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Research Article

Case Study on Road Accidents in a Motorcycle-Propelled Public Transport

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines utilizes the motorcycle as informal transport services. Thus, the birth of the “habal-habal” motorcycle taxi that traverses not only in the secondary roads but also in the national highways. This case study intends to describe the experiences of the participants on the list of occurrences that ended in casualty and fatality and to identify problems in the policy implementations pertinent to road safety and management. This study utilizes interviews, observation, and data reviews in gathering the data while the Mayring (2002) approach was used in the data analysis procedure. Themes come out from the narratives of the participants like unlicensed driving involving minors, under-reporting of fatalities and non-use of safety gear during the flight. The output of the study is a proposed new Model on Malay Transportation Development and Management.

Keywords: Motorcycle-Propelled Public Transport, Boracay Island, Philippines, Model Malay Transportation Development and Management

Introduction

Developing countries depend on accessible and affordable informal transport services for their daily travel needs (World Bank, 1996). In the Philippines, this informal transport has emerged as the public transport known as *habal-habal*.

Habal-habal becomes an accepted form of transportation due to its accessibility, faster, and flexibility. Habal-habal, the local term for motorcycle-propelled transport has been around the world for some time now and popular informal transport in many parts of the country. This transport service is very

prevalent in our roads connecting passengers from a remote place to major thoroughfares. This informal transport system is the primal vehicle that ushered the passengers in far-flung barangays that are not accessible by jeepneys and buses. In Siargao, Habal-habal is retrofitted to serve as health ambulance (Abraham, 2019). Republic Act 4136, section 7 on registration classification, a vehicle with a private classification cannot be utilized as a carrying vehicle servicing the public or cargo for pay. Habal-habal operates beyond the metes of laws, rules, and regulations, therefore, pauses a liability issue

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on the driver and the riding public. These two-cylinder motorcycles emit more Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) per mile than a passenger car. It can even be seen in our major thoroughfares competing with other traditional transportation modes. This retrofitted vehicle existed because of a lack of public vehicle system, road, and rail network substituted by emerging informal vehicles in remote areas (Abraham, 2019). Although Habal-habal is an informal vehicle system, it brought also some benefits. This vehicle carries different cargoes and people especially the poor and marginalized who were deprived of the traditional transportation mode access. Furthermore, Habal-habal has been an integral element of the distribution network, ferrying goods across the island. The riding public preferred this informal vehicle because it can reach the tapered alleys of barangays. Due to its functionality, it creates employment for many drivers that eventually feed their families and send their kids to school.

Despite its functionality, Habal-habal as an informal service vehicle pause usual misconceptions. This misunderstanding centers on its unregulated activity and informal perception of the government and the riding public. There is self-regulation, oversight, and coordination happening within the groups of Habal-habal drivers in a locality. Some of them (drivers) are aware of these existing laws, rules, and regulations established by the authorities.

The study was undertaken to address the clamor of the ordinary citizens who wanted to arrive at their target place on time, who is concerned about the well-being of the driver over road accidents including its cause and effect. The main researcher used to be the Local Economic Investment Promotion Officer (LEIPO) of LGU-Malay including Boracay Island and the Second Author is the Professor of Public Administration conducted the study to describe the lived experiences