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Ride-Hailing vs. Traditional Commute: Generational Perspectives on Mobility Preferences and Their Implications for Transport Marketing Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Urban transportation systems continue to evolve as commuters are presented with expanding mobility options, including app-based ride-hailing services and conventional public transportation. This study examined and compared the transportation preferences of Generation Z and Millennial commuters in Metro Manila, particularly their inclination toward traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. A quantitative descriptive-comparative research design was employed using a structured Google Forms survey. A total of 257 valid responses were analyzed, consisting of 210 Generation Z commuters and 47 Millennial commuters who regularly travelled within Metro Manila. The data were treated using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, and multiple linear regression analysis through SPSS. Results showed no statistically significant difference between Generation Z and Millennials in their preference for traditional transportation ($p = 0.180$) and ride-hailing services ($p = 0.186$). However, service-related factors shaped transportation choices. Accessibility and comfort significantly predicted traditional transportation preference, while accessibility, reliability, and comfort significantly predicted ride-hailing service preference, with accessibility emerging as the strongest predictor in both models. The findings indicate that commuter preferences are influenced more by practical service attributes than by generational classification. The study recommends that transport providers, marketers, and policymakers improve accessibility, reliability, comfort, safety communication, and integrated mobility services to respond to the needs of urban commuters.

Keywords: *ride-hailing services, traditional transportation, transportation services, Generation Z, Millennials, Metro Manila*

INTRODUCTION

Transportation remains a crucial part of Filipino life, particularly in highly urbanized locations such as Metro Manila, were traffic congestion and diverse mobility options shape daily commuting behavior. With the rise of ride-hailing services such as Grab, Angkas, JoyRide, and Move It, commuters have gained alternatives to traditional modes of transport such as jeepneys, buses, tricycles, and rail systems. These choices are not only matters of convenience and affordability but are also linked to lifestyle, technology adoption, and consumer behavior in the transportation sector.

Traditional commuting remains widely used because of its affordability and accessibility, while ride-hailing services offer digital booking, route tracking, and perceived comfort. However, existing studies often examine ride-hailing adoption or commuter behavior without directly comparing the mobility preferences of Generation Z and

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Millennials. This gap limits the ability of transportation providers, marketers, and policymakers to determine whether generational differences should guide service design and promotional strategies.

This study compared the transportation preferences of Generation Z and Millennials in Metro Manila and identified the factors that influence their choices between traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. Specifically, it examined cost, convenience, safety and security, reliability, accessibility, comfort, and technology usability. The findings provide evidence that may help ride-hailing companies, public transport operators, government agencies, and marketing professionals design more responsive, commuter-centered transportation strategies.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation: Theory of Planned Behavior

This study was anchored on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains behavioral intention through attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Applied to commuting, favorable attitudes toward affordability, safety, convenience, and comfort may encourage commuters to prefer a specific mode. Subjective norms, including peer influence and urban mobility trends, may also affect decisions, while perceived behavioral control reflects commuters' ability to access and pay for available transport options.

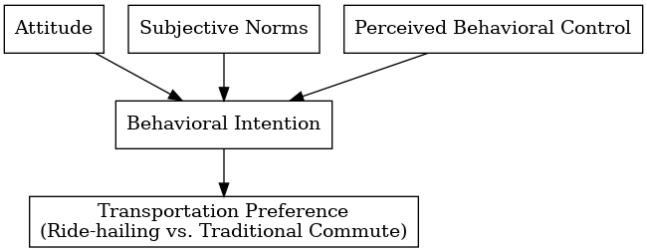

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior.

Ride-Hailing Services and Transportation Preference

Ride-hailing services have become an important component of modern urban transportation. App-based transport network services allow users to request rides through mobile applications, offering flexible and on-demand mobility. Ali et al. (2022) emphasized that ride-hailing platforms have transformed urban travel by providing smartphone-enabled transportation alternatives. In developing countries, commuters evaluate transport options based on cost, convenience, safety, and accessibility before choosing a mode (Ahmad & Anwar, 2023).

In the Philippines, ride-hailing applications have gained popularity in urban areas where demand for efficient mobility is high. Gumasing et al. (2023) found that users appreciated the convenience, accessibility, real-time driver tracking, and cashless payment features of Grab, Angkas, and JoyRide. Metro Manila's congested and high-demand transportation environment further influences commuter choice (Asian Transport Observatory, 2024).

Factors Influencing Transportation Preferences

Transportation preference is shaped by convenience, affordability, safety and security, comfort, reliability, accessibility, and technology usability. Convenience involves ease of access, reduced waiting time, and simplified booking processes. Cueto et al. (2024) reported that ride-hailing services improve convenience by allowing commuters to request rides through mobile applications, while Nguyen et al. (2023) emphasized the role of perceived usefulness and ease of use in Southeast Asian ride-hailing adoption.

