



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Exploring service quality and pricing ethics of motorcycle drivers in cabanatuan: Perspectives of student clients

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 24(03), 2389-2396

Publication history: Received on 16 November 2024; revised on 22 December 2024; accepted on 24 December 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.24.3.3956>

Abstract

This study explores the service quality and pricing ethics of motorcycle drivers in Cabanatuan City, focusing on the perceptions of student clients. Motorcycle services, widely used for their affordability and accessibility, often face challenges related to professionalism, safety, and ethical pricing practices. This research evaluated the factors influencing customer satisfaction and trust among students, including safety, professionalism, punctuality, vehicle condition, and pricing transparency. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, collecting data from 35 student respondents through a structured questionnaire disseminated via Google Forms. The results revealed moderate satisfaction with professionalism, punctuality, and vehicle condition but highlighted significant gaps in safety measures, transparency in pricing, and driver behavior. Ethical concerns, including inconsistent fare practices and perceived overcharging, were particularly evident during peak demand periods, undermining student trust. The findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions such as mandatory driver training, standardized pricing mechanisms, and improved service coverage to enhance the reliability and equity of motorcycle services. However, the study's scope was limited to a single semester and a small sample of 35 respondents, restricting the generalizability of the results. Future research should expand the sample size and include broader demographics to comprehensively understand the issues.

Keywords: Accessibility; Customer satisfaction; Pricing ethics; Service quality; SDG 11; Sustainable Cities and Communities

1. Introduction

Service quality and pricing ethics are at risk as students in metropolitan areas like Cabanatuan City use motorbike services more. Motorcycle taxis, or "habal-habal," are popular owing to their cost, accessibility, and ability to handle crowded metropolitan areas. This transit option is crucial to urban mobility in locations where public transport is poor or inefficient (Oluwaseyi et al., 2014; Olvera, 2016). However, significant motorbike service expansion has caused quality and ethical pricing issues. Driver behaviour, vehicle condition, and safety restrictions might affect service quality for students, who utilise these services most (Al-Hasan et al., 2014). Informal motorcycle taxi businesses might lack accountability, resulting in irregular service and passenger safety issues (Olvera et al., 2016). Lack of standardised pricing may also lead to ethical issues, as drivers may abuse students, who have little negotiating power (Nyabuta & Muindi, 2018). Knowing motorcycle taxi dynamics requires knowing service quality and client happiness. According to research, promptness, driver professionalism, and vehicle upkeep greatly affect consumer satisfaction. Motorcycle taxis' punctuality is a major benefit in congested cities. This benefit must be matched with price ethics. Despite offering cheaper costs than typical taxis, motorcycle taxi consumers may feel unfairly priced (Cholily, 2022). Cabanatuan City's socioeconomic background also affects student customers' experiences. Due to financial restrictions, many students use motorbike services as their main form of transportation, making them susceptible to exploitation (Al-Hasan et al., 2014).

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Drivers sometimes operate without regulation due to the informality of these services, which might worsen service quality and ethical pricing concerns (Olvera et al., 2016; Messan, 2013). Motorcycle services are crucial for students in Cabanatuan City, however service quality and price ethics must be addressed. Local authorities and transport organisations must implement regulatory frameworks that guarantee fair pricing and improve service quality to make student transit safer and more dependable.

Service quality and price ethics in motorcycle transportation services, especially in metropolitan areas like Cabanatuan City, substantially impact student consumer happiness and confidence. Students, who use these services for their cost and convenience, form their opinions based on safety, dependability, professionalism, and car condition (Suratriadi, 2023). Students are prone to motorbike travel dangers such accidents and poor vehicle maintenance, making safety vital (Truong et al., 2020). Professional and polite drivers may improve the experience, building trust and promoting recurrent use among students (Marpaung et al., 2023). Pricing ethics are also crucial. Students with limited finances value fare clarity, consistency, and justice (Gunarso, 2022). Students' confidence in motorbike operators and desire to utilise services are affected by ethical pricing. According to Suratriadi (2023) and De Lara and Santos (2024), students are more loyal to service providers when they see pricing as fair and transparent. Dissatisfaction and unwillingness to utilise these services again might result from uneven pricing or hidden surcharges (Alexandro et al., 2022). The socio-economic environment of these services complicates service quality and price ethics. Many metropolitan areas, including Cabanatuan City, have informal motorcycle taxi services that lack regulatory monitoring, resulting in unethical pricing and inconsistent service quality (Ratanawaraha & Chalermpong, 2015). Many students lack the expertise or skills to negotiate fares, leaving them more vulnerable to abuse (Gunarso, 2022). Establishing regulatory frameworks that guarantee fair pricing and improve service quality is vital for dependable student transport. Improving urban student motorcycle transportation requires addressing service quality and price ethics. Service providers may improve consumer happiness and trust by prioritising safety, dependability, professionalism, and ethical pricing, creating a more sustainable and user-friendly transportation system.

