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A Quality Assessment of Bolt E-hailing Service Delivery in Rural Towns. A Case Study of Thohoyandou, South Africa

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Abstract

E-hailing sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally due to the rapid expansion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the transportation sector. E-hailing has revolutionized the way people travel contributing to the idea of "Sharing" instead of "Owning" vehicles. In South Africa, one of the fastest-growing e-hailing service providers are Bolt, which has doubled its operational footprint over the past few years, to include rural towns such as Thohoyandou in the Limpopo province of South Africa. However, e-hailing service provision comes with its own challenges, particularly in South Africa where passengers are supposed to be 'on high alert' when riding e-haling transport. The study assessed the quality of Bolt Service delivery in Thohoyandou town. A mixed-methods approach was employed to (i) Map the coverage of Bolt service in Thohoyandou; (ii) To assess the quality of Bolt service delivery and (iii) To recommend suggestions for improving the quality of Bolt service delivery in Thohoyandou town. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews; field observations and the distribution of 274 questionnaires. The Service quality model (SERVQUAL) was employed to assess the quality of Bolt service delivery. The study results indicated that Bolt passengers' perceptions of the quality of service they are receiving is lower than their expectations in all the SERVQUAL model's five quality dimensions. Furthermore, some factors hindering the quality of Bolt service delivery outlined include: (i) Illegal practices by Bolt drivers such as demanding exorbitant trip fares more than the stipulated ones; Impersonation of online Bolt driver profiles; (ii) Mistreatment of passengers by Bolt drivers; (iii) Inadequate online and physical platforms for passengers to raise queries; and an inefficient existing regulatory framework. The study suggested recommendations towards an e-hailing implementation framework that enhances the quality of Bolt service provision particularly in small rural towns.

Keywords: E-hailing, Bolt, Service Quality, Assessment

Introduction

The growing information and communication technology (ICT) revolutionized the transportation sector, particularly the taxi services, with the introduction of the ride-sharing economy [1]. The emergence of Transport Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Bolt has significantly transformed the traditional transportation method, providing consumers with a new mode of transportation that is efficient, cost-effective, and based on the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and advanced software application [2]. The development of e-hailing services has been driven by the increasing availability of the internet, smart devices, and the adoption of specific e-hailing applications [3]. Despite its enormous potential, e-hailing services like Bolt are not without challenges, with service quality being a matter of significant concern. This research paper aims to assess the quality of Bolt Service provision in Thohoyandou, evaluate the existing challenges of Bolt, and suggest recommendations towards improving Bolt services in the study area. To achieve this aim, this paper will spatially map the coverage of Bolt service in Thohoyandou, explore the quality of services offered by Bolt in Thohoyandou, and recommend suggestions for improving the Bolt services in Thohoyandou.

The e-hailing industry has been expanding rapidly in South Africa, led by companies such as Uber and Bolt. Bolt especially gained popularity in the country with its competitive pricing,

leading to the company's continued growth. Bolt currently operates in over 30 South African cities, including Thohoyandou, where the service has been in operation since its establishment in 2016. Despite its popularity, e-hailing services have been faced with numerous challenges, including safety and comfort concerns, worries about driver experience and reliability, and service quality. Additionally, criminal activity against TNCs drivers, fraudulent activities by Bolt drivers, racial discrimination, and gender-based violence are some of the issues facing the industry [4, 5].

Therefore, this paper seeks to identify major issues affecting the provision of quality services by Bolt and provide recommendations for improvement. The study will spatially map the coverage of Bolt service in Thohoyandou, explore the quality of services offered by Bolt in terms of assurance, tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, efficiency, and customer care services. The research questions developed for this study will address the extent of adoption and usage of Bolt services in Thohoyandou, the coverage and distribution of Bolt services, and the demographic characteristics of Bolt service users and purposes. Additionally, the paper will examine the existing stakeholders and programs in place to address the issues of Bolt service and suggest interventions that can be advanced to improve Bolt service quality.

The study will contribute to the existing literature on e-hailing services in South Africa and provide insights into the quality of service provided by Bolt in Thohoyandou. The outcomes of this research will be beneficial to Bolt service users, policymakers, and stakeholders in the transportation industry, including TNCs, government agencies, and investors interested in the e-hailing market. Finally, the research outcomes will promote the development of more effective and efficient e- hailing services in Thohoyandou and other regions, contributing to the improvement of the transportation sector in South Africa.

Literature Review

E-hailing services have emerged as a game-changer in the transportation industry, providing customers with a convenient, reliable, and cost-effective mode of transportation. However, the success of e-hailing services largely depends on the policy and legislative framework in which they operate, service quality, and the implementation of digital applications. This literature review aims to critically examine and analyze literature related to e-hailing services, policy and legislative framework, service quality, digital applications, and case studies in developed and developing countries.

E-hailing services refer to the process of using a digital application to book a ride from a transportation network company (TNC) such as Uber and Bolt. These services provide numerous benefits to customers, including accessibility, affordability, convenience, and reliable transportation. E-hailing services have become increasingly popular in recent years and have disrupted the traditional taxi industry. [6].

The policy and legislative framework that informs e-hailing/TNCs have a significant impact on the success of these services. Governments' regulation and policies can either create a favorable or unfavorable environment for e-hailing services to operate and flourish. These regulations and policies need to address key issues such as safety, insurance requirements, pricing mechanisms, and market competition [7].

