private transportations, traffic jams, and accidents,” Yoyok commented at cendananews.com (21.08.2015).

“Touring with the Werkudara is a new and fantastic experience for me. I enjoyed sightseeing the city view for two hours with a soft sofa that was relaxing and cozy. I am satisfied,” Ma’arif shared his story at lensanasrul.com.

“The public transportation in Solo is more sophisticated than Jakarta,” at Twitter SeputariNewsRCTI.

“Usually a bus comes within no more than 10 minutes,” Wicaksono at aryowicaksono91.blogspot.com (2012).

Concerning Surakarta’s train, Syarif Hidayatullah at poljogja.com (07.04.2017) said that the train is more punctual than other modes of transportation. If he is requested to assess the train’s convenience, he gives 8 out of 10. According to Nurul at mentari.online (10.04.2018), the train can be a solution for traffic jams. Furthermore, Rivaldi at trevelingyuk.com (2018) said that, besides being cheap, it is easy to use the Batara Kresta Train because tourists can book the ticket before using it. Concerning the train tariff, most people deliver their positive comments. Okta at kabarpenumpang.com (2018) argued that although the Jaladra tariff is expensive, most passengers are satisfied with the service. Wisatasolo.id and travelingyuk.com support Okta’s opinion.

People appreciate the dependability of the Tirtonadi Bus Terminal. According to the Facebook account Candi.Sukuh.Karanganyar, the terminal is fresh and clean with no brokers, the guidance is clear, the toilet is OK, the prayer room is large, and the carpet is fragrant. For Setijowarno, the integration between the Tirtonadi Terminal and the Solo Balapan Train Station eases society when they change the transportation. People do not need to use other transportation because they can walk from one side to the other side through a long aisle. “It is a physical integration example which was built for the comfort of pedestrians,” Setijowarno said as cited by presidenri.go.id (20.10.2016) and katadata.co.id (27.12.2016).

“The room is well maintained and cozy, no street performers. Handphone charging spot is available. It’s cool,” at FB Grojogan.Sewu.Tawangmangu.Karanganyar.

“The Tirtanadi Terminal is the first glorious terminal in Java Island with the concept of the green terminal and airport standard,” at Twitter @SoloUpdate.

Neg. Public transportation in Surakarta City copes with several issues such as a lack of management capacity, lack of profitability, and an over-reliance on government subsidies so that air pollution, traffic jams, and the lack of punctuality are still problems (kotakita.org, tempo.co, 2012; radarsemarang.com, 2015). The transportation management in Surakarta also recognized that they still cannot provide the optimal service to society, whether in terms of human resources or the existing buses (rri.co.id, 12.03.2018).

Krjogja.com (06.02.2018) highlights some infringements which were committed by transportation crews such as turning off the AC, smoking in the bus while driving, receiving another order to other cities while they work, stopping the bus at the outside of the bus stop, and overloading the number of passengers. Candra at republik.co.id (24.06.2016) emphasized the feasibility test, which is not conducted for tour buses. At the sciencehistorylover.wordpress.com (23.02.2013), it was written that the Werkudara Bus is unstable. Due to its excessive height, double-deckers are not able to fit under overpasses and through narrow areas that other vehicles can. They can travel only on flat streets.

Setiadi at sindonews.com (08.11.2013) reported the dismissal performance of some of BST’s drivers because they did something that was not suitable for the standard operating procedure such as calling with handphone while driving as well as receiving and dropping passengers outside the bus stop. Other complaints are related to the lack of bus stops, the expensive tariff of the parking area at the Solo Balapan Train Station which is not equal with the service, and the ticket selling is not always available.

“I found the bus crew committed collusion with the officer of the bus stop in terms of the number of passengers. I (also) never received the ticket (receipt) again. It is an indication of corruption,” at FB Sriwerdari.

“Trans Jogja is better than the BST in service, payment, and shuttle bus. #IMHO,” at FB Arif Junianto.

“I also had a terrible experience because the BST was broken,” Lumakto at kompasiana.com (24.06.2015).

“The bus runs slow. Turn right and turn left is slow,” at Twitter @dishubsurakarta @Alfannaani.

### **4.3 Responsiveness**

Pos. The Kluthuk Jaladara Train is an old-fashioned steam train in Surakarta which gives an ancient and nostalgic atmosphere related to the period of Dutch colonialism (canggukline.blogspot.com). Betsu Brahmana Restu, the tourist, said that the Kluthuk Jaladara is a fantastic train for touring in Surakarta (jogja.tribunnews.com, 22.08.2012). Afterward, the additional BST route has improved our accessibility to our workplaces and the city center (cdia.asia, 29.06.2017). Moreover, “The travel time of the Solo Express Train will be faster”, Slamet said at thejakartapost.com (17.05.2018). Furthermore, it can carry many passengers and can help them to enjoy views from a higher place while touring a whole town (sciencehistorylover.wordpress.com, 23.02.2013).

Besides the train, the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service also takes place in the bus fleets BST and Werkudara as shown in the social media comments that follow.

