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The Socio-Economic Profile and Challenges on Drivers of Bicycle with Side Car in Bais City: Implications for Policy and Support

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ABSTRACT

The bicycle with a sidecar, called "potpot" locally, is an important part of Bais City's transportation. This study looks at the social and economic background and problems of potpot drivers from 2020 to 2025 to guide policy and support. Using a standard survey method, data were collected from 63 drivers (92.65% response rate) through questionnaires and interviews, and a simple statistical analysis was used. The results show that most drivers are men (87.3%) and middle-aged, especially those aged 41-50 (19.05%). Most are married (65.08%) and have mostly elementary-level education (69.84%). Economically, the sector is very unstable; 53.97% of drivers earn a low monthly income of ₱4,000–₱5,000. A key finding is that most drivers (88.89%) rent their vehicles, which keeps them financially dependent. Also, many drivers suffer from long-term health problems, especially high blood pressure (60.32%), and have the added responsibility of supporting families, often with three or more children. The study finds that the "potpot" sector is made up of experienced, long-time workers who do not own their main work equipment and face serious health and money problems. Therefore, it is suggested that local governments create "Rent-to-Own" small loan programs to help drivers own their vehicles and provide on-site heart health check-ups. Laws supporting pension-like social security and financial education programs suited to drivers' education levels are also needed. These steps aim to help drivers move from financial trouble to long-term security and social protection.

Keywords: *Potpot, Socio-Economic Profile, Asset Insecurity, Occupational Health, Policy Intervention*

INTRODUCTION

Bicycles, locally known as “potpot,” “pedecab,” or “trisikad,” are integral to the public transportation landscape in the Philippines. While studies focusing solely on bicycle drivers with sidecars are limited, existing research on tricycle drivers provides valuable insights into their experiences, challenges, and contributions. In the Philippine context, these modes are considered essential for short-distance travel and last-mile connectivity (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2012).

This research aims to determine the socio-economic profile and challenges faced by drivers of bicycles with sidecars in Bais City from 2020 to 2025, with implications for policy and support.

The significance of this study lies in its demonstration of how data science, innovative research, and collaborative online learning can address real-life community issues. Utilizing actual data from potpot drivers offers a practical example for teaching data analysis, thereby supporting the development of students' skills in interpreting and applying statistical information.

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Additionally, the study promotes innovative and interdisciplinary research by examining an underexplored sector and encouraging learners to integrate social, economic, and health concepts in addressing real-world challenges. The findings may be disseminated through collaborative online platforms, facilitating interactive learning, knowledge exchange, and community-based discussions.

In summary, this study contributes to the development of data-literate, research-oriented, and socially aware learners, thereby supporting a more responsive and future-ready educational system.

METHODS

The study sought to examine the socio-economic profile of drivers of bicycles with sidecars in Bais City, Negros Oriental. It utilized the normative survey method of research with the questionnaire and interview as the accompanying techniques in gathering the needed data.

A total of 63 drivers on bicycles with a sidecar in Bais City, out of 68, or 92.65%, readily and immediately returned the research instruments. Inasmuch as the study is fact-finding, which afforded adequate interpretations, the normative survey method of research was used with the questionnaire and interview as the accompanying techniques in gathering the needed data. After all the questionnaires are retrieved, the respondents' responses are entered into the master data sheet. Tabulation was immediately conducted to include all the desired responses necessary for solving the research problems. Correspondingly, the frequency counts were converted into percentages. Such are critically and descriptively analyzed and interpreted. Below is the statistical formula being used:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

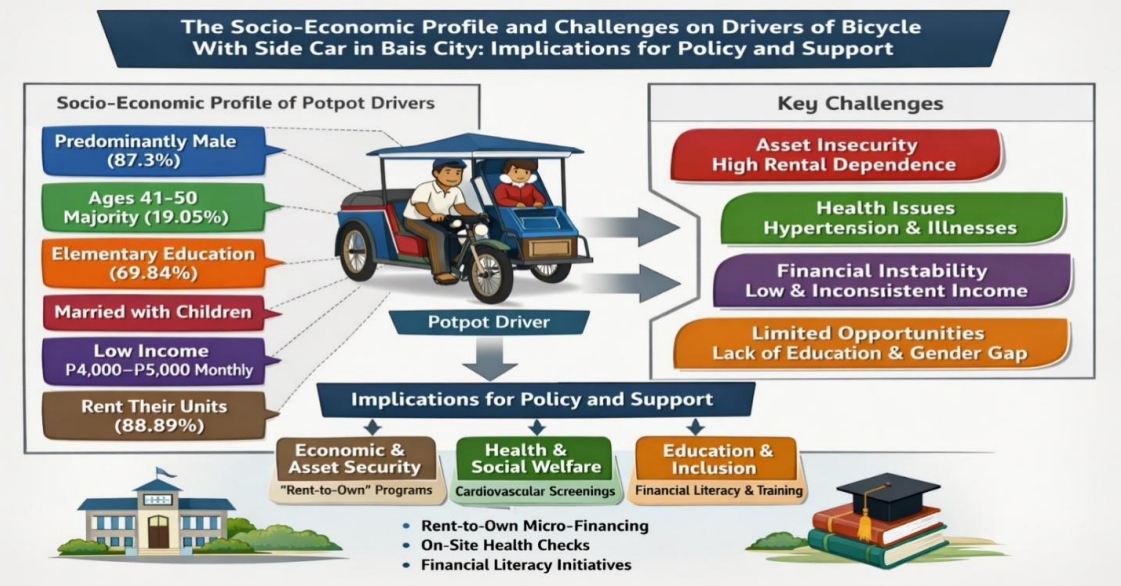
Where:

P percentage

f= frequency

n = total frequency

Theoretical Framework



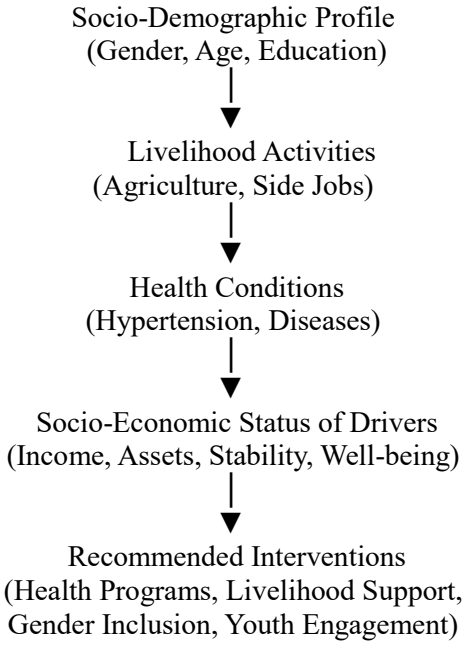
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This study is anchored on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework and Human Capital Theory, which explain that an individual's socio-economic characteristics influence their capacity to sustain income and manage life challenges. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) explains that people's ability to maintain their livelihoods depends on access to key assets such as human, social, financial, physical, and natural capital, which are influenced by vulnerability contexts and institutional processes (Chambers & Conway, 1992; DFID, 1999).

Further, informal transport workers are often characterized by low educational attainment and limited access to formal employment, which confines them to labor-intensive and low-paying occupations (Becker, 1964). Health studies also indicate that drivers are at risk of chronic illnesses such as hypertension and musculoskeletal disorders due to long working hours, exposure to traffic pollution, and lack of regular medical care (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011).

In this study, the socio-economic profile of potpot drivers—such as age, gender, education, income, work experience, and family size—serves as the independent variables that shape their access to resources and opportunities. These factors contribute to key challenges, including asset insecurity, low income, and health risks, which act as intervening variables affecting their overall socio-economic stability and quality of life (dependent variable). Empirical studies support these frameworks by showing that informal transport workers, such as tricycle drivers, often experience unstable income, lack of asset ownership, and limited access to financial services, which contribute to persistent poverty and vulnerability (Cervero, 2000; Gwilliam, 2005). The framework further assumes that appropriate policy interventions, such as rent-to-own programs, health services, and financial literacy training, can mitigate these challenges and improve the drivers' economic condition and well-being.

Conceptual Framework Diagram



The framework shows that the drivers' background (who they are), their work (how they earn), and their health (physical condition) all affect their economic situation and quality of life. Because many face low income and health issues, interventions such as financial support, healthcare, and training programs are necessary to improve their overall well-being.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the 63 potpot drivers surveyed, 55 (87.3%) are male and 8 (12.7%) are female, demonstrating a pronounced gender imbalance within the sector. The data indicate that potpot driving is predominantly a male occupation, with limited female participation, potentially influenced by social, cultural, economic, or safety-related factors. These findings underscore the importance of promoting gender inclusion to achieve a more balanced workforce.

Respondents are distributed across seven age groups, with the largest proportion aged 46–50 (19.05%), followed by those aged 41–45 (15.87%). The smallest group is 18–25 (11.11%). These results indicate that potpot driving is primarily undertaken by middle-aged individuals, suggesting the occupation is more prevalent among experienced adults, with limited entry by younger individuals.

Poultry is the most common activity (73.02%), followed by fishing (50.79%), piggery (44.44%), and farming (41.27%). Fewer respondents participate in sewing (17.46%), baking (14.29%), and sari-sari store operations (11.11%). Overall, respondents are primarily engaged in agriculture and livestock-based livelihoods, with poultry as the dominant source of income.

Hypertension is the most common health condition (60.32%), followed by diabetes and arthritis (17.46% each), osteoporosis (14.29%), heart disease (12.70%), cataract (9.52%), and prostate problems (6.35%). Overall, the findings indicate that non-communicable diseases, particularly cardiovascular-related conditions, are most prevalent among respondents, emphasizing the need for regular health monitoring and preventive care.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, most potpot drivers are men, middle-aged, and married. They usually have low levels of education but extensive driving experience. Most earn a modest income of around ₱4,000 to ₱5,000 per month and rely on rented vehicles, which shows they have few assets and face financial insecurity.

Many drivers also work in agriculture or raise livestock to earn extra income. They are active in their communities and families, and most belong to mainstream Christian groups.

Many drivers have health problems, especially high blood pressure, which is common in the group. While they have strong experience and social connections, they struggle with steady income, owning assets, and health issues. This shows there is a need for programs that support their livelihoods, finances, and health.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, here are some recommendations:

Gender Inclusion: Create programs that encourage more women to become potpot drivers to help balance the gender gap in the sector.

Livelihood and Financial Support: Offer rent-to-own options, microloans, and livelihood programs to help drivers own their vehicles and achieve more stable incomes.

Education and Skills Training: Provide drivers with training in managing money, saving, and acquiring new skills for other jobs.

Health Interventions: Improve access to regular check-ups, health insurance, and wellness programs, especially for high blood pressure and other common diseases.

Youth Engagement: Attract younger people to the sector by offering training and support to ensure the workforce remains strong in the future.

Social Protection Programs: Set up local government support to help drivers with low incomes, few assets, and little social protection.

In summary, policies that support better livelihoods, health care, and financial skills are needed to improve the lives and economic situation of potpot drivers.

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