Dubai’s Transportation System Advancements in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The advancement of Dubai’s transportation system over the last two decades is regarded as being at the forefront of technological advancements, focusing mainly on the driverless train system, the efficient traffic flow, and the strict, safety-focused taxi regulations. Such swift developments provide an opportunity for research into how these developments were made possible and how accessible and user-friendly this system is for tourists. Answering this question could provide a blueprint for developing cities focusing on tourism to maximize efficiency when planning their transportation systems “from scratch” in the same manner as Dubai.

This research utilized field observations, informal interviews, and artifact collection to gather data. Triangulation of the data lead to the findings that the meticulous engineering of the roadways, exploiting working conditions of emigrants, constant construction, and prioritization of tourism are the main factors that have given Dubai’s transportation system its cutting edge in the last two decades. While these rapid developments mark a new era of technological advancement on a grand infrastructural scale and can serve as a model for up and coming cities, the manipulation of poor migrant workers is an injustice which cannot be dismissed in the name of progress.

Research Questions

1. What factors are prioritized in the design of Dubai’s transportation system?
2. What factors contributed to the speed of the development?
3. What progress is currently being made to continue development on the transportation systems?

Methodology

This research utilized field observations, informal interviews, and artifact collection for data collection. Following the data collection, the data was coded for common themes and similarities. These themes were compared to themes found in the literature and the researcher’s personal bias and background was accounted for in the findings.

• Factors the researcher specifically noted were expense, safety, and “user friendliness” (defined by simplicity transportation is for diverse travelers to use, i.e. multilingual labels, maps, signs, available attendants)

• Field Observations: Throughout the researcher’s time in Dubai, they utilized every kind of transportation available — trains, taxis, automobiles — and took photos, videos, and notes about all observable aspects of each form of travel. Expected limitations included language barriers, expense, and the researcher’s unfamiliarity with the transportation system.

• Informal Interviews: The researcher conducted informal interviews with other tourists in Dubai about their feelings regarding the transportation system. These interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the subject’s experience traveling in Dubai.

• Collection of Artifacts: The research kept train tickets, took pictures, videos, and journal notes of experiences with the airport, taxis, trains, roadways, and anything else related to the transportation system.

Findings

• Public safety, efficiency, and ease of transportation for tourists, mainly English-speaking tourists are main factors considered during the development of the transportation system.

• There were no signs of financial restraint or limitations for extravagance or safety.

• Extensive roadway engineering, nonstop construction, and exploitation of migrant workers made development possible.

• Drone taxis and ongoing construction in barren areas indicates continuing progress.

References


Pictured above: On many Dubai highways, there will be four to six lanes with many turn-off lanes in different directions. The purpose of this is to combat rush hour traffic and maintain the flow of traffic in busy areas. Ampule signage is posted well in advance so drivers unfamiliar with the roadways have plenty of information to make turns in time. There are many turn-off lanes on these highways, given that a driver does miss a turn, it will not cost them too much time. This ties into the efficiency and user-friendliness of the transportation system.

Pictured left: Dubai’s government places strict rules and regulations on the taxi industry. Wages are set by the government, security cameras are placed in every taxi, and every taxi’s information as well as the information of the driver are clearly posted for riders to view. The phone number for the Road and Transit Authority (RTA) is printed below the taxi number so riders can call with any issues they may be having. This information is printed on both sides of the back seat, as well as details regarding the security cameras, which can be found on each rear window.