Exploring the Voices of Uber Users in Taiwan

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Abstract

The motivation of the current study originated from the fact that the population of Uber users has been increasing in Taiwan. Thus, the study was conducted to explore the voices of 247 people (M=105; F=142) who had experience of using Uber transportation services in Taiwan. The research question was: What attitudes did Taiwanese people with the experience of taking Uber rides hold toward Uber from the perspectives of all the participants, age, career, education, monthly income, and vehicle ownership? Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed through Excel. The results of the study indicated that (a) Uber users tended to have strongly positive attitudes towards Uber, (b) More female than male participants used Uber, but their attitudes towards Uber were the same or similar, (c) In terms of career, businesspersons' and homemakers' satisfaction ratings of Uber were less than the other career groups', (d) The group aged between 51 and 60 and that aged over 60 had less Uber satisfaction than the other age groups, (e) Participants with higher education status tended to have stronger positive attitudes towards Uber than those with lower education status, (f) Up to 90%, with the average percentage of all the items, of the group who earned less than NT$20,001 per month tended to be satisfied with Uber, and (g) The participants who owned their own vehicles and those who did not own their own vehicles had the same or similar Uber satisfaction.

Keywords: online questionnaire, Uber, Uber user, Taiwan

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I. Introduction

The widespread availability of the smartphones and mobile networks has made Uber more popular among local people and tourists as a cost-effective and safe form of personal transportation (Henama & Sifolo, 2017). People sometimes have negative opinions of the service quality of conventional taxicabs (Wallsten, 2015). Uber improves customer service by offering enhancements such as a user-friendly smartphone App (application) (Henama & Sifolo, 2017). This has seriously influenced the taxicab market (Puche, 2016). Since 2009, Uber has spread into many cities around the world (Chang, 2017; Puche, 2016), including the cities and counties of Taiwan (林/Lin, 2017). In 2017, about 63.6% of foreigners in Taiwan used Uber, and 42.8% of Taiwanese people also used Uber services (林/Lin, 2017).

Personal transportation should be convenient so that people can travel safely and comfortably anywhere they want to go. Therefore, people's lives are bound up with the personal transportation network. For many centuries, taxis have played an important role in transportation "in various forms and with various names" (Suhami, Talib, Bachok, & Saleh, 2018, p. 2). Taxis developed from the stagecoaches which people could hire in Paris and London in the mid-1600s (Suhami, Talib, Bachok, & Saleh, 2018). Since Uber was founded in 2009 (Hartmans & Leskin, 2019; 蘇/Su. 2018), Uber has become increasingly popular in the transportation market all around the world. Currently, customers can use the Uber smartphone App to call an Uber driver to drive them to their destination (Suhami, Talib, Bachok, & Saleh, 2018).

In Taiwan, Uber has grown rapidly, partly due to many complaints customers have about regular taxi drivers and their taxis. These complaints mainly include the drivers' impoliteness, talking on their smartphone while driving, taking a detour, smoking while driving, unavailability of cashless payment system, the low quality of taxis (Wallsten, 2015), odd smells in the taxis (Frizell, 2014), and the taxis' uncleanliness (Wang, 2015). Uber offers a sharing platform in which cars may provide various additional services such as mobile phone call services, electronic information supply services, and third-party payment services (蘇/Su, 2018). On the other hand, the satisfaction of Uber users has much to do with Uber service quality and value for money (Chen, 2008). A high level of Uber user satisfaction correlates with increased loyalty and behavioral intentions (Olsen, 2007), such as continuing to take Uber in the future (Saengsuwan, 2016).

To use the Uber service, a customer must download and run the Uber App which allows him/her to contact an Uber driver. Then s/he swipes his/her credit card, and waits until the Uber driver arrives. The Uber App can display the whole journey and the customer can send it to his/her family and/or friend(s). After arriving at the desired destination, the Uber App will automatically send the customer the route taken, consumption details, and a one-satisfaction-related-item questionnaire together with a space for free comments. Afterwards, the customer can rate the given questionnaire and make free comments online; the Uber driver can use another online questionnaire to express his/her attitude about the customer (林/Lin, 2017).

The research motivation lay in the fact that more and more Taiwanese people took Uber rides and there has been a paucity of exploring the voices about Uber users around Taiwan based on their various demographics: gender, age, career, education, monthly income, and vehicle ownership. As such, the purpose of the current study is to investigate the voices of Taiwanese Uber users and rate their experience of taking Uber rides.

II. Literature Review

Various forms of public transportation are available in Taiwan such as Uber, regular taxis, buses and MRT (Mass Rapid Transit). Uber has become a popular alternative form of transportation because it can provide fast and reliable transportation services for users (Saengsuwan, 2016). The factors that attract people to take Uber include easy access,

high-quality service, fare transparency, appealing rates (Wade, 2016), punctuality (Ng, 2016), and a user-friendly mobile phone App (Henama & Sifolo, 2017).

Saengsuwan (2016) employed a five-point Likert scale in an online questionnaire to explore the experience of Thai Uber users. Three hundred Thai Uber users in Bangkok were invited to rate a questionnaire; the number of valid questionnaires was 296 (M: 97; F: 199). The results of the research indicated that (a) Service quality positively impacted on perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intention, (b) Perceived value positively impacted on satisfaction and behavioral intention, and (c) Satisfaction positively impacted on behavioral intention.

The study conducted by 林/Lin (2017) focused on Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese Uber users' attitude towards Uber. Three sources of data collection were employed: participant observation, face-to-face interviews, and an online survey. Nine Uber drivers were interviewed concerning their experience of driving an Uber cab. In addition, 404 people rated the five-point Likert scaled online questionnaire. The number of valid questionnaires was 395. The important results of the study indicated that (a) The satisfaction of Taiwanese and non-Taiwanese Uber users was high and similar, (b) The majority of Uber-using participants were under the age of 45, (c) About 68% of Uber-using participants agreed that Uber had had an impact on their daily lives, (d) Uber coupons, which must be used within a given time, could influence participants to use Uber, and (e) The participants tended to agree that Uber was a safe

choice.