“BST is nice public transportation. I can get in it everywhere in Solo. No need motorcycle. Let’s start to reduce pollution by public transportation,” at FB Siswoko.

“We are curious to use the Werkudara Bus. Finally, it is fascinating,” Yeti Pipit, Jakarta citizen, said to sindonews.com (28.06.2015).

“OMG, Surakarta is the paradise of public transportation. Using the Werkudara for traveling Solo is really cheap #sapaanakindonesiakeren,” at Twitter Jerri Irgo @jerriirgo.

Regarding the bus terminal and train station, the passengers said that they are cozy due to various

facilities and they are free for everyone. Those facilities are also friendly for people with a disability. There is an ATM center if someone wants to take cash. The service and facilities on the bus and train are cozy and safe, it is punctual and there are no jams. The departure and arrival of students to and from the schools are efficient with the standard tariff being cheap for the public. The Prameks train always takes lots of passengers due to the comfortable service and facilities. The bus crew can be the tour guide for tourists.

Neg. Some people grumble about being less comfortable if their ID card is used for insurance when they use the Solo Balapan Station facilities like the toilet and prayer room. Others protest about the longtime wait for the big-sized bus. Sometimes the bus comes late and it is unpredictable. Further, if society builds new houses, they will not be able to reach the bus stop due to the long distance.

Some people complained about the slowness of the Werkudara bus (sciencehistorylover.wordpress.com, 23.02.2013). Afterward, Lumakto at kompasiana.com (24.06.2015) waited almost one hour for the BST to come. People also comment on the sky bridge which seemed to be deserted; even some visitors prefer to use the online transportation service.

“There is something strange with the route Solo-Sragen. Why do we have to wait until the morning while actually we can wait from 04 am at dawn,” at FB Grojogan.Sewu.Tawangmangu.Karanganyar.

“OMG, it is really difficult to go out from the bus,” at Twitter @mukmukhsin.

Some people protested about the tariff. Subakir, a school teacher, stated that the tariff of 100,000 IDR per passenger applied by the Surakarta city administration is too high. He hoped that the rate could be reduced so that the low-and-middle-income people like him could share with the tourists and enjoy a steam train (dephub.go.id, 27.09.2009).

#### **4.4 Assurance**

Pos. School children and teenage students who are prohibited by law to drive motorcycles are likewise benefited by the safe and timely bus service (cdia.asia, 29.06.2017). Regarding the bus employees, people assess that most drivers perform their job well and follow the standard operating

procedure. Female crews are friendly in serving passengers. Even some buses provide a tour guide and an officer who can serve passengers by taking photos while traveling.

In terms of the officers at the Tirtonadi Terminal, they are friendly to visitors. The terminal provides an anti-pickpocket task force to decrease the criminal activity so that if women come to the terminal overnight and alone, they will be safe. Ira Permatasari, a passenger heading to Jakarta, said that she was happy that there were no street vendors inside the terminal (thejakartapost.com, 03.07.2014). The authorized employees are spread in each corner of the terminal to serve passengers.

“No brokers there. The point is that the Tirtonadi Terminal is really awesome,” at FB Dirumahku.Istanaku.

“Safe, cozy, clean. The officers are friendly.” At FB Istana.Mangkungeran.

“Large and clean. The officers are polite,” at FB Sidik Jatmika.

Neg. Some people still find the bus officers are mischievous while driving, smoke inside the bus, violate the traffic laws, are unfriendly, and pick up or drop-off passengers outside the bus stop. In a few buses, the crew sometimes did not give back change to the passengers. Afterward, some employees sometimes increase the tariff illegally. This is detrimental to passengers. Other people still claim that there are a lot of robbers, pickpockets, and thieves at the terminal, so they do not always get the bus from the bus terminal.

“The bad evaluation of the overload of passengers in the public transportation affects the unwillingness of society to use it and change to use private transportation like a motorcycle,” LPM Ketingan UNS Solo (14.06.2009).

“When I used the BST, the driver was mischievous. All passengers were grumbling. That was not cozy. I regret to use it again. I think the driver was drunk,” at FB Sugiantoro.

“Many brokers did not give advantages to passengers” at FB GoTikSwan.

**4.5 Empathy**

Pos. The Solo Ekspres Train is caring for passengers with disabilities. It also has executive seats with a larger space for feet. Likewise, Surakarta’s buses are cozy and also friendly to disabled passengers. The ticket purchase can be obtained by two methods: buying on the spot or ordering on the previous days.

Facilities at the Tirtonadi Terminal are also friendly to passengers with disabilities due to the existence of the yellow line and special toilets for them. Waiting rooms are also cozy because they are clean from air pollution. Sugiyan, a disabled passenger, was satisfied when he used the Begawan Abiyasa Bus, which was caring for him. “With the existence of this bus, it means that disabled passengers are being considered,” Sugiyan said at vivanews.com (04.12.2013). Thus, persons with disabilities along with older adults are those who greatly benefit from the BST as they enjoy the accessibility and safety features of the new buses and the bus station shelters (cdia.asia, 29.06.2017).

