

Traffic Police's Attitude Towards Solving Traffic Problem and Livelihoods of Traffic Police in Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were 1) to study the traffic police's attitude towards solving traffic problems in Bangkok, 2) to study the traffic police's attitude towards the livelihoods of the traffic police, 3) to find ways to solve traffic problems in Bangkok. This study was a quantitative study using a questionnaire distribution method. The population was the Metropolitan Police, involved in traffic work. The sample consisted of 400 police officers from 10 police stations in Bangkok. In the analysis and calculation, basic statistics, such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, T-test and F-test, were used. The results revealed that the factors affecting traffic in Bangkok were entirely at a moderate level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the traffic police saw that the factors affecting traffic problems the most were personnel, followed by operations, environment, policy, road users and road conditions, respectively. In terms of the livelihoods of the traffic police on each aspect, it was entirely at a moderate level. When considering each aspect, it was found that the traffic police had the highest level of satisfaction in terms of economy, followed by health and work, respectively. When summarizing information about problems, obstacles and recommendations of the traffic police on traffic problems in Bangkok, most viewed that it was caused by people's lack of discipline in traffic. The volume of cars was large and the road conditions were also problematic. On most of the roads, they are currently under construction for the sky train route. In terms of living conditions of the traffic police, it was found that they want to increase welfares especially in the residence.

Keywords: Traffic Problem, Traffic Police, Attitude

Introduction

Traffic congestion is a major problem in Bangkok. This problem is gradually becoming more and more severe and also has a great impact on the country's development. It also damages the economy, society and environment as well as the public health in general. Everyone is well aware of the importance of the problem. In addition, governments in every era are trying to find a way to fix the problem. However, it still does not seem to be able to effectively resolve the issue very effectively in practice. This is possibly because the traffic problem is a complicated problem. There are many components that affect this problem causing traffic problems to be accumulated for over 30 years (Poonyarith, Suriyamanee & Kanyajit, 2019). Regarding the occurring traffic problem, one of the main reasons for this is the structural problem. The fact is that the road area in Bangkok is very small compared to the rapid increase in the number of cars. It is found that the road area is only 10% of the total Bangkok area. Compared to other megacities in other countries, there are about 20-25% of the road space. For example, London has 20% of the road area. New York City has 24% of the road.

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There were approximately 3 million cars registered in Bangkok in 2007. However, by the end of 2017, there were almost 6 million registered cars. If including more than 3 million motorcycles, there will be cars registered in Bangkok for more than 9.8 million vehicles (Policy and Planning Division, 2018).

Apart from the problem of road area which is inconsistent with the number of cars driving on the road, the condition of the road network still has problems in use, such as uneven road direction and size due to lack of good urban planning, etc. In addition, the road user behavior is problematic to traffic. The problems are also from parking in a no-parking area, sale of goods on road surfaces or even uncoordinated traffic light management making it impossible to manage traffic problems effectively (Tangpaisankij, 2011).

The researcher believes that solving traffic problems requires the cooperation of all parties involved. In terms of the government's policy, there are alternatives to public transport such as sky trains, the operation of officials that control the traffic rules. As the people who use the roads must comply with the law, the study should be provided to focus on government policies, performance of traffic police officers, and respect for the traffic rules of the people to be used as information in solving traffic problems with participation in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

The objectives of this study were 1) to study the traffic police's attitude towards solving traffic problems in Bangkok, 2) to study the traffic police's attitude towards the livelihoods of the traffic police, 3) to find ways to solve traffic problems in Bangkok.

Research Methodology

This study is a quantitative study. The population is the Metropolitan Police who are involved in traffic work. The sample consisted of 400 police officers from 10 police stations in Bangkok. They are divided according to the structure into 2 groups; the Metropolitan Police Station with a high amount of responsibility and the Metropolitan Police Station with a small amount of responsibility by using the traffic volume criteria each day divided by inner and outer districts of Bangkok in accordance with the manpower plan of the traffic police officers under the Central Traffic Metropolitan Police Headquarters. The tool used to collect data was a questionnaire divided into 4 parts. Part 1 was personal data factors consisted of age, status, education, income, length of service, and position. Part 2 were factors that affected traffic in Bangkok consisting of policy, practice, personnel, road users, road conditions, and other aspects by setting Likert Scale to 5 levels. Part 3 were the livelihoods of the traffic police consisting of health, work and economic by setting Likert Scale. Part 4 were problems and recommendations of traffic police in solving traffic problems and livelihood problems of traffic police in Bangkok. The quality of the research tool was checked by content validity by 5 experts. Then, the results of the experts were checked to find the Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). The applicable question items were items with a value of .5 or higher, which the researchers had adjusted the content of each question according to the advice of the experts and used to determine the confidence value using the alpha coefficient method according to Cronbach's method. The results of the analysis for confidence were = 0.89, analyzed by using a package to analyze and calculate the basic statistics, i.e. percentage, mean, standard deviation.