Suhami, Talib, Bachok, and Saleh (2018) employed a five-point Likert scaled questionnaire to measure 400 Malaysian Uber users' (M: 244; F: 156) satisfaction with Uber services. Participants were required to have used Uber once or more in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The results of the study demonstrated positive effects in four factors – safety, price, convenience, and information and communications technology (ICT).

According to the above literature review, many factors affecting Uber users' cognition, emotion, and action include service quality, satisfaction, behavioral intention, age, coupons, and safety, among others. Besides these factors, some other variables were included in the current study. Thus, the research question produced to motivate the study is: What attitudes did Taiwanese people with the experience of taking Uber rides hold toward Uber from the perspectives of all the participants, age, career, education, monthly income, and vehicle ownership?

III. Methodology

1. Participants

The online questionnaire was rated by 297 people between November 27 and December 11, 2019. Among the 297 questionnaires, 247 (M: 105, 43%; F: 142, 57%) were deemed valid and 50 invalid. Demographics for the 247 participants in terms of age, career, education, monthly income, and vehicle ownership are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographics of Participants

Variables	Item	Number of Participants 247	Percentage (rounded)
Gender	Male	105	43 %
	Female	142	57 %
Age	Under 21	114	46 %
	21-30	97	39 %
	31-40	16	7 %
	41-50	12	5 %
	51-60	6	2 %
	Over 61	2	1 %
Career	Service industry	21	9 %
	Business	9	4 %
	Manufacturing	10	4 %
	Technology industry	7	3 %
	Government official	17	7 %
	Homemaker	6	2 %
	Student	168	68 %
	Retirement	0	0 %
	Other	9	4 %
Education	Elementary school	6	2 %
	Junior high school	3	1 %
	Senior high school	22	9 %
	Bachelor degree	189	77 %
	Master's degree	21	9 %
	Doctoral Degree	3	1 %
	Other	3	1 %
Monthly income	Under NT$20,001	169	68 %
	NT$20,001~30,000	16	7 %
	NT$30,001~40,000	20	8 %
	NT$40,001~50,000	12	5 %
	NT$50,001~60,000	10	4 %
	NT$60,001~70,000	9	4 %
	NT$70,001~80,000	2	1 %
	NT$80,001~90,000	3	1 %
	NT$90,001~100,000	1	0 %
	Over NT$100,001	5	2 %
Vehicle ownership	Yes	191	77 %
	No	56	23 %

2. Questionnaire

The items for the questionnaire were gathered from three sources: (a) some questionnaire items used in 林/Lin's study (2017), (b) several questionnaire items elicited from pre-questionnaire Line interviews with seven Taiwanese people who had experience of taking Uber, and (c) the results of researchers' brainstorming the topic in small group meetings. To increase the reliability of the Chinese paper questionnaire, its final Chinese version was revised by a Chinese professor who had been teaching Chinese in a national university of sciences and technology since 2010. Afterwards, the paper questionnaire was converted to an online questionnaire, which included three parts: (a) participants' demographics, (b) the 27 questionnaire items (see Appendix), and (c) a space for free comments. Of the 27 questionnaire items, item 27 was an invalid item, "If you answer this question, this questionnaire will be considered invalid." Item 27 was designed to avoid the absent-minded participants from carelessly rating all items without reading them.

The online questionnaire was rated by 297 people between November 27 and December 11, 2019. Among the 297 questionnaires, 247 (M: 105, 43%; F: 142, 57%) were deemed valid and 50 invalid. The return rate was 83% (247/297), which supported the reliability of the questionnaire collection process. Furthermore, the value of Cronbach's Alpha for all the questionnaire items was 0.956, which indicated a high reliability for the questionnaire.

IV. Results and Discussion

In this section, the questionnaire data will be discussed and analyzed via Excel from the perspective of all the participants and then their demographic characteristics: gender, age, career, education, monthly income, and vehicle ownership respectively. The percentages via the accumulation of Excel in Figures 1 to 7 have been rounded.

1. All the Participants

Fifty-three percent of the participants indicated that they would not buy a car because they could take Uber (item 26). Except for item 26, more than 80% of all the participants tended to agree with the statements in the other items, and more than 90% tended to agree with 17 of the items (see Figure 1). As such, Uber was viewed as popular and successful by most of the participants. In general, the impact of service quality on the participants' satisfaction was positive, and this result echoed Saengsuwan's study (2016). On the other hand, the participants also tended to be satisfied with the charges for a ride with Uber (item1, 84%) and convenience of Uber (item 9, 93%), and these two results corresponded to those in the study by Suhami, Talib, Bachok, and Saleh (2018). Also, the participants tended to be satisfied with the safety of Uber (item 8, 88%), and this result echoed in the study by 林/Lin (2017) and also that by Suhami, Talib, Bachok, and Saleh (2018).