Service quality is a critical factor in the success of e-hailing services. In the transportation industry, the service quality expectations of customers are high, and they demand reliable, timely, safe, and comfortable service. SERVQUAL is a widely used model for measuring service quality in the transportation industry. The model identifies gaps between customer expectations and management perception, management perceptions and service quality specification, service quality specifications and service delivery, service delivery, and external communications gap, and expected service and perceived service gap. Addressing these gaps is crucial in delivering quality service to customers [8].

Digital applications have transformed the transportation industry, revolutionizing how we travel. These applications have enabled TNCs such as Uber and Lyft to provide efficient and reliable services to customers. The integration of digital applications, such as real-time tracking, online payment, and GPS, has improved the customer experience and service quality, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty [9].

Case studies provide valuable insights into the service quality of e-hailing/TNCs and related issues in both developed and developing countries. In developed countries such as China, the e-hailing sector has undergone significant development, leading to increased competition, service quality, and customer satisfaction. In developing countries such as Indonesia, price, service quality, and trust in online transportation are key factors that determine customer satisfaction. In Kenya, e- hailing services have been successful in addressing transportation challenges in urban areas. In Thailand, e-hailing services have improved accessibility and have contributed to reducing traffic congestion [10-13].

Therefore, the success of e-hailing services relies on the policy and legislative framework, service quality, and digital applications. There is a need for governments to formulate policies and regulations that foster a favorable environment for e-hailing services to operate and flourish. TNCs need to address the identified gaps in service quality to provide quality service and meet customer expectations. Digital applications can improve the customer experience and service quality, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. The case studies provide valuable insights into the service quality of e-hailing/TNCs and related issues in both developed and developing countries, which can inform policy and practice [14-19].

Research Methods

This section describes the various strategies that were used to obtain the data needed to meet the study's specified objectives. It includes the tools and procedures used to gather, present, and analyze data. For achieving the most important objective of the study concerning the assessment of the quality of Bolt Service as a case study, the research method was divided into four major elements, which include:

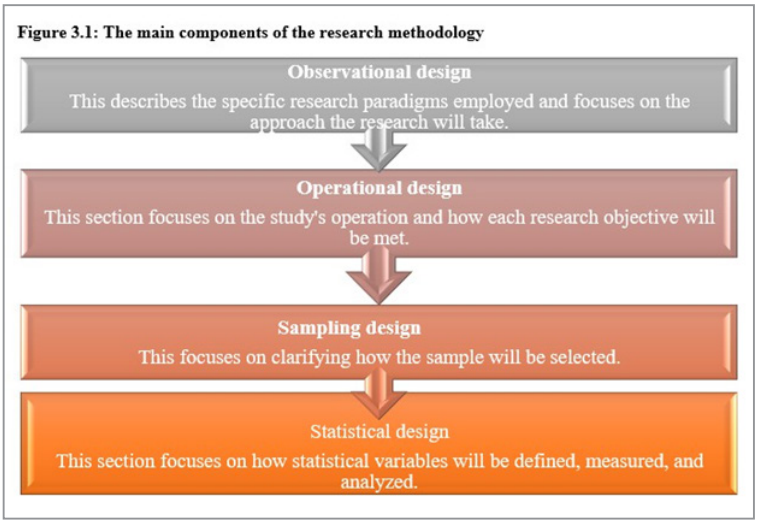

Figure 1: The main components of the research methodology
Source: Author's Construct (2021)

Several research paradigms were critical in assessing issues related to the assessment of the quality of Bolt Service within Thohoyandou. This study utilized a mixed method, which comprises both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. To achieve the four main objectives of this study data from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms were required. Use of quantitative research design was used by adopting the SERVQUAL model, which contains five dimensions of service quality (tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and empathy) to assess the quality of Bolt's (Taxify) service. The qualitative research design was used for conducting interviews with Bolt drivers, and Bolt officials and the use of e-hailing articles and documents. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews; field observations and the distribution of 274 questionnaires. The Service quality model (SERVQUAL) was employed to assess the quality of Bolt service delivery. The five quality dimensions and the 20 service quality statements were used to measure the quality of Bolt service delivery, with each dimension consisting of four determinants. Respondents' responses were analysed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree to determine the quality of Bolt service [20-29].

Table 3. 1: The five quality dimensions and the 20 statements concerning service quality.

The five quality dimensions questions	The 20 statements/elements to accessed concerning Service Quality
a) How reliable is Bolt service around Thohoyandou?	1.Ride-hailing service fare is reliable
	2.Security condition for ride-hailing is adequate.
	3. Arrive at the destination on time.
	4.Feel safe during the ride.
b) What assurance is there for Bolt service in Thohoyandou?	5.Bolt drivers are trustworthy.
	6. Bolt drivers drive safely.
	7. Bolt drivers are respectful.
	8. Bolt users feel safe with the transaction or payment.
c) How tangible is the Bolt service within Thohoyandou?	9.A new or adequate car.
	10. The interior of vehicle is clean
	11. Comfort and cleanness of seat.
	12. Drivers' attire is neat.
d) What is the level of empathy in the Bolt service in Thohoyandou?	13.Bolt drivers are friendly.
	14. Bolt drivers are helpful.
	15. Bolt service providers handle complaints effectively.
	16. Bolt always have the passengers" best interest at heart".
e) How responsive is Bolt service in Thohoyandou?	17. Communication with drivers is clear and helpful.
	18. Provide various payment methods.
	19. Service covers all area.
	20.Drivers keep the commuters informed of any delay or inability to deliver the services

Results and Discussion

This section outlines the results of the study. It will first explore the demographic characteristics of the participants. The socio-demographic profiles of Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou were examined using the following characteristics: the respondents' gender, age, employment status, and monthly income [30].