Research Results

The results revealed that among traffic police respondents, most of them were in the age range of 40-49 years for 122 persons representing 30.5%, having marital status for 257 persons representing 64.2%, having a bachelor's degree for 209 persons representing 52.2%, with salaries at 25,001-30,000 baht for 108 persons representing 27.0%, having a period of

work for 15 years or more for 210 persons representing 52.5%. Most of them were the noncommissioned officers for 301 persons representing 75.2%.

Attitude of the Traffic Police on Solving Traffic Problems in Bangkok

Table 1 Mean, standard deviation, factors affecting traffic in Bangkok entirely

Factors affecting traffic in Bangkok	Attitude of the traffic police		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation of results
Policy	3.12	.914	Moderate
Operation	3.46	.615	High
Personnel	3.70	.707	High
Road users	2.99	.676	Moderate
Road conditions	2.89	.745	Moderate
Environment	3.31	.752	Moderate
Entirely	3.24	.530	Moderate

From Table 1, factors affecting traffic in Bangkok viewed by the traffic police were entirely at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.24$, S.D. = .530). When considering each aspect, the traffic police had the attitude that personnel factor was the factor that affected the traffic the most ($\bar{X} = 3.70$, S.D. = .707). The 2nd rank was the operation ($\bar{X} = 3.46$, S.D. = .615). The 3rd rank was the environment ($\bar{X} = 3.31$, S.D. = .752). The 4th rank was policy ($\bar{X} = 3.12$, S.D. = .914). The 5th rank was road user ($\bar{X} = 2.99$, S.D. = .676) and the 6th was road condition ($\bar{X} = 2.89$, S.D. = .745).

Traffic police's attitude towards the livelihood of the traffic police

From Table 2 on the livelihood of the traffic police in each aspect, the overall was at a moderate level ($\bar{X} = 3.33$, S.D. = .642). The traffic police had the view on the livelihood of the traffic police in the economy which was the problem in the 1st rank ($\bar{X} = 3.52$, S.D. = .895). The 2nd rank was health ($\bar{X} = 3.25$, S.D. = .805) and the 3rd rank was in work ($\bar{X} = 3.22$, S.D. = .658).

Table 2 Mean, standard deviation, livelihood of the traffic police entirely

Livelihood of the traffic police	Level of problem		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Interpretation of results
Health	3.25	.805	Moderate
Career	3.22	.658	Moderate
Economics	3.52	.895	High
Entirely	3.33	.642	Moderate

Guidelines for Solving Traffic Problems in Bangkok

When summarizing information about problems, obstacles and recommendations of the traffic police on traffic problems in Bangkok, most viewed that it was caused by people's lack of discipline in traffic. The volume of cars was large and the road conditions were also problematic. On most of the roads, they are currently under construction for the sky train route. In terms of living conditions of the traffic police, it was found that they want to increase welfares especially in the residence.

Conclusion & Discussion

The results of analysis on the traffic police's opinion survey on solving traffic problems and the livelihoods of traffic police in Bangkok revealed some interesting issues as follows:

Personnel was the most important factor in solving traffic problems. When looking in details, it could be found that colleagues were in harmony. They helped one another and had a good understanding of traffic laws. The supervisors were friendly and ready to give advice on work and personal matters. However, there should be more police officers, especially during rush hours. This is correspondent with the study of Tangpaisankij (2011) finding that traffic police play an important role in solving traffic problems, especially during rush hours. They can clear traffic surfaces when accidents occur. For the operation, it was found that traffic work required patience and had to face high risk. The workload is also suitable for the number of staffs. However, there is a need for more budget and equipment support. Besides, there should be more publicity about the work of the traffic police and traffic conditions. This is consistent with a study of the Thailand Development Research Institute (2004) finding that traffic police operations need support from both the government and the public. In terms of setting clear policies and plans, there is support in budget and appropriate equipment. In the private sector, the support and cooperation should be received in the work of people by creating a better understanding between the traffic police and road users whether it is public relations or communication to the public in the field of duties and problems that the traffic police have to face in their work. For the environment, it was found that the environment was polluted, such as loud noise, car soot causing performance degradation. Traffic laws are appropriate but the punishment result is ineffective. People are not afraid to violate the traffic rules and policies. Most traffic police consider that the operational policy is appropriate. It is clear and can be converted to a guideline. However, it should allow more workers to participate in policy formulation to make work efficiency. For road users, it was found that traffic violations of the people were a major cause of traffic problems caused by people's lack of discipline in the use of road. They lack of knowledge and understanding about traffic rules. Road conditions are the factors that the traffic police see as the most problematic factor. Even with appropriate lights and traffic signs, the problem arises from the traffic surface with the construction of sky trains. The number of roads do not correspond to the number of cars. This agrees with the study of Tanaboribun (2008) finding that there is a need for planning to improve traffic surfaces from electrical and water pipe installations. More roads need to be constructed to meet the increasing number of cars.

The view of the traffic police on living conditions was found that the overall was at a moderate level. Traffic police had economic problems. The 1st and the 2nd were health problems. The least problematic factor was the job. The economy was the most important problem of the livelihood of the traffic police especially in terms of welfare assistance from agencies such as housing, etc., followed by insufficient salary to support the family and indebtedness, both in and outside the health system. The occurring health problems were stress from work at the most, followed by insufficient rest and occupational diseases such as allergies, asthma, etc. In the field of work, it was found that working caused happiness in the family to decrease. They rarely received public admiration and there is less opportunity for advancement than other fields. The agency always promotes training and job visits to develop knowledge and abilities. This is consistent with a study of Pratsajakrakkee (2007) and Amornpetkul (2000) finding that traffic police problems that caused stress and reduced work efficiency were physical health to receive exhaust fume from cars. The operations were at risk of accidents. On the psychological aspect, it had to deal with the stress of working hours, traffic problems and road users in the economy. The minority traffic police had insufficient salaries and welfare for themselves and their families.

From the study of factors affecting traffic in Bangkok, the recommendations are as follows:

In Policy: The operators should be involved in planning in formulating policies and operating guidelines. All relevant departments should be coordinated to work in an integrated way.

In Road Users: The driving licenses should be more difficultly granted to prevent driving licenses from being purchased. The road users must be courteous, cooperate with respect, strictly conform to traffic rules and not carelessly drive. The discipline and culture of respecting traffic rules should be cultivated among people.

Road Conditions: In the area where there is road construction, such as sky train projects, etc., there should be signs or lights in such areas at night. The road should be expanded to be the same width throughout the line and trying to expand the road to accommodate the increasing number of cars. The conformity to traffic rules should be strict at the bottlenecks or bridge necks. The simultaneous road use in the morning and evening should be reduced such as adjusting the working hours to have more time overlapping than the present. The schools and banks should be opened and closed at slightly different times. As they do now, it does not solve the traffic problem. In order to really solve this problem, there must be a large overlap of time at schools and all types of large workplaces, for example, one at 7 o'clock, the other at 10 o'clock, or divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The government workplaces can have different holidays from the state enterprises and educational institutes.

Environment: Traffic laws are always reviewed to be up-to-date. The law must be enforced equally and have appropriate penalties. The technology such as surveillance cameras should be applied to prevent traffic violations. People should be encouraged to participate and witness for the police officers such as taking photos of criminals and send them to the police. There is publicity and reports on traffic conditions that are easily accessible to the public.

In the livelihood of the traffic police, there are recommendations as follows:

In Health: The protective equipment for health such as masks, reflective vests, etc. should always be provided at work. There should be an annual health check, especially mental health. There should be recreational activities to reduce stress and build good relationships among officers.

In Work: There should be an appropriate rest time for the happiness of the staffs and their families. There should always be training to improve knowledge. The good understanding can be built between the police and the people.

In Economic: Welfare should be provided to suit the number of staff, such as housing, etc. There should be a fund to provide economic assistance to police officers.

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