Figure 1 All the participants (n=247)
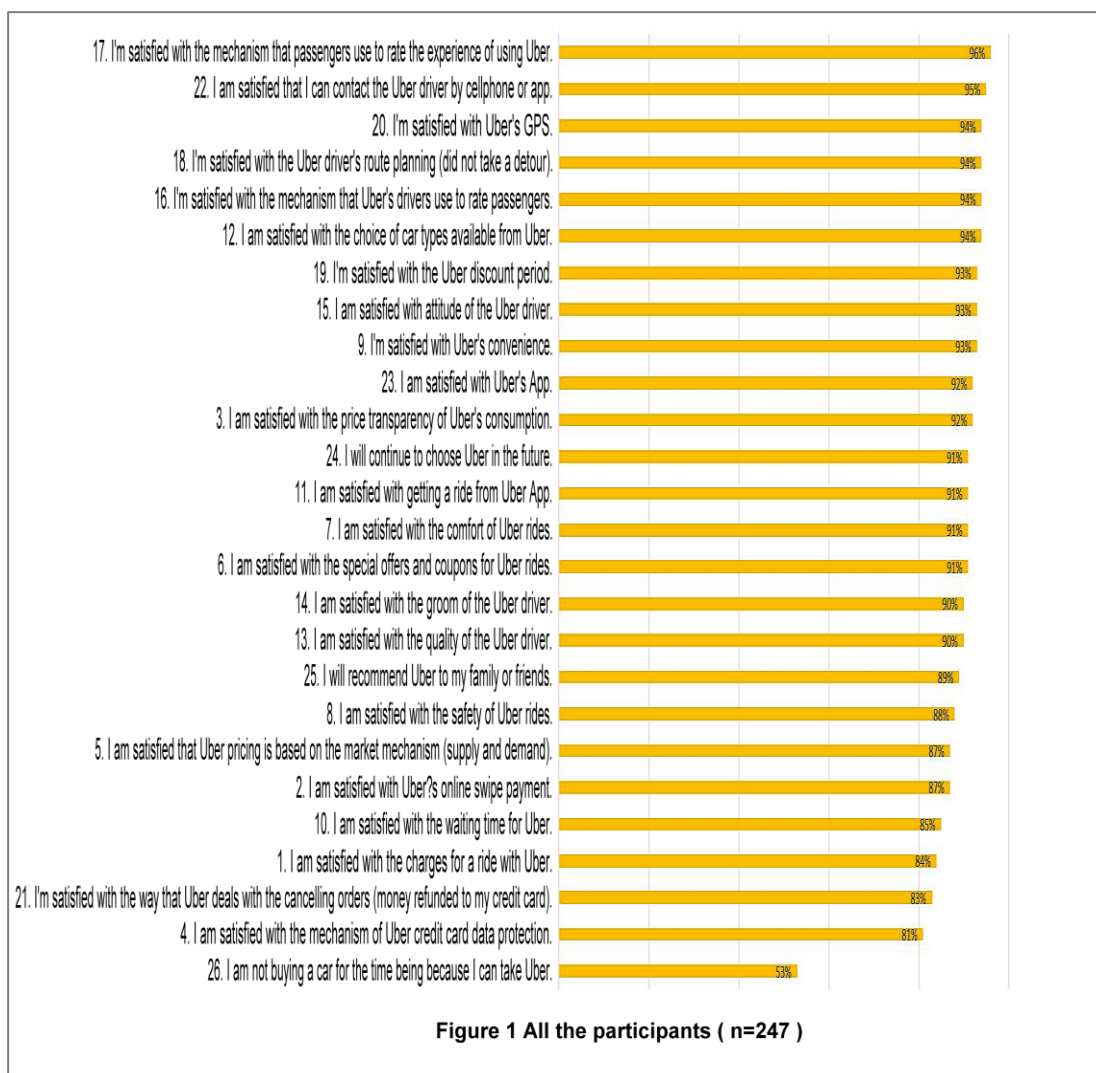
2. Gender

From the perspective of gender, there were more female participants (n=142, 57%) in the sample than males (n=105, 43%). Figure 2 shows that 61% of female participants preferred to take Uber rather than buy a car, whereas only 43% of male participants preferred using Uber to buying their own car (item 26). Except for item 26, male and female participants expressed the same or similar attitudes towards the other items and percentages varied only slightly from 0% to 8%. In particular, both male and female participants held similar attitudes about the quality of the Uber driver (item 13, 90%) and the price transparency of Uber's consumption (item 3, 92%).