Gender of Respondents

The gender of respondents was analyzed to determine the proportion of male versus female respondents. This was critical in determining the dominant user regarding the gender of Bolt passengers. In general, there are more female Bolt passengers as compared to male Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou. Figure 4.1 depicts the proportions of male to female-respondents in the study area [31].

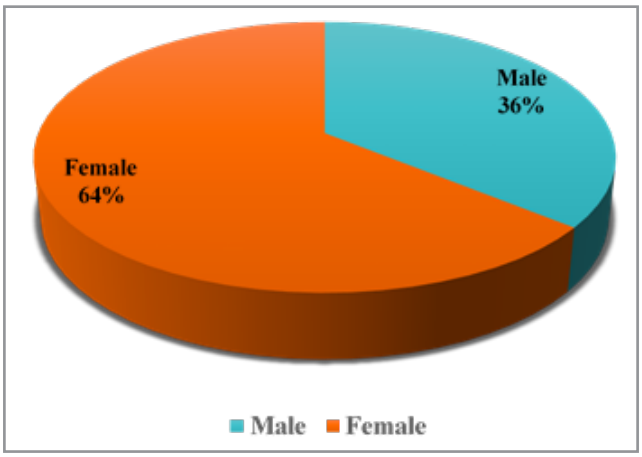

Figure 4.1: The gender of the respondents
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.1. shows that 64% of the respondents were female Bolt passengers and 36% were male Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou. Based on the researcher's sample data, female Bolt passengers exceed the number of male Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou. According to Statistics SA (2011), there are more females (54,9%) than males (45.1%) in Thulamela municipality, which could be attributed to the fact that female Bolt passengers outnumber male Bolt passengers.

The Age of Respondents

The age groups of respondents were examined to discover the predominant age group of Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou. Figure 4.2 illustrate the age groups of respondents.

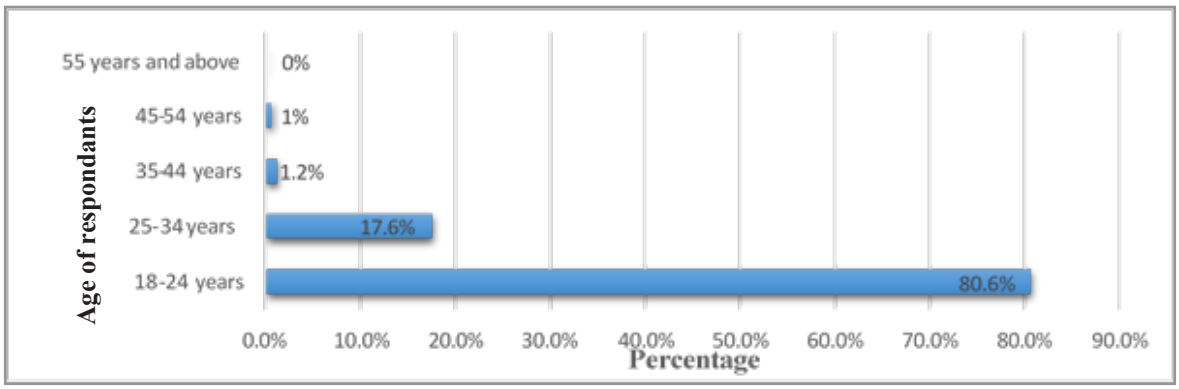

Figure 4.2: Age Groups of Respondents
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.2 demonstrates that 80.6% of respondents were 18-24 years old, 17.6% were 25-34 years old, 1.2 % were 35-44 years old,1% were 45-54 years old and there were no respondents aged 55 and up. Most respondents (80,6 %) were between the ages of 18 and 24. Smith (2021) study also indicated a similar gap in gender demographic where most of most respondents were aged 18 to 25, also known as the "Millennial Generation." This is consistent with previous research on e- hailing technology related, which shows that the younger consumer uses a variety of devices and applications. These findings have demonstrated that young adults (18-24 years) are the most adopting age group in terms of e-hailing technology. The age group 18-24 years is

one of the most dominant age groups of internet users and has a smartphone, allowing them to easily download, install, and use the Bolt application, and the University of Venda's location in Thohoyandou has also contributed because the university has a lot of youth contributing to a large number of the young age group being around Thohoyandou has influenced the young age group being a dominant group of Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou [31-37].