The literature on student motorbike servicing quality and cost is lacking. Prior studies have exhaustively analysed public and private transportation networks, but they have not fully addressed students' special concerns, who frequently require dependable and cheap transit for school. This control is crucial in metropolitan places like Cabanatuan City, where the absence of official regulation and standardisation in motorcycle services worsens service quality and price ethics (Yarmen & Sumaedi, 2016). Transportation service quality includes safety, dependability, professionalism, and vehicle condition. These aspects are important for students who value reliable and safe mobility (Yarmen & Sumaedi, 2016). Maintaining excellent service standards is important because positive service impressions improve customer loyalty and referrals (Alwi et al., 2017). However, informal motorbike services typically have uneven procedures, which may lower service quality and expose students to poor experiences (Stanforth & Hauck, 2010). Pricing ethics also strongly influence students' motorbike service views. For students on restricted budgets, fare transparency, consistency, and fairness are crucial ethical issues (Délamou et al., 2020). Drivers may overcharge students due to their perceived vulnerability in the absence of standardised pricing procedures (Klapita et al., 2020). Ethical pricing techniques increase customer trust and loyalty (Pasharibu et al., 2018). Thus, resolving these ethical issues is crucial to building confidence between service providers and student consumers. Motorcycle services are further complicated by Cabanatuan City's socioeconomic backdrop. Informally operated transport networks sometimes lack accountability and control, which may lead to safety and ethical pricing difficulties (Ratanawaraha & Chalermpong, 2015; Santos 2023). As kids go through school, they require dependable, affordable transit, emphasising the need for specialised study.

Student consumers' perceptions of Cabanatuan City motorcycle drivers' service quality and price ethics were addressed by the research. It detailed how this demographic's consumer satisfaction and trust were affected. The study helped to urban transport service improvement by assessing students' impressions of safety, professionalism, timeliness, vehicle condition, and pricing methods. The research was unique in its focus on marginalised students and its proposal for a strategic plan suited to their needs. The research suggested ways to improve service quality and pricing ethics by describing student perspectives and problems. These results promoted a sustainable and fair transit system to build student client trust and satisfaction.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to explore the service quality and pricing ethics of motorcycle drivers in Cabanatuan City from the perspective of student clients studying in schools within the city. The design was chosen to provide an accurate description and interpretation of the current conditions and challenges faced by students who rely on motorcycle transportation for their daily commute to school. The study involved 35 respondents, all students enrolled in educational institutions located in Cabanatuan City. These respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method, with participation limited to those willing to respond to an online