Figure 2 Gender (n=247)
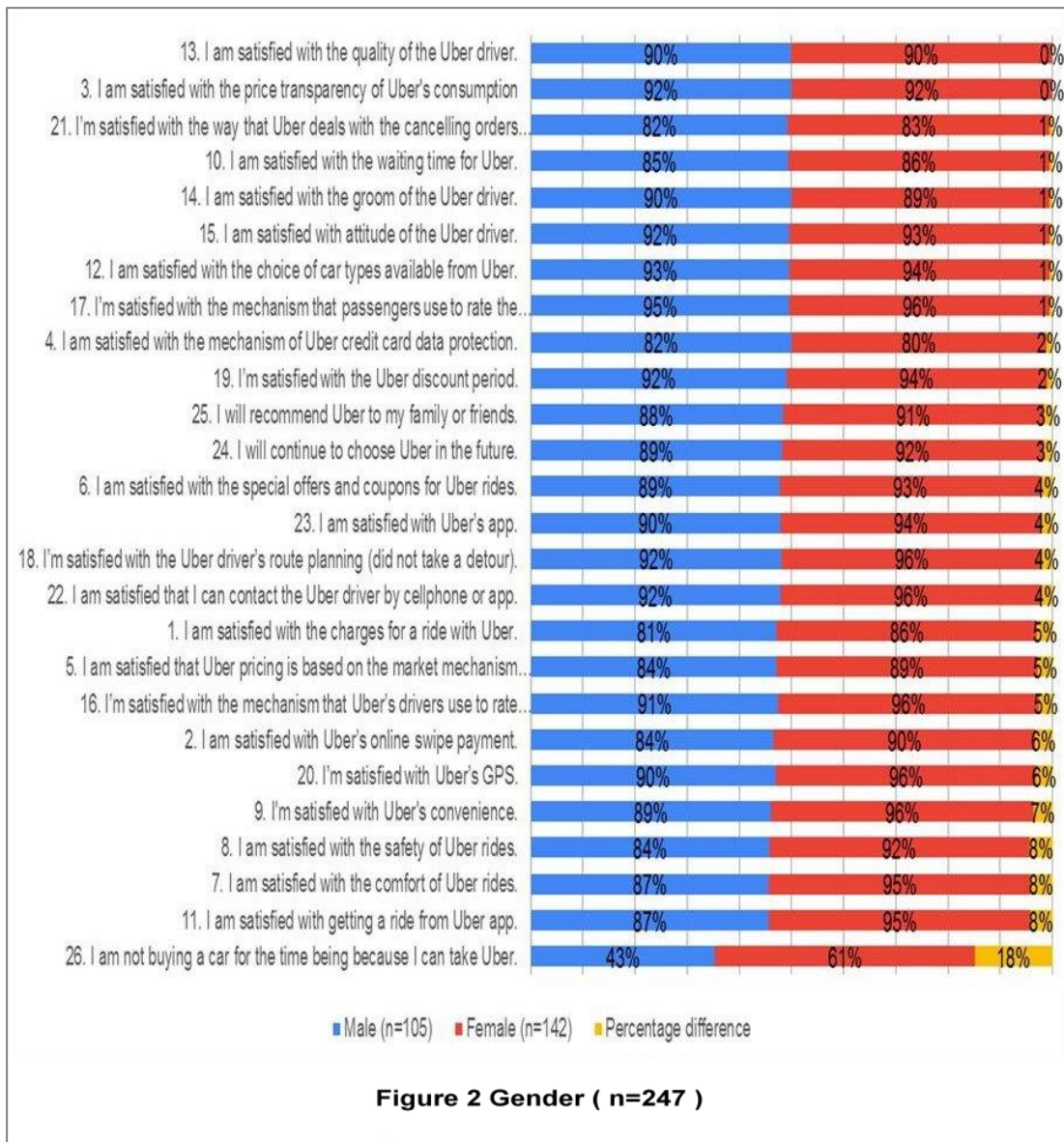
3. Career

From the perspective of career, most participants were students (n=168) and none were retirees (n=0) (see Figure 3). Participants from the retirement group (n=0) and other (n=9) were under-represented, so these two career groups will not be discussed in this section. The average percentages of the items are from the other seven career groups, and varied from 60% to 94%. The two groups of businesspersons and homemakers were less satisfied with

Uber than the other career groups. More specifically, government officials (94%) were the most satisfied with Uber, followed by students (90%), service industry staff (87%), manufacturing personnel (86%), technology industry staff (85%), homemaker (72%), and then businessperson (60%). However, the small sample sizes of three groups (business (n=9), technology industry (n=7), and homemaker (n=6)) could skew the result.