The Employment Status of Respondents

The residents were asked to indicate their employment status. Figure 4.3 illustrates the employment status of respondents

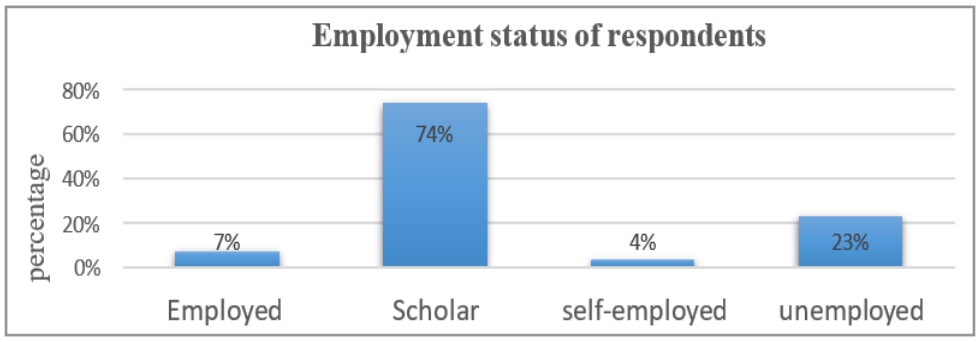

Figure 4.3: The employment status of Respondents
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.3 shows that 74 % of respondents were scholars, 23 % of respondents were unemployed, and 7% of respondents were employed, with the lowest percentage of 4% of respondents being self-employed. The findings prove that most Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou are students. The high number of users being students is influenced by the high density of young people in Thohoyandou due to the presence of the University of Venda, as well as the youths' ability to use a variety of devices applications, and is the dominant age group of internet users, which has allowed them to easily download, install, and use the Bolt application as compared to older age group [38-40].

Educational Status of Respondents

The respondents were questioned about their educational status to determine if there is a relationship between the utilization of Bolt and the level of education. Figure 4.4 shows the educational status of respondents.

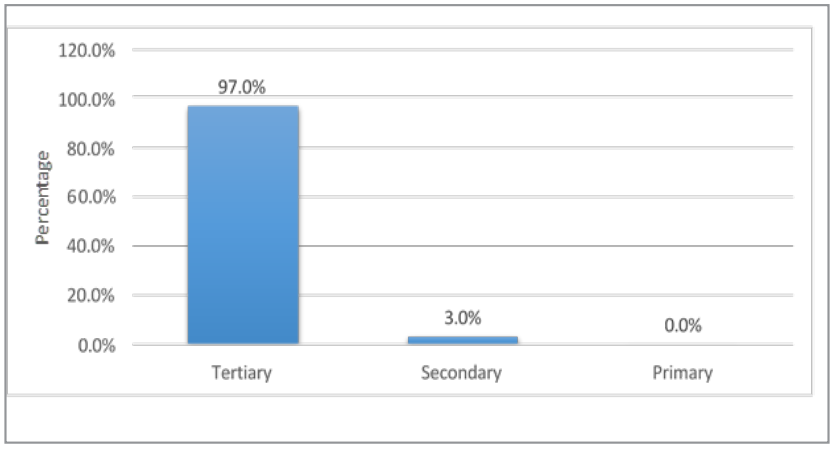

Figure 4.4: The respondents' educational status
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.4 shows that most respondents have attained tertiary level education recording 97% and 3% for respondents whose highest level of education is secondary level. This indicates that most Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou have reached the tertiary level or are currently at the tertiary level. Smith (2021) discovered similar results from respondents when it came to the educational level of e-hailing users. Those with no completed schooling (0.98%) and nursery school to grade (0.98%) were the least likely to use e-hailing, while those with tertiary education were the most likely to use it, accounting for more than 50% of respondents. People with primary and secondary education levels are less exposed to the use of applications and the internet and have limited knowledge of how they work as compared to those with tertiary education, whereas those with tertiary education are more exposed to today's technology, computers, and other digital devices, and are more likely to use digital devices

daily, which has a high possibility of exposing them to e-hailing technology [41-50].

Monthly Income of Respondents

Respondents were asked about their income; see figure 4.5 illustrating respondents' monthly income. Finding proof that most respondents make less than R3500 (47,3 %), followed by those who do not earn (41,8 %), those who earn R3600-R7500 (4,8 %), and those who earn R7600- R15000 (2,4 %). The findings are this way because most Bolt passengers in Thohoyandou are youth (18-24 years) who are primarily at the tertiary level and unemployed whose primary source of income is bursary.

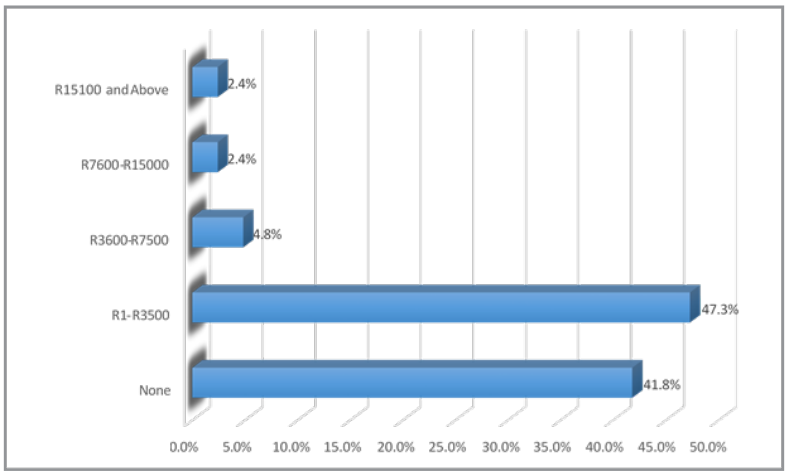

Figure 4.5: Respondents' monthly income
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

The Current Bolt Trip Aspects and Bolt Usage in Thohoyandou

It was critical to learn about Bolt trip aspects and usage in Thohoyandou. Respondents were asked questions about Bolt trips to learn more about the extent to which Bolt service has been adopted in Thohoyandou, the extent to which Bolt service is being used in Thohoyandou, the distribution and coverage of Bolt service in Thohoyandou, and the waiting time after requesting a ride or trip [51].