questionnaire disseminated via Google Forms. To ensure ethical compliance, an informed consent form was embedded at the beginning of the Google Form. Respondents were required to acknowledge and agree to the terms before proceeding with the questionnaire, safeguarding their autonomy and data privacy. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire specifically designed to address the study's objectives and research questions. The questionnaire consisted of four sections. The first section focused on gathering demographic data, such as age, gender, educational level, and the frequency of using motorcycle services. The second section assessed students' perceptions of service quality, examining dimensions such as safety and security, professionalism and courtesy, punctuality and availability, and the condition of the vehicles used. The third section delved into ethical concerns regarding pricing practices, including fare consistency, transparency, perceived overcharging, and fairness. The final section addressed challenges faced by student clients, such as driver behavior, service availability, and pricing transparency. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Experts checked content relevance and clarity to guarantee questionnaire reliability and validity. A high Cronbach's alpha score indicates the tool's dependability after a 20-student pilot test. Exclusively using Google Forms made data collecting more convenient and accessible while eliminating physical encounters. Student organizations and social media outlets targeting Cabanatuan City students received the form link. These data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The demographic characteristics of respondents were described using frequency and percentage distributions. They assessed service quality and price ethics using means and standard deviations. Where relevant, thematic analysis identified respondents' common issues and experiences. This study followed ethical research norms. The research was voluntary, and participants were informed of its objective and assured anonymity and confidentiality. Securely stored data were utilized for scholarly reasons. The research focused on Cabanatuan City schoolchildren. This emphasis produced useful insights. However, motorcycle drivers and municipal officials' viewpoints were not included. Future study may add their perspectives to enhance the topic's comprehension.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 Profile of the Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-25	28	80%
	26-35	6	17%
	below 18	1	3%
	Total	35	100%
Gender	Female	20	57%
	Male	14	40%
	Prefer not to say	1	3%
	Total	35	100%
Educational Level Distribution	College	27	77%
	Graduate Studies	4	11%
	High School	4	11%
	Total	35	100%
Frequency of Using Motorcycle Services	Daily	12	34%
	Rarely	9	26%
	2-3 times a week	9	26%
	Weekly	5	14%
	Total	35	100%

The demographic data provide a detailed overview of the respondents' characteristics. A significant majority, 80%, of the respondents were aged between 18 and 25 years, representing the primary age group of student clients. Those aged 26-35 comprised 17%, while only 3% were below 18, indicating that young adult students predominantly utilize motorcycle services. In terms of gender, 57% of respondents were female, 40% were male, and 3% preferred not to disclose their gender. This slight majority of female users may reflect a gendered preference for motorcycle services, potentially driven by convenience or other practical considerations specific to female commuters. The respondents' educational levels highlight the predominance of college students, who accounted for 77% of the total sample. Graduate and high school students each represented 11%, signifying that college-level individuals are the primary users of these services, likely due to the demands of daily commuting within an urban setting. Regarding the frequency of motorcycle service usage, 34% of respondents reported daily use, showcasing a strong reliance on this mode of transportation. Those who used the services either rarely or 2-3 times per week each accounted for 26%, while 14% used them weekly. This distribution suggests that while many students depend heavily on motorcycle services for regular commuting, a notable portion utilizes them sporadically, perhaps as a supplementary transport option.

3.2. Perceptions of Service Quality

The research shows that student clientele in Cabanatuan City is reasonably satisfied with motorbike drivers' safety and security. Students' motorbike safety perceptions averaged 2.63, indicating moderate agreement. Driver safety prioritization rated somewhat higher, with an average mean of 2.83, indicating excellent but inconsistent effort. However, traffic rule compliance had a mean of 2.60, showing variability and raising road safety issues. Security of items during rides had the lowest average mean rating of 2.51, indicating trust difficulties that may dissuade students from utilizing these services. Most students felt treated well by drivers, with an average mean of 2.86 for respect and kindness. The mean score for communication clarity, civility, and interpersonal comfort was 2.77, indicating adequate but not remarkable encounters. Professional behavior consistency had a somewhat lower mean of 2.63, showing drivers' behavior may vary, affecting students' perception of professionalism. The statistics show modest timeliness and availability satisfaction. The mean score for drivers' prompt appearances was 2.74, while motorbike services' availability was 2.80, suggesting that students can usually get them. The dependability of punctuality was 2.69, indicating space for improvement. The simplicity of reserving rides averaged 2.74, suggesting that although the procedure is typically straightforward, logistical issues at busy hours or in some places may impede the experience. The vehicle condition dimension showed that students consider bikes adequate but not ideal. Motorcycle maintenance and cleanliness averaged 2.77, while vehicle dependability was 2.80, indicating modest satisfaction. However, the cars' comfort score was 2.69, suggesting design or maintenance issues. Safety equipment, such as helmets, scored the lowest in this category, with an average mean of 2.57, indicating a major opportunity for passenger safety improvement.