Figure 3 Career (n=247)
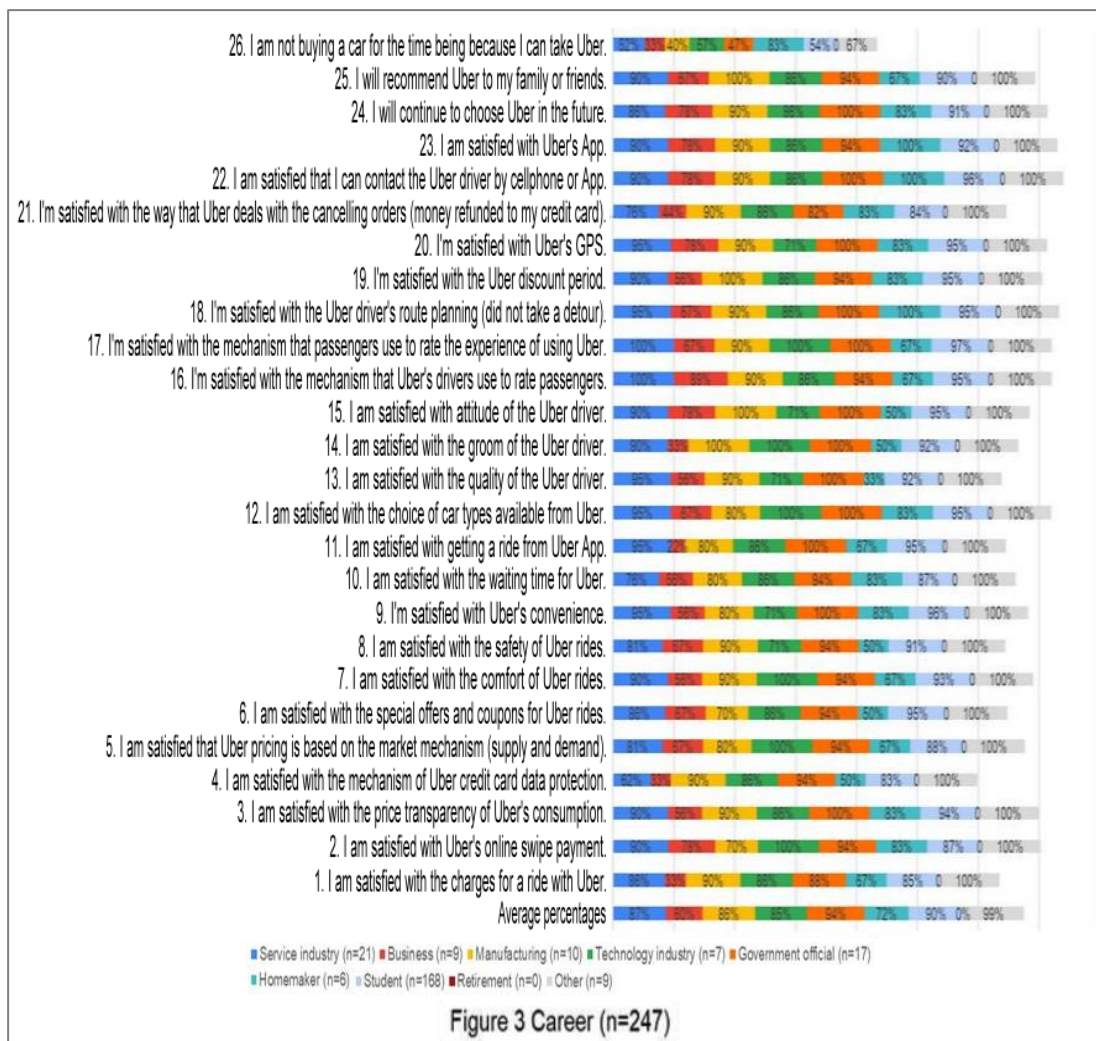
4. Age

The average satisfaction percentages of all the items rated by the age groups, varied between 63% and 91%. Figure 4 showed that the two age groups aged between 51 and 60 or 61 and older had less satisfaction ratings of Uber than the other four age groups. To be more specific, 91% of the participants in the two groups aged from 21 to 30 and 41 to 50 tended to have the same attitude toward taking Uber, and so did 88% of those in the other two groups, (i.e. those aged under 21 and between 31 and 40). Only 75% of the group aged between 51 and 60 were satisfied with Uber, and so did only 63% of the group aged between 61 and older. However, the small sample sizes of the two groups aged between 51 and 60 (n=6) or 61 and older (n=2) could skew the result.

Figure 4 Age (n=247)
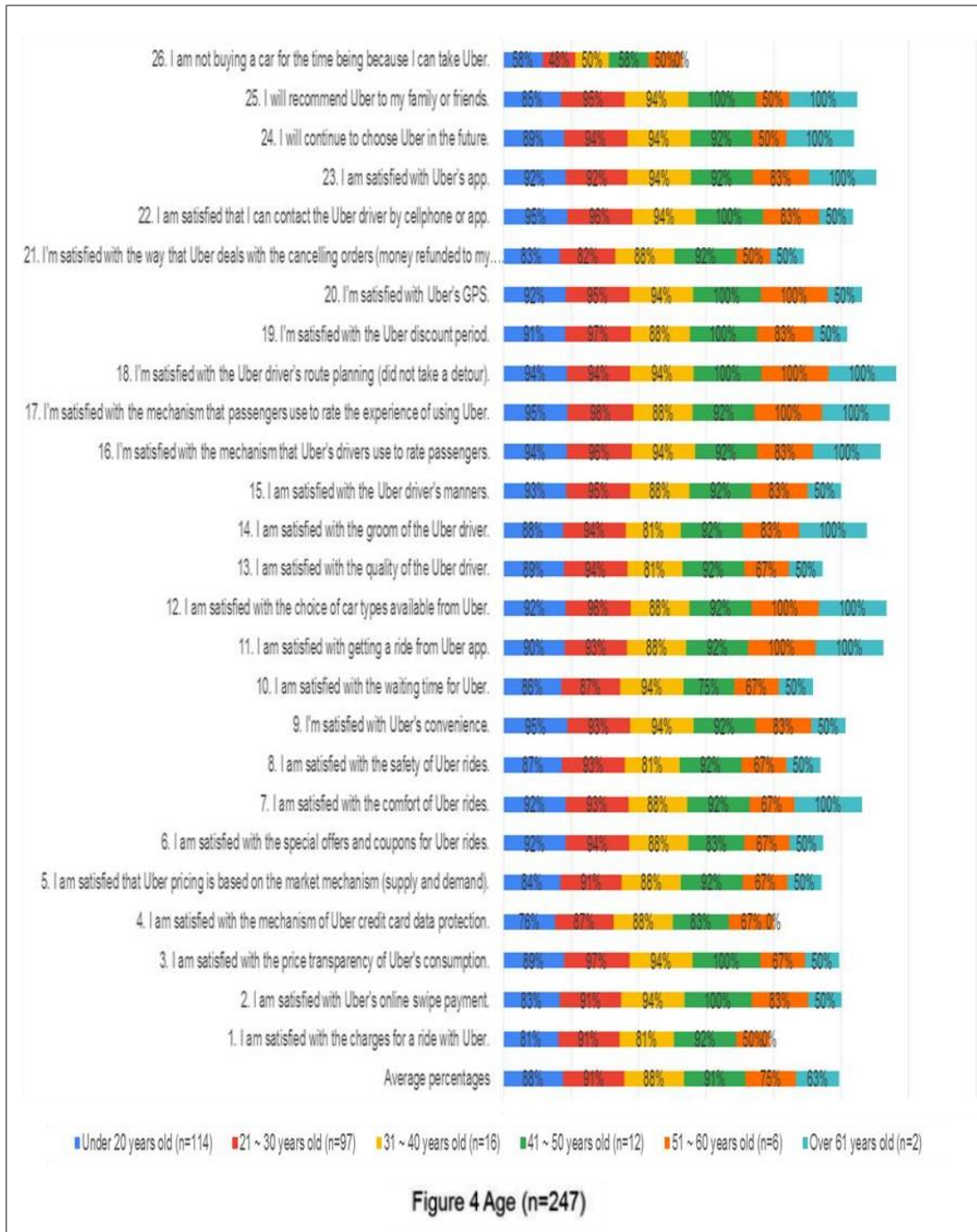
5. Education

From the perspective of educational status, most of the Uber users held a Bachelor's degree (n=189) (see Figure 5). Participants from other (n=3) were under-represented, so this education group will not be discussed in this section. The order of average satisfaction percentages ranked by educational status was: Elementary School (45%), Junior High School (51%), Senior High School (78%), Bachelor's Degree (91%), Doctoral Degree (91%), Master's Degree (96%), and Other (99%) (see Figure 5). This indicated that participants with higher education status tended to have higher Uber satisfaction than those with lower education status. However, the small sample sizes of four of the groups (Elementary School (n=6), Junior High School (n=3), Doctoral Degree (n=3), and Other (n=3)) could skew the result.