The Days of the Week in Bolt Passengers Mainly Use Bolt Service

To better understand the utilization of Bolt service, the days of the week when Bolt service is most likely to be in high demand, as well as the peak, respondents were asked which days of the week they primarily used the Bolt service. Figure 4.6 depicts the days of the week on which respondents primarily use the Bolt service.

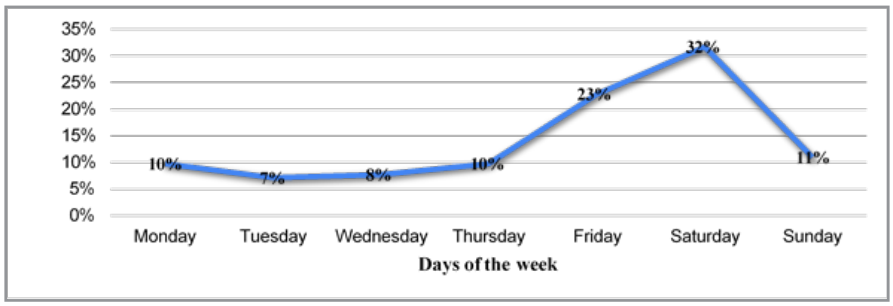

Figure 4.6: The Days of the Week on which Respondents Primarily use the Bolt Service.
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.7. data reveals that most respondents (32 %) utilize the Bolt service in Thohoyandou on Saturday, followed by 23 % on Friday, 11% on Sunday, 10% on Monday and Thursday, 8 % on Wednesday, and 7 % on Tuesday. This also indicates that the Bolt service is likely to be in high demand, primarily on Friday and Saturday, this is because most Bolt passengers (Students) are more likely to be free during Friday evening and the weekend because there are no school activities during those days, allowing them to go shopping and other recreation, sport, and leisure activities during those days of the week, which increases the demand for the utilization of Bolt service.

The Main Range or Area of Reach in Bolt Service in Thohoyandou in Terms of Kilometers

Both respondents and key informants were questioned about the major travel distances they had while utilizing the Bolt service in Thohoyandou. Plate 4.1. shows the roads most traveled while using Bolt service in Thohoyandou. Figure 4.7 depicts the major distances major Bolt trip distances Bolt passengers had while using Bolt service.

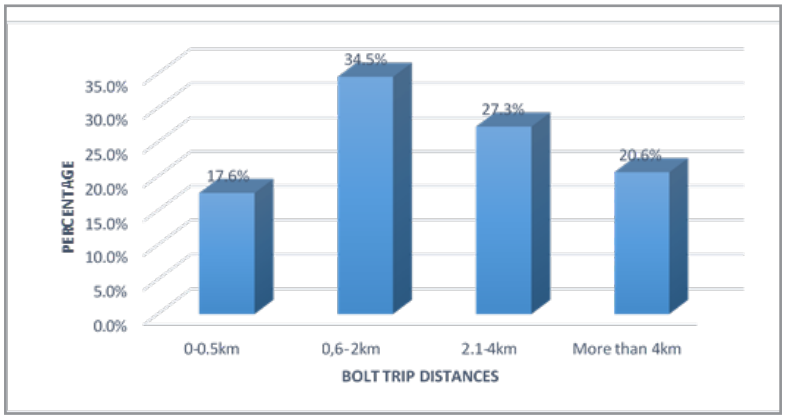

Figure 4.7: Respondents' Major Bolt Trip Distances
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.7 shows that most respondents (34,5%) had Bolt trips of 0.6-2km, followed by those who mainly travel 2.1-4km (27.3%), those who traveled more than 4km (20.6%), and those who traveled 0-0,5km (17,6 %). This shows that Bolt services in Thohoyandou are mainly used for short trips which range between 0.6-2km.

Most Bolt drivers interviewed responded that the main areas of range or area of reach of their Bolt service in Thohoyandou range from 0.5km to 2.5km to or from Thohoyandou shopping area, which includes Venda Plaza, Thavhani mall, or the CBD. This indicates that Bolt service is mainly found in areas where people are mainly concentrated or areas where there are a lot of activities happening.

The Respondents' Response on the Utilization of Bolt Service in Thohoyandou

Respondents were asked about their frequency of Bolt service usage in Thohoyandou to better understand Bolt service adoption and utilization in Thohoyandou. Figure 4.8 depicts the frequency with which respondents used the Bolt service in Thohoyandou.