Cost remains an important determinant of transport choice. Commuters compare fare levels, perceived value, discounts, and surge pricing when choosing between traditional and ride-hailing options (Ahmad & Anwar, 2023; Ali et al., 2022). Safety and security also influence acceptance and trust. Rahman and Hasan (2022) noted

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that perceived safety affects ride-sharing acceptance, while Ocampo and Reyes (2023) emphasized the role of passenger security and driver accountability in Metro Manila.

Comfort and reliability are similarly important. Commuters evaluate seating, cleanliness, crowding, vehicle condition, and predictability of arrival times when selecting transportation modes (Garcia & Torres, 2023; Rahman et al., 2021). Accessibility, or the ease with which commuters can reach or book transportation, is particularly important in urban areas where service availability varies by location (Lim & Peralta, 2022). Technology usability also enhances ride-hailing experience when applications are easy to navigate, responsive, and efficient (Gumasing et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2022).

Generational Differences in Mobility Preference

Generation Z and Millennials grew up in different technological and social contexts, which may shape their transportation preferences. Generation Z is often described as digitally native, while Millennials experienced the transition from traditional to digital technologies. Younger users are generally comfortable navigating mobile applications and digital payment systems, which may increase acceptance of ride-hailing services (Ali et al., 2022; Francisco & Bautista, 2025).

Despite these differences, both generational groups face similar urban mobility problems, including traffic congestion, limited parking, safety concerns, cost sensitivity, and time constraints. These practical conditions may weigh more heavily than age category alone in determining transport choice. Thus, the present study examined whether significant differences exist between Generation Z and Millennials and whether service factors better explain their mobility preferences.

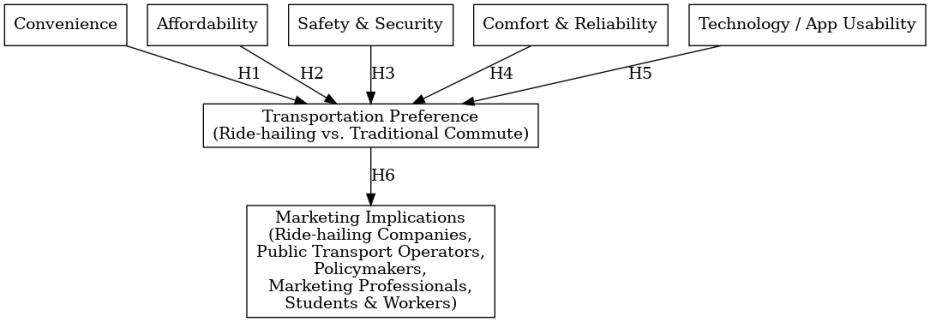

Figure 2. *Conceptual framework of the study.*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design. The descriptive component summarized respondents' transportation preferences in terms of cost, convenience, safety and security, reliability, accessibility, comfort, and ride-hailing application usability. The comparative component determined whether Generation Z and Millennials differed significantly in their preference for traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. The study was non-experimental because no variables were manipulated; instead, existing commuting perceptions and behaviors were measured.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Metro Manila, Philippines, a highly urbanized region characterized by dense population, traffic congestion, and diverse mobility options. The area includes traditional transport modes such as jeepneys, buses, tricycles, MRT, and LRT, as well as ride-hailing services such as Grab, Angkas, JoyRide, and

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Move It. This setting was appropriate for examining commuter preferences because both traditional and app-based transportation options are widely available.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The target population consisted of Generation Z and Millennial commuters who resided in or regularly travelled within Metro Manila. Generation Z respondents were defined as individuals aged 18-25, while Millennials were defined as individuals aged 26-41. Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility and time constraints. Although the initial target was 400 respondents, the researchers obtained 257 valid responses, consisting of 210 Generation Z commuters and 47 Millennials. Participants were included if they belonged to either generational group, regularly commuted within Metro Manila, had experience using traditional transportation or ride-hailing services, and voluntarily completed the survey.