Figure 5 Education (n=247)
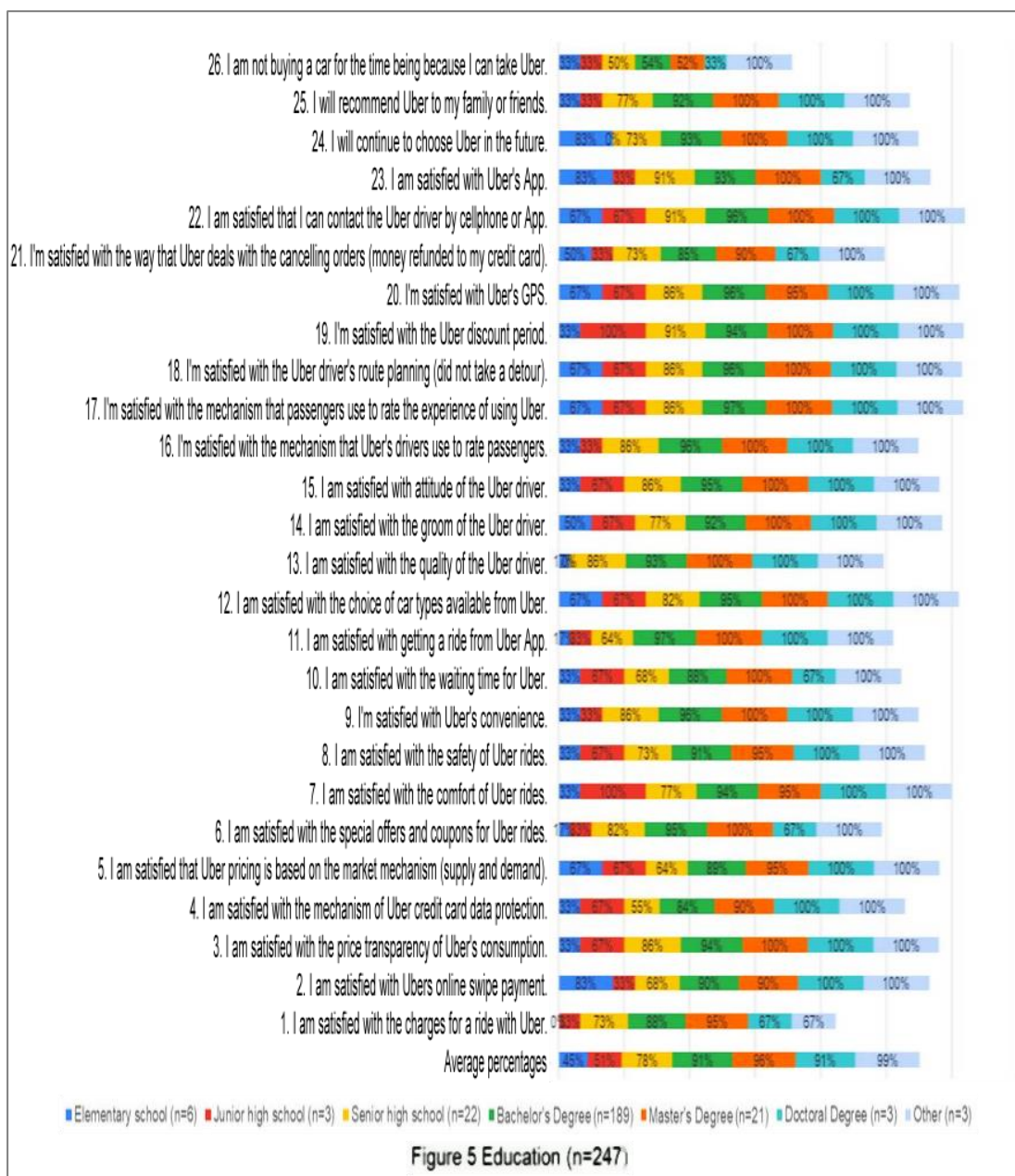
6. Monthly income

The sample sizes for the five groups with monthly income of NT$60,001~NT$70,000 (n=9), NT$70,001~NT$80,000 (n=2), NT$80,001~NT$90,000 (n=3), NT$90,001~NT$100,000 (n=1), and NT$100,001 or more (n=5) were so small that they were not discussed in this section. Interestingly enough, the participants who earned less than NT$20,001 per month (n=169; see Figure 6) tended to express their Uber satisfaction with the average percentage of all the items at 90%.