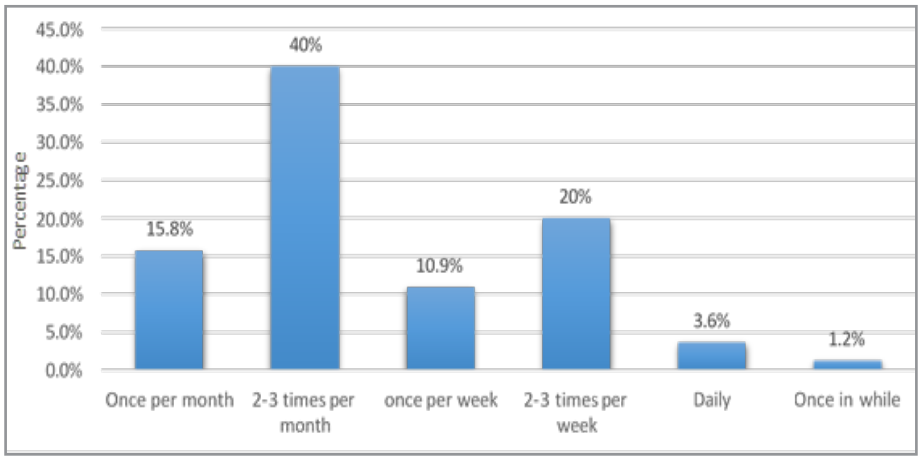

Figure 4.8: Frequency of Bolt service usage in Thohoyandou
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.8 shows that most respondents used Bolt service 2-3 times per month (40 %), a significant number of respondents used Bolt service 2-3 times per week (20 %), followed by those who use Bolt service once per month (15,8 %), 10,9% of respondents use Bolt service once per month, 3,6% of respondents use Bolt service daily, and 1.2 % use Bolt service occasionally. This demonstrates that bolt service has been adopted as an alternative mode in Thohoyandou, with more than 20% of respondents using bolt service 2-3 times per week. The majority (students) use it 2-3 times per month because they mainly use the Bolt service for shopping and other recreational, sporting, and leisure purposes which they mainly do during the week they receive their bursary payment.

Respondents' Response on Bolt Trip's waiting Time after Requesting a Ride

To gain more information about how long it mainly takes drivers to arrive to pick up Bolt passengers after a Bolt ride has been requested, respondents were questioned about the Bolt trip's waiting time after requesting a ride. Figure 4.8 shows the Respondents' Bolt trip waiting time after requesting for Bolt ride.

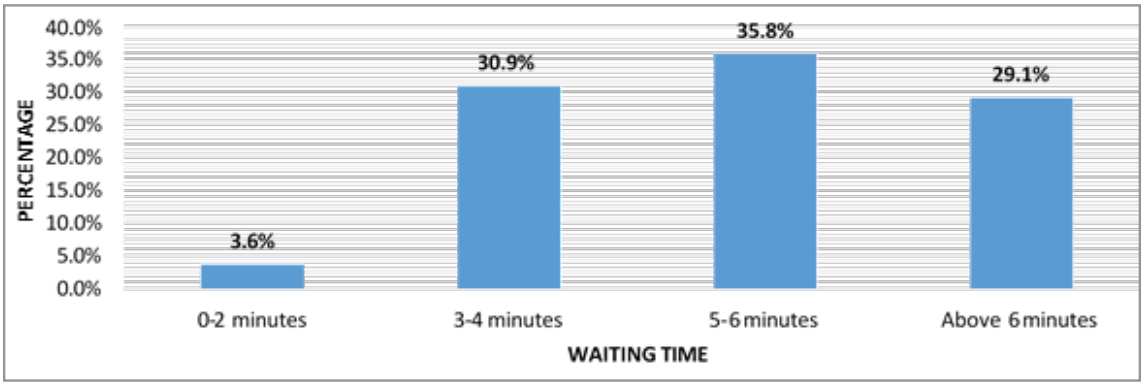

Figure 4.9: Respondents' Bolt trip waiting time after requesting for Bolt ride
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.9 shows that most respondents (35.8 %) waited for 5-6 minutes after requesting a ride, followed by 30.9 % who waited for 3-4 minutes, 29.1 % who waited for more than 6 minutes, and 3.6 % who waited for 0-2 minutes. This translates to most Bolt drivers taking 5-6 minutes to pick up users. The efficiency of Bolt's picks up time can be affected by the peak hours when Bolt rides are in high demand.5-6 minutes pick up time in terms of efficiency its adequate. The waiting time above six minutes (29.1%) is more likely to occur on Fridays and Saturdays since during these days of the week Bolt service is more like to be in demand as compared to other days of the week.

Respondents' Response on Trip Purposes which Bolt Service is Mainly used for.

It was important to gain information about the trip purposes for which Bolt service is being used to further understand the dominant purpose for which Bolt service is being used in Thohoyandou. Figure 4.10 depicts the trip purposes for which Bolt service is being used.

