Examining the Critical Factors for Success and Failure of Common Ticketing Systems

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Abstract : With a plethora of new mobility services and payment systems found in our cities and across modern public transportation systems, several cities globally have turned to common ticketing systems to help navigate this complexity. Helping to create time and space-differentiated fare structures and tariff schemes, common ticketing systems can optimize transport utilization rates, achieve cost efficiencies, and provide key incentives to specific target groups. However, not all cities and transportation systems have enjoyed a smooth journey towards the adoption, roll-out, and servicing of common ticketing systems, with both the experiences of success and failure being attributed to a wide variety of critical factors. Using case study research as a methodology and cities as the main unit of analysis, this research will seek to address the fundamental question of "what are the critical factors for the success and failure of common ticketing systems?" Using rail/train systems as the entry point for this study will start by providing a background to the evolution of transport ticketing and justify the improvements in operational efficiency that can be achieved through common ticketing systems. Examining the socio-economic benefits of common ticketing, the research will also help to articulate the value derived for different key identified stakeholder groups. By reviewing case studies of the implementation of common ticketing systems in different cities, the research will explore lessons learned from cities with the aim to elicit factors to ensure seamless connectivity integrated e-ticketing platforms. In an increasingly digital age and where cities are now coming online, this paper seeks to unpack these critical factors, undertaking case study research drawing from literature and lived experiences. Offering us a better understanding of the enabling environment and ideal mixture of ingredients to facilitate the successful roll-out of a common ticketing system, interviews will be conducted with transport operators from several selected cities to better appreciate the challenges and strategies employed to overcome those challenges in relation to common ticketing systems. Meanwhile, as we begin to see the introduction of new mobile applications and user interfaces to facilitate ticketing and payment as part of the transport journey, we take stock of numerous policy challenges ahead and implications on city-wide and system-wide urban planning. It is hoped that this study will help to identify the critical factors for the success and failure of common ticketing systems for cities set to embark on their implementation while serving to fine-tune processes in those cities where common ticketing systems are already in place. Outcomes from the study will help to facilitate an improved understanding of common pitfalls and essential milestones towards the roll-out of a common ticketing system for railway systems, especially for emerging countries where mass rapid transit transport systems are being considered or in the process of construction.

Keywords : common ticketing, public transport, urban strategies, Bangkok, Fukuoka, Sydney