Figure 6 Monthly income (n=247)
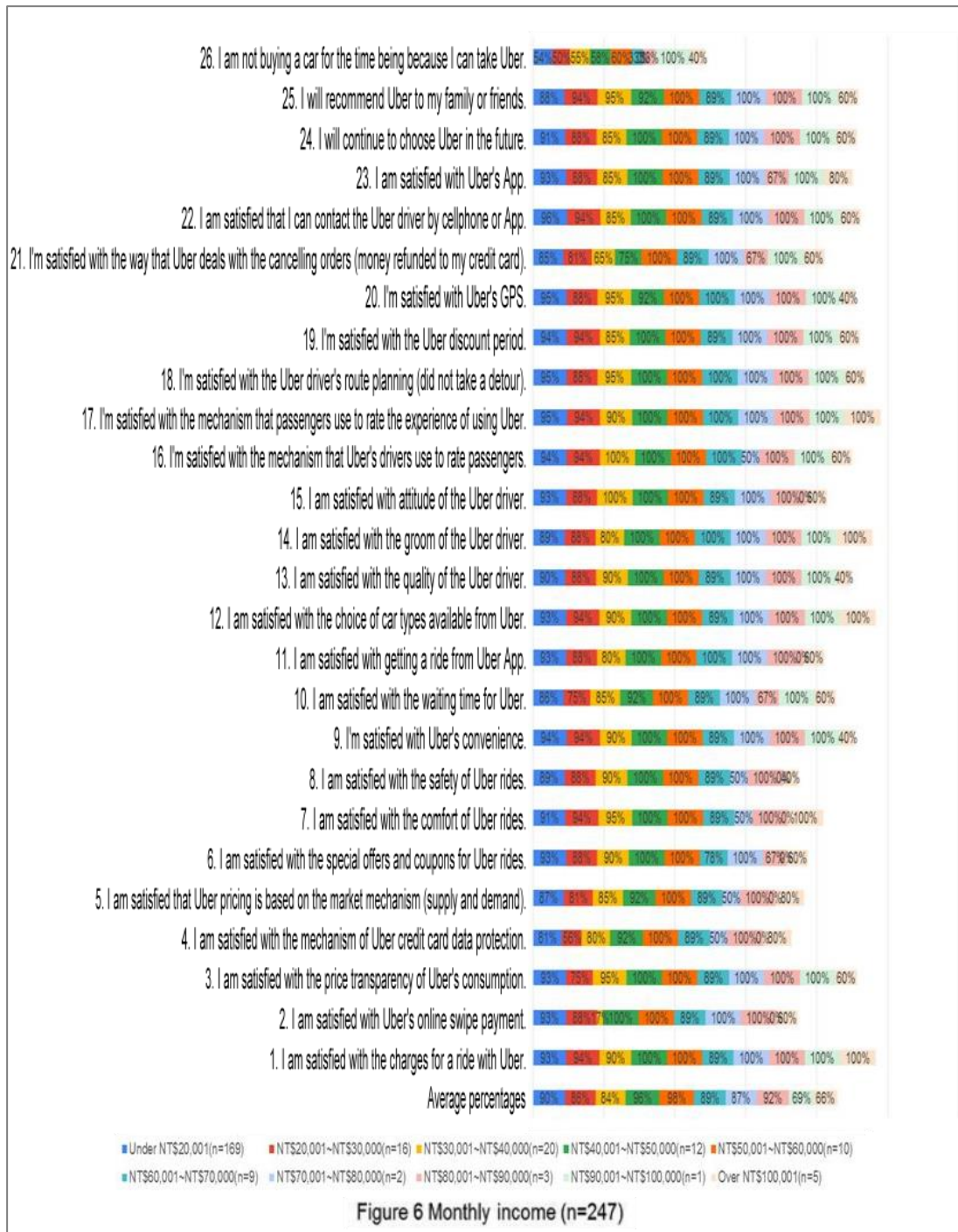
7. Vehicle ownership

From the perspective of personal vehicle ownership, the sample size of the Uber users who owned a vehicle(s) (n=191, 77%) in the current study was more than three times as much as that of those who did not own a vehicle(s) (n=56, 23%). The two groups of participants with vehicle(s) and those without vehicle(s) took the same or similar attitudes toward all the items with percentages varying only a little from 0% to 9% (see Figure 7). In particular, 95% of the participants in both groups tended to be satisfied that they could contact the Uber driver by cellphone or App (item 22); 91% tended to be satisfied with the offer of using the coupon for Uber (item 6). Furthermore, these two groups tended to take almost the same attitude toward Uber's online swipe payment system (item 2) with percentage difference of only 0.07% (original percentages: 87.43% vs. 87.50%).

Figure 7 Vehicle ownership (n=247)
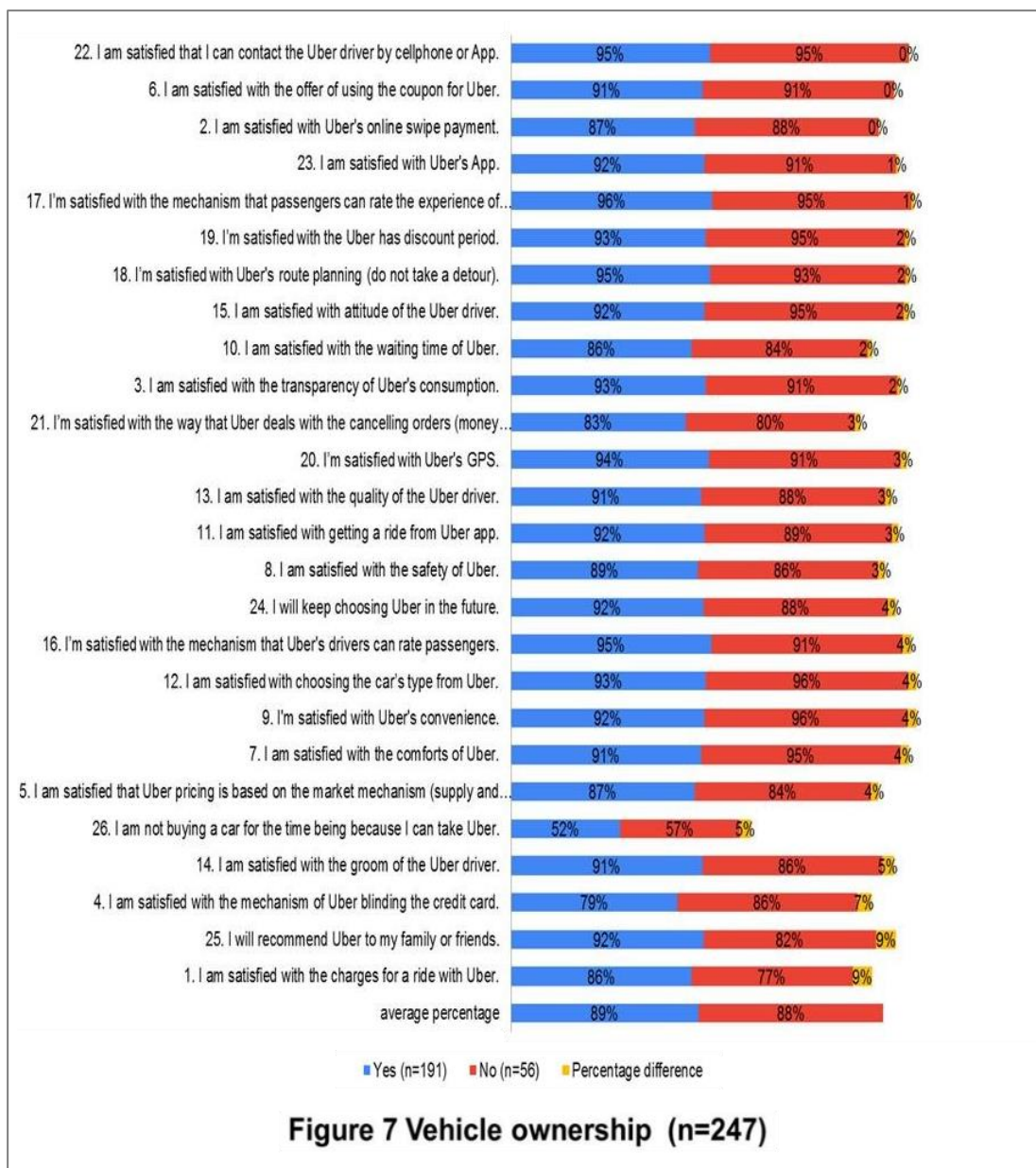
V. Conclusions