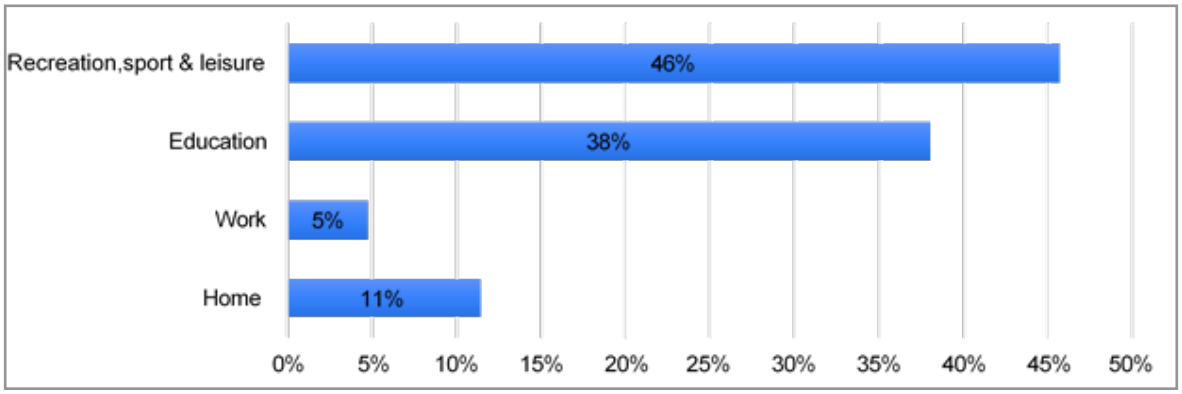

Figure 4.10: Trip purpose for which Bolt service is used.
Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Figure 4.10 shows that the most common trip purpose for which Bolt service is used in Thohoyandou is recreation, sport, and leisure (46 %), followed by those who used Bolt service for educational purposes (38 %), then those who used Bolt service to travel to and from home (11 %), and those who used Bolt service to and from work (5%). Since the dominant age group is young people (students), who are more likely to use Bolt for attending classes and more likely to go shopping, attend events, and participate in sports activities than other age groups, these two trip purposes are dominant [52-59].

The Overall Expectation and Perception, and Gaps in the 20 Determinants of Service Quality Dimension.

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS						
THE ATTRIBUTES	**Expectation (E)**		**Perception (P)**		**The Gap (P-E)**	**THE SERVICE QUALITY**
	Mean	$s=\sqrt{\frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}}$	Mean	$s=\sqrt{\frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2}{n-1}}$		
Reliability						
1. Ride-hailing service fare is reliable	3.34	1.05	2.96	1.09	-0.38	Poor service
2. Security condition for ride-hailing is adequate.	3.23	1.05	3.09	1.05	-0.14	Poor service

3. Arrive at the destination on time.	3.47	1.08	2.98	1.05	-0.49	Poor service
4. Feel safe during the ride.	3.13	0.92	2.82	1.08	-0.31	Poor service
Assurance						
5. Bolt drivers are trustworthy.	2.90	1.11	3.07	0.92	0.17	Adequate service
6. Bolt drivers drive safely.	3.7	1.07	2.95	1.07	-0.75	Poor service
7. Bolt drivers are respectful.	3.01	1.18	2.97	1.08	-0.04	Poor service
8. Bolt passengers feel safe with the payment or transaction	2.96	1.31	2.82	1.13	-0.14	Poor service
Tangibility						
9. A new or adequate car	2.97	0.99	2.93	1.03	-0.04	Poor service
10. The interior of the vehicle is clean	3.09	1.15	2.96	1.05	-0.13	Poor service
11. Comfort and cleanness of the seats	3.06	1.15	2.93	1.02	-0.13	Poor service
12. Drives' attire is neat	2.99	1.14	3.07	1.09	0.08	Adequate service
Empathy						
13. Bolt drivers are friendly.	3.20	1.10	3.05	1.01	-0.15	Poor service
14. Bolt drivers are helpful.	3.27	1.18	3.15	1.18	-0.12	Poor service
15. Bolt service providers handle complaints effectively.	2.75	1.19	2.56	1.19	-0.19	Poor service
16. Bolt drivers always have the passengers' "best interest at heart"	2.99	1.22	2.87	1.22	-0.12	Poor service
Responsiveness						
17. Communication with drivers is clear and helpful.	2.86	1.15	2.97	1.21	0.11	Adequate Service
18. Provide various payment methods.	3.22	1.10	3.12	1.14	-0.1	Poor service
19. Service covers all areas.	3.25	1.24	3.20	1.30	-0.05	Poor service
20. Drivers keep the commuters informed of any delay or inability to deliver the services	3.05	1.23	2.93	1.26	-0.12	Poor service

Source: Author's field data, 2022 (Sample size=274 respondents)

Table 4.1 illustrates the average scores for all the 20 determinants of the five-service quality dimension. Only three out of the 20 determinants where perceptions exceeded expectations include Bolt drivers being trustworthy, drivers' attire being neat, and communication with drivers being clear and helpful. This interprets that only three determinants have achieved adequate service quality while the other seventeen did not achieve adequate quality of service resulting in poor service quality. The overall findings of service quality did not paint a good picture of the state of service quality. This gives a clear picture that there is a need for improvement of service quality for the seventeen determinants which failed to achieve adequate service quality. Considering the overall finding from the gap analysis it can be concluded that the service quality of Bolt service did meet Bolt passengers' expectations since most of the determinants have a negative gap which indicates poor service quality [60-65].

Discussions with Key Informants (Bolt Drivers)

It was crucial to interview key informants such as Bolt drivers for the researcher to answer some of the study's research questions and objectives. More specifically, to comprehend how they oper ate their service in Thohoyandou.