This implies that while students are moderately satisfied with motorcycle services regarding professionalism, punctuality, and vehicle condition, there are significant gaps in safety, consistency, and the provision of necessary equipment. These findings underscore the importance of developing a strategic plan to address these issues. Efforts should focus on enhancing driver training for professionalism and safety, ensuring the consistent provision of safety equipment, and implementing guidelines to standardize punctuality and availability. Addressing these gaps would not only improve the quality of motorcycle services but also build trust and satisfaction among student clients, ensuring their continued reliance on these services for their transportation needs.

3.3. Ethical Concerns on Pricing Practices

Exploring ethical issues about motorcycle drivers' pricing methods in Cabanatuan City showed student customers' perspectives. The average mean for this dimension was 2.77, showing modest agreement with price ethics. This shows that although some price decisions are fair and open, others are concerning. In the fare consistency category, "Fares are reasonable based on the distance travelled" averaged 2.31, indicating poor satisfaction. This shows that students wonder if their ticket matches the distance travelled, emphasizing pricing anomalies. Pricing transparency, a key trust component, had varied effects. For instance, "Drivers clearly state the fare before the ride begins" got 2.51, suggesting that some drivers do this but not all. The indication "I am informed about additional charges in advance" had a mean of 2.46, indicating space for improvement in informing students of extra expenses. "Fare rates are communicated to me" scored 2.57, indicating incremental development, while "Drivers avoid hidden charges or unclear fare calculations" scored 2.54, indicating reasonable transparency but ongoing concerns with ambiguous pricing. With higher averages, signs in this area raised concerns about overcharging. The mean for "Overcharging occurs more often during peak hours or bad weather" was 3.29, indicating significant agreement that this problem is widespread. "I have experienced being charged more than usual for the same route" and "Drivers sometimes demand higher fares without justification" scored over 3.30, indicating regular discontent with unanticipated fare spikes. These data show that high-demand opportunistic pricing hurts students' trust and experience. Pricing fairness, which assesses fare systems' ethical base, showed middling judgments. The phrase "I believe that fare rates are generally fair and reasonable" got 2.57, indicating

mixed opinions on pricing. The indicators "Drivers consider the affordability of their clients" and "I rarely feel unfairly treated regarding fare rates" scored 2.34 and 2.57, respectively, demonstrating that students believe drivers do not prioritize affordability and justice. However, "Fair pricing encourages me to continue using motorbike services" had a slightly higher mean of 2.83, demonstrating that fairness still motivates student customers.

The findings highlight areas for improvement in fare consistency, transparency, and fairness. Students perceive significant issues with overcharging during peak periods and inconsistencies in pricing communication, which undermine their trust in motorcycle services. Addressing these concerns through standardized pricing policies, improved communication, and mechanisms to prevent opportunistic fare hikes would greatly enhance the ethical standing of motorcycle services in Cabanatuan City. This would foster trust and encourage continued patronage among student clients, ensuring a more equitable and reliable transportation system.

3.4. Challenges in Receiving Quality Service

The analysis of challenges in receiving quality service and fair pricing among motorcycle drivers in Cabanatuan City revealed recurring themes that impact the satisfaction and trust of student clients. The responses identified multiple challenges, with several repeatedly cited issues indicating widespread dissatisfaction in specific service delivery areas.

One prominent challenge the respondents noted was motorcycle drivers' behavior and professionalism. Many students reported encountering rude or unprofessional behavior, with some drivers described as uncooperative or argumentative. This behavior discouraged clients from using their services again, emphasizing the negative impact of driver attitude on customer retention. The lack of consistent professional conduct affected the immediate riding experience and raised broader concerns about the reliability and trustworthiness of the service.

Another significant issue highlighted was the lack of transparency in pricing. A large proportion of respondents noted that fare rates were not always clear before the ride began. Additionally, many experienced variabilities in pricing among different drivers and perceived hidden charges or unclear fare calculations. These inconsistencies diminished trust in the service, making students feel uncertain and dissatisfied with their transactions. This concern was compounded during peak hours or in high-demand situations, where overcharging was frequently reported, further eroding client confidence.