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the voices of Taiwanese Uber users and explore their experiences of taking Uber trips. The results obtained from this study indicated that Uber was popular among Taiwanese Uber-users, whether male or female. The two career groups of businesspersons and homemakers tended to have less satisfaction ratings of Uber than the other career groups. In terms of age, young people who were under the age of 21 used Uber most often within the sample group; the two groups aged between 51 and 60 or 61 or older had less Uber satisfaction than the others. In terms of education, the higher the participants' education status was, the higher their satisfaction ratings of Uber were. The participants whose monthly income was less than NT$20,001 were satisfied with Uber, with the average percentage of all the items at 90%. The two groups of participants with vehicle ownership and those without vehicle ownership took the same or similar attitudes toward Uber satisfaction.

The results of the current study might encourage Uber to publicize their services further to people aged 50 or older. Furthermore, Uber drivers may be able to contribute to service improvements.

The sample sizes of the five groups with monthly

income between NT$60,001~ NT$70,000 (n=9), NT$70,001~ NT$80,000 (n=2), NT$80,001~ NT$90,000 (n=3), NT$90,001~ NT$100,000 (n=1), and NT$100,001 or more (n=5) were too small to be represented in the current study. The same thing occurred in the two groups of people aged 51 to 60 (n=6) and over 60 (n=2) as well as in the three groups with educational status of Elementary School (n=6), Junior High School (n=3), and Doctoral Degree (n=3). In the career category, the four groups of business (n=9), technology industry (n=7), homemaker (n=6), and retirement (n=0) were also small. Therefore, obtaining larger sample sizes of the above under-represented groups would add a lot to the relevant research study in the future. Moreover, future studies may focus on learning more about the Uber organization from other perspectives. For example, future research studies may consider the voices of Uber staff, Uber drivers, regular taxi drivers, and Uber-free people. Furthermore, the number of Uber users' experience(s) can be taken as another factor in the future study.

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Appendix: Online questionnaire items

6: Strongly Agree　　5: Agree　　4: Somewhat Agree 3: Somewhat Disagree　　2: Disagree　　1: Strongly Disagree						
1. I am satisfied with the charges for a ride with Uber.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I am satisfied with Uber's online swipe payment.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I am satisfied with the price transparency of Uber's consumption.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am satisfied with the mechanism of Uber credit card data protection.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am satisfied that Uber pricing is based on the market mechanism (supply and demand).	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I am satisfied with the special offers and coupons for Uber rides.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I am satisfied with the comfort of Uber rides.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. I am satisfied with the safety of Uber rides.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I'm satisfied with Uber's convenience.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. I am satisfied with the waiting time for Uber.	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. I am satisfied with getting a ride from Uber App.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. I am satisfied with the choice of car types available from Uber.	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. I am satisfied with the quality of the Uber driver.	6	5	4	3	2	1
14. I am satisfied with the groom of the Uber driver.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. I am satisfied with attitude of the Uber driver.	6	5	4	3	2	1
16. I'm satisfied with the mechanism that Uber's drivers use to rate passengers.	6	5	4	3	2	1
17. I'm satisfied with the mechanism that passengers use to rate the experience of using Uber.	6	5	4	3	2	1
18. I'm satisfied with the Uber driver's route planning (did not take a detour).	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. I'm satisfied with the Uber discount period.	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. I'm satisfied with Uber's GPS.	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. I'm satisfied with the way that Uber deals with the cancelling orders (money refunded to my credit card).	6	5	4	3	2	1
22. I am satisfied that I can contact the Uber driver by cellphone or App.	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. I am satisfied with Uber's App.	6	5	4	3	2	1
24. I will continue to choose Uber in the future.	6	5	4	3	2	1
25. I will recommend Uber to my family or friends.	6	5	4	3	2	1
26. I am not buying a car for the time being because I can take Uber.	6	5	4	3	2	1
27. If you answer this question, this questionnaire will be considered invalid.	6	5	4	3	2	1

台灣優步使用者對優步的看法

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摘　要

　　本研究動機源於這個現況:台灣搭乘優步(Uber)的人口持續成長。因此本研究藉由線上問卷，調查 247 名有搭乘過優步經驗的台灣民眾對於優步的想法(男性=105；女性=142)。研究問題為:從整體受訪者、性別、年齡，職業別、教育程度、個人月收入、與有無個人車輛來看，有搭乘優步經驗的台灣民眾對於優步的看法為何?本研究結果指出: (一)有搭乘優步經驗者對優步持有正面的態度。(二)搭乘優步的女性多於男性，且雙方對於優步的態度都是相同或相似。(三)商業與家管這兩種職業對優步的滿意度比其他職業別低。(四)這兩個年齡層—五十歲至六十歲及六十歲以上—對優步滿意度比其他年齡層低。(五)優步使用者的學歷越高，對於優步的態度傾向越正面。（六）月收入兩萬以下的民眾對於優步的滿意度，各項總平均達到九成。（七）擁有自己車輛的受訪者與沒有車輛的受訪者對優步的態度都是相同或相似。

關鍵字：線上問卷; 優步(Uber); 優步使用者; 台灣

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