Research Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire was used as the primary instrument. The questionnaire included items on respondents' generational classification and transportation preferences. It measured perceptions of traditional transportation and ride-hailing services across cost, convenience, safety and security, reliability, accessibility, comfort, and technology or application usability. Responses were gathered using a Likert scale indicating level of agreement with each statement.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through Google Forms distributed online through digital platforms. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. After the data collection period, the researchers screened the responses and retained only complete and valid questionnaires for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize transportation preferences. An independent samples t-test determined whether Generation Z and Millennials differed significantly in transportation preferences. Multiple linear regression analysis identified the factors that predicted preference for traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. Results were interpreted at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

The study observed voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible handling of data. Respondents were not required to disclose unnecessary personal identifiers, and all responses were used only for academic research purposes. The online survey format allowed respondents to participate without coercion and to discontinue answering at any time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Commuting Preferences of Generation Z and Millennials

Table 1. *Commuting Preferences of Generation Z and Millennials in Terms of Cost, Convenience, Safety, Reliability, Accessibility, Comfort, and Technology Usability*

Variable	Generation	n	M	SD
Convenience (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	2.82	0.58
	Millennials	47	2.74	0.55
Convenience (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.18	0.61
	Millennials	47	3.16	0.56

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Cost (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	3.28	0.61
	Millennials	47	3.18	0.49
Cost (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.02	0.55
	Millennials	47	3.00	0.45
Safety (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	2.89	0.55
	Millennials	47	2.81	0.43
Safety (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	2.92	0.57
	Millennials	47	3.13	0.89
Comfort (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	2.73	0.65
	Millennials	47	2.68	0.50
Comfort (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.15	0.58
	Millennials	47	3.22	0.47
Reliability (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	2.72	0.59
	Millennials	47	2.66	0.46
Reliability (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.08	0.52
	Millennials	47	3.07	0.42
Accessibility (Traditional)	Gen Z	210	3.05	0.64
	Millennials	47	2.96	0.46
Accessibility (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.09	0.59
	Millennials	47	3.03	0.48
Technology/App Usability (Ride-hailing)	Gen Z	210	3.19	0.57
	Millennials	47	3.13	0.45

Table 1 shows that both Generation Z and Millennials rated ride-hailing services higher than traditional transportation in convenience, comfort, reliability, and accessibility. For example, Generation Z rated ride-hailing convenience higher (M = 3.18) than traditional convenience (M = 2.82), while Millennials showed the same pattern (M = 3.16 versus M = 2.74). This indicates that ride-hailing services are perceived as more convenient by both groups.

In terms of cost, traditional transportation received higher ratings than ride-hailing services. Generation Z rated traditional transportation cost at 3.28 compared with 3.02 for ride-hailing, while Millennials rated traditional cost at 3.18 compared with 3.00 for ride-hailing. This suggests that traditional transportation is perceived as more affordable. However, ride-hailing was rated higher for comfort and reliability, indicating that commuters may view it as a better option when convenience, personal space, and predictable service are prioritized.

Technology or app usability was also rated highly by both generations, with Generation Z reporting a mean of 3.19 and Millennials a mean of 3.13. This finding supports the literature that digital usability strengthens ride-hailing adoption when applications are easy to navigate and payments or bookings are convenient (Gumasing et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2022

Differences in Transportation Preferences by Generation

Table 2. *Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Generation Z and Millennials Transportation Preferences*

Transportation Preference	Generation	n	M	SD	t	df	p

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Traditional Transportation	Generation Z	210	2.92	0.63	1.34	255	0.180
	Millennials	47	2.79	0.53			
Ride-Hailing Services	Generation Z	210	2.99	0.60	-1.33	255	0.186
	Millennials	47	3.11	0.47			

The independent samples t-test showed no statistically significant difference between Generation Z and Millennials in their preference for traditional transportation ($t = 1.34$, $p = 0.180$). Although Generation Z had a slightly higher mean score ($M = 2.92$) than Millennials ($M = 2.79$), the difference was not statistically meaningful. Similarly, ride-hailing preference did not differ significantly between the two groups ($t = -1.33$, $p = 0.186$). Millennials obtained a slightly higher mean ($M = 3.11$) than Generation Z ($M = 2.99$), but the difference did not reach significance.

These findings indicate that generational classification alone does not strongly shape transport preference in Metro Manila. Instead, both groups appear to respond similarly to the practical realities of urban commuting. This supports the interpretation that service-related considerations such as cost, accessibility, reliability, and comfort may have stronger explanatory value than age category.

Predictors of Traditional Transportation Preference

Table 3. *Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Traditional Transportation Preference*

Predictor	B	SE	beta	t	p	Significance
Constant	0.384	0.182	—	2.11	0.036	Significant
Convenience (Traditional)	0.139	0.071	0.130	1.96	0.051	Not Significant
Cost (Traditional)	0.060	0.063	0.057	0.95	0.344	Not Significant
Safety (Traditional)	-0.009	0.082	-0.008	-0.11	0.912	Not Significant
Comfort (Traditional)	0.135	0.067	0.136	2.02	0.045*	Significant
Reliability (Traditional)	0.145	0.079	0.133	1.83	0.069	Not Significant
Accessibility (Traditional)	0.394	0.067	0.392	5.84	< .001***	Significant

The regression model for traditional transportation preference showed that accessibility and comfort were significant predictors. Accessibility had the strongest standardized beta coefficient (beta = 0.392, $p < .001$), indicating that ease of reaching or using traditional transportation is a major factor in commuter preference. Comfort was also significant (beta = 0.136, $p = 0.045$), suggesting that commuters are more likely to prefer traditional transportation when it is perceived as physically manageable and acceptable. Convenience, cost, safety, and reliability were not statistically significant in the model, although convenience approached significance ($p = 0.051$).