“The train is also cozier and disabled-friendly,” Slamet stated at thejakartapost.com (17.05.2018).

“Surakarta City has complete and suffice transportations so that I am no longer confused to study at IHS Indonesia,” at FB Mintardi.

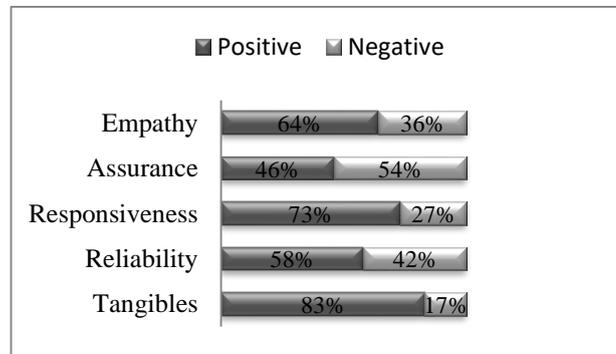
“In the Ramadhan month, the officers of the Tirtonadi Terminal distribute takjil (the meal eaten by Muslims after sunset) for sky bridge users,” at Twitter @JarrFajarr\_.

Neg. Although the bus is caring for disabled passengers, it is technically difficult for such passengers to operate wheelchairs when they get into the bus. Assistance is still needed to push the wheelchairs to finish the service. Nevertheless, it is dangerous if the government does not address this problem.

“Disabled people, especially the ones using wheelchairs, are not able to climb the stairs to the second level. The stairs in a double-decker are difficult to get through by disabled people,” at sciencehistorylover.wordpress.com (23.02.2013).

Umi, a blind passenger, wishes that the bus would provide Braille button instructions or voice instructions for the bus stop location so that disabled passengers know where they should stop. It would be a guidance for them while inside the bus (VOA Indonesia, 03.12.2013).

Picture 2 demonstrates that most people tend to have positive perceptions rather than negative ones except in the “assurance”. Among the five SERVQUAL indicators, tangible earns the highest positive perception. It confirms that most perceptions of physical facilities and equipment are cozy, complete, clean, and modernized. The appearance of the personnel is friendly. Nevertheless, a few people argue that some facilities are broken and not well maintained.



**Picture 2. Public Perceptions on Public Transportation in Indonesia’s Big City**

The second highest position is responsiveness. The terminal and station are cozy due to the complete facilities that are free for everyone. Also, they demonstrate a willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. The facilities are friendly for persons with disabilities. The bus crew can be the tour guide. The bus route has improved public access to workplaces and the city center. The train and bus are rapid so that the time is productive. The protests are sometimes that the bus comes late and is unpredictable, the tariff is expensive, and society feels uncomfortable when they use the station facilities by submitting their ID card.

Empathy is ranked third. The caring and individualized attention the firm provides its customers can be seen from the fact that the government cares for passengers with disabilities by providing facilities for assisting them. The bus has executive seats with ample space for feet. The ticket purchase can be obtained easily. Nonetheless, the difficulties are that disabled passengers cannot operate the wheelchairs when they get onto the bus.

There is no guidance inside the bus for disabled passengers.

The following rank is reliability. To prove that public transportation can perform the promised service dependably and accurately, the government applies the Moovit application and the sky bridge as integration for two different stations. The existing fleets can decrease private transportation use, traffic jams, and accidents. The complaints are related to the lack of management capacity and punctuality, the wrecked facilities, and the non-compliance of a few drivers.

Why does insurance suffer a negative perception? It confirms that bus employees are driving mischievously, smoking inside the bus, violating the traffic laws, unfriendly, taking and dropping the passengers outside the bus stop, and sometimes they did not give back the change to the passengers. However, competence, courtesy, credibility, and security still exist and most of the bus officers are friendly and follow the procedure. The terminal officers ensure the passengers' safety, and some buses provide a tour guide.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Among the five SERVQUAL indicators, the highest positive perception is tangible. It indicates that most people appreciate the physical facilities and the appearance of the personnel of public transportation. Positive acknowledgments also take place in the responsiveness which relates to the fact that the willingness to help customers and provide prompt services are well performed. The positive trends are followed by empathy and reliability, respectively.

The fact that insurance is categorized in the negative perception denotes that competence, courtesy, credibility, and security remain weak and this should be evaluated fundamentally by the government to have a better service in the future. This fact is reinforced by evidence such as some bus employees are mischievous while driving, smoke inside the bus, violate the traffic laws, are unfriendly, pick-up and drop-off the passengers outside the bus stop, and sometimes do not give back change to the passengers.

To sum up, this paper postulates that most people have positive perceptions of the service of public transportation in Indonesia's big city. If all those SERVQUAL indicators are calculated as a

percentage, they are 66 percent positive and 34 percent negative. Surakarta's experience can be a benchmark for other big cities, mainly in Southeast Asia, on how to regulate public transportation. In addition to positive comments, negative complaints can be employed as a considerable part of the input for the government to develop service quality in the future.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

None.

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE:

This paper was approved by the institution.

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