Response on the Availability of a Local E-hailing Organization and Bolt Offices in Thohoyandou

There are no Bolt offices or departments in Thohoyandou to resolve driver and user complaints and problems. There is no e-hailing association in Thohoyandou that advocates for both Bolt drivers and users. Drivers mostly talk about challenges and other related concerns through a WhatsApp group they created. However, in South Africa, there is the E-hailing Authority South Africa (EHASA), which is an independent governing body that seeks to regulate the e-hailing sector in South Africa while keeping the interests of drivers and users in mind. However, Thohoyandou Bolt drivers have stated that they have never reported complaints to EHASA and have no or limited knowledge about it. indicated that regulation is a crucial step in the effort to establish a better industry; the presence of platform call centers and offices where customers can seek advice and report concerns to competent operators is critical in maintaining a well-regulated platform and good customer care service [14]. Local regulatory agencies and offices for e-hailing services are essential in providing a well-regulated platform.

Response on the Coverage and Distribution of Bolt Service in Thohoyandou

Most Bolt drivers interviewed mentioned that the areas where they primarily give their services are the University of Venda, Venda Plaza, and Thavhani mall. They also underline that the university of Venda students play an important part in keeping their business going because they are key users of Bolt services. They also stated that most of their trips are to and from the Shopping areas and the University of Venda. See Plates 4.1. illustrating the main areas of Bolt service highlighted by Bolt drivers. The areas that have the highest concentration and distribution of Bolt service are the University of Venda, followed by Venda Plaza and then Thavhani mall.

The drivers were also interviewed about the routes they took when using the Bolt service, which included Mutsido street, Garden route, Tshibevha street, main road (R524), Mvusuludzo street, Tshivhase street, Casino Blvd, and Main road (R523). All these routes primarily connect shopping areas such as Thavhani mall, Mvusuludzo, and Venda Plaza to surrounding areas, the University of Venda.

Conclusion

This section provides the study conclusions from the findings with research objectives. E-hailing service such as Bolt service has become an alternative mode of transport in Thohoyandou as it (Bolt service) provides a critical form of mobility, especially for a significant number of young people who are better educated than the general population, with the main trip purposes being for both recreational activities and educational purposes in Thohoyandou. As indicated in the findings from the SERVQUAL model's five dimensions shows that in all the gaps analyzed in the five quality dimensions all the gaps are negative meaning that Bolt passengers are dissatisfied with the service they are receiving from Bolt service in Thohoyandou. Keeping promises is the cornerstone of any business relationship, and users will gladly deal with businesses that deliver on their promises, therefore it is very critical for Bolt service to ensure that the service being delivered to Bolt passengers is reliable. Monitoring the performance of Bolt drivers and addressing bad behavior from drivers is critical when it comes to addressing assurance-related problems. For Bolt's service to expand in South Africa and become a more dependable means of transportation, one of the most important factors to consider is creating a positive corporate image through tangibles. Bolt service needs to provide individualized attention to its consumers to improve the level of service they deliver. Bolt drivers must recognize that each customer is unique, with unique desires and desires, and should be handled as such. More client satisfaction will be achieved from personalized service. To increase consumers' perceptions of service quality, drivers should communicate openly, and address Bolt passengers' requests and demands. Being forced to wait for service without explanation is one of the most frustrating experiences for customers. If delays are anticipated, it is advisable to notify the customer. Customers prefer to use the services of service providers whose personnel deliver prompt service while demonstrating that they appreciate and value the customers' time. The next section will present the conclusion of the study and provide recommendations.

Recommendations

This section comprises recommendations for improving Bolt services in Thohoyandou Making regulations for standards or requirements for e-hailing applications or similar technology will create an environment that will allow improvement of the service, lack of regulations attract criminal activities and poor service government need to put enforce regulation measure in the e- hailing sector like in other modes of transport such as public buses and taxi industry.

The establishment of offices in all locations where Bolt service is available will play a crucial role in responding to user complaints, thereby assisting in the improvement of Bolt service delivery in Thohoyandou. indicated, the willingness of company to assist is very important to customers, customers look forward to using the service of companies that have the right attitude and show a willingness to help them solve their problems [15]. The provision of offices will also show the willingness of Bolt towards responding to Bolt passengers needs which is an important aspect of improving the state of service quality.

There is an urgent need for Bolt drivers to be trained on how to conduct their service and what is expected of them while doing so, so that users may be catered to safely and properly. Training of Bolt drivers can play a critical role in the improvement of Bolt drivers' behavior.

To address these difficulties and improve the service quality dimensions, an internal regulatory system for Bolt service is required to monitor any misconducts and other problems that must be rectified. This includes keeping track of vehicle conditions, service fees, timekeeping, and drivers' behavior. A 24/7 hotline to support passengers at any time can also play a critical role in responding to Bolt passengers' concerns and complaints.

To tackle challenges such as the app's car description not matching the actual car driver- and delivery-partner facial authentication is required. The car driver- and delivery-partner facial authentication use facial recognition to ensure that only registered drivers can accept bookings through e-hailing applications and that drivers are required to authenticate and verify their identity at least once per day. This can also help to ensure that the driver who shows up at the pick-up location matches the one who is described in the application. This strategy has been implemented by other e-hailing companies such as Grab which mainly operates in Asian countries

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