Accessibility and availability of services also emerged as critical challenges. Students had difficulty securing motorcycle rides during peak hours and reported that services were often unavailable when needed. In certain areas, motorcycle services were entirely inaccessible, highlighting gaps in service coverage that significantly inconvenienced users. For students who rely on timely transportation for academic obligations, these issues pose serious disruptions.

The findings reveal that multiple dimensions of service delivery require urgent attention. Addressing driver behavior through training and implementing professional standards could significantly improve the client experience. Additionally, enforcing transparent pricing mechanisms, such as fare cards or upfront communication about rates, would alleviate concerns about inconsistency and hidden charges. Expanding service coverage and ensuring availability during peak hours would further address accessibility issues, providing students with a more reliable and equitable transportation option.

These recurring challenges underscore the importance of developing targeted strategies to improve service quality and pricing ethics. By addressing these issues holistically, motorcycle services in Cabanatuan City could enhance trust and satisfaction among student clients, ensuring a more sustainable and dependable mode of transportation for the community.

3.5. Propose Development Plan

The proposed strategic development plan addresses the critical issues of service quality and pricing ethics among motorcycle services in Cabanatuan City. The priority is driver training and professionalism enhancement, including mandatory training programs focusing on respect, safety compliance, and conflict resolution to improve driver-client interactions and reduce uncooperative behavior. The second key area is transparent pricing mechanisms to address fare inconsistencies. This includes implementing standardized fare cards, upfront communication of rates, and clear guidelines for adjustments during peak hours to eliminate hidden charges and prevent overcharging. Enhancing passenger safety is another critical focus. Drivers must provide helmets meeting safety standards, undergo regular vehicle inspections, and obtain proper certification to ensure accountability and reliability. The plan also highlights the expansion of service coverage and availability by optimizing routes, introducing driver incentives for underserved areas, and developing a mobile booking system to reduce wait times and enhance accessibility. To ensure compliance,

regulatory oversight is necessary. Drivers must register with a governing body, and a monitoring system will enable clients to report issues, while regular audits and penalties will enforce standards. Educational campaigns targeting both drivers and passengers will raise awareness of standardized pricing and safety protocols, empowering students and fostering mutual trust. Finally, continuous evaluation through periodic surveys and monitoring of performance metrics like punctuality, pricing transparency, and professionalism will refine strategies and address emerging challenges. Addressing inconsistent pricing, unprofessional behavior, and safety concerns, this plan ensures motorcycle services become more ethical, reliable, and student-friendly, promoting a sustainable and equitable transportation system in Cabanatuan City.

4. Conclusion

This study highlighted critical issues in the service quality and pricing ethics of motorcycle services in Cabanatuan City from the perspective of student clients. The findings underscore that while there is moderate satisfaction in terms of professionalism; punctuality, and vehicle condition, significant gaps remain in safety measures, pricing transparency, and driver behavior. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving trust and satisfaction among student clients, particularly in enhancing their daily transportation experience. The study's significant contribution lies in its identification of key problem areas and its focus on student clients as a vulnerable demographic in transportation systems. By providing actionable recommendations, such as mandatory driver training, transparent pricing mechanisms, and expanded service coverage, the research offers a foundation for improving the reliability and equity of motorcycle services. These insights could serve as a guide for local policymakers, transport organizations, and other stakeholders in developing interventions that enhance service quality while addressing ethical concerns in pricing.

However, this study acknowledges several limitations. Conducted over one semester and with only 35 respondents, the findings are not representative of the broader population. The reliance on a convenience sampling method also limits the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the scope of the study was confined to student clients in Cabanatuan City, excluding perspectives from other stakeholders, such as motorcycle drivers, regulatory authorities, and non-student users, which could provide a more holistic understanding of the issues. Future research should consider expanding the sample size, including a broader demographic and incorporating longitudinal data to assess changes over time.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by student clients and offers a framework for addressing these issues. By implementing the proposed strategies, motorcycle services in Cabanatuan City can move toward a safer, more ethical, and student-friendly transportation environment.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The researchers express sincere gratitude to the student respondents from Cabanatuan City who shared their experiences, providing the foundation for this study. Special thanks are extended to the faculty, peers, and institution administrators who supported the research process. Despite its limitations, this study was made possible through the collective effort of all contributors.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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