Predictors of Ride-Hailing Service Preference

Table 4. *Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Ride-Hailing Service Preference*

Predictor	B	SE	beta	t	p	Significance
Constant	-0.004	0.159	—	-0.03	0.980	Not Significant
Convenience (Ride-hailing)	0.108	0.062	0.111	1.76	0.079	Not Significant
Cost (Ride-hailing)	0.063	0.070	0.057	0.89	0.375	Not Significant

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Safety (Ride-hailing)	0.048	0.043	0.053	1.12	0.265	Not Significant
Comfort (Ride-hailing)	0.171	0.073	0.165	2.34	0.020*	Significant
Reliability (Ride-hailing)	0.266	0.078	0.230	3.41	< .001***	Significant
Accessibility (Ride-hailing)	0.318	0.057	0.314	5.61	< .001***	Significant

For ride-hailing services, accessibility, reliability, and comfort significantly predicted preference. Accessibility had the strongest effect (beta = 0.314, $p < .001$), followed by reliability (beta = 0.230, $p < .001$) and comfort (beta = 0.165, $p = 0.020$). These results suggest that commuters value the availability of ride-hailing services, dependable booking and arrival experience, and overall passenger comfort. Convenience, cost, and safety were not significant predictors, though convenience approached the threshold of significance ($p = 0.079$).

Synthesis of Findings

Overall, the findings show that Generation Z and Millennials do not significantly differ in their preference for traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. While ride-hailing services were rated more favorably in convenience, comfort, reliability, accessibility, and app usability, traditional transportation remained stronger in affordability. These results suggest that both generations use a practical decision-making process when choosing transportation modes.

The regression analyses further demonstrate that accessibility consistently influenced both traditional and ride-hailing preferences. This implies that commuters prioritize transport modes that are easy to reach, book, or use from their location. Comfort also mattered in both models, suggesting that improving the passenger experience can benefit both conventional transport operators and ride-hailing platforms. For ride-hailing, reliability was especially important, reflecting the need for dependable drivers, accurate arrival estimates, and reduced cancellations.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between Generation Z and Millennials in their preference for traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. Although minor differences in mean scores were observed, these differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, generational classification does not appear to be a major determinant of commuting preference among the respondents in Metro Manila.

Transportation preference is shaped more by service-related factors than by generational differences. Traditional transportation remains relevant because it is perceived as affordable and accessible, while ride-hailing services are valued for convenience, comfort, reliability, accessibility, and app usability. Accessibility emerged as a central factor across both transportation modes, while comfort also contributed to preference. For ride-hailing services, reliability was an additional significant factor.

The findings imply that transport marketing strategies should not rely only on generational segmentation. Instead, providers should prioritize commuter situations, service quality, affordability, accessibility, safety communication, and user experience. Improving the practical features of both traditional and ride-hailing transportation may better respond to commuter needs than strategies based solely on age group.

Recommendations

Transportation companies and brands should implement dual-platform marketing strategies that target commuters using both traditional transportation and ride-hailing services. Advertising placements may be distributed across jeepneys, buses, trains, terminals, driver uniforms, helmets, in-vehicle materials, and ride-hailing application banners. Since both generations use both transportation modes, limiting campaigns to one platform may reduce market reach.

Transport providers should improve accessibility, reliability, comfort, and safety visibility. Traditional operators may enhance ventilation, seating, cleanliness, route information, and schedule predictability. Ride-hailing companies may improve price transparency, booking reliability, driver accountability, tracking features, and customer support. Safety-focused branding, such as verified drivers, tracked rides, visible identification, and modernized units, may help address moderate safety perceptions.

Government agencies and policymakers should promote integrated transport systems that allow easier switching between rail, traditional public transport, and ride-hailing services. Standard safety protocols, clear fare regulations, commuter information systems, and regulated advertising spaces in public transportation may support both public mobility and transport marketing opportunities.

Future researchers should include other generations such as Generation X and Baby Boomers, use a larger and more balanced sample, and consider qualitative interviews to explain why particular factors such as safety and cost influence commuter decisions. Further studies may also explore environmental concern, digital trust, regional differences, and comparisons between Metro Manila and other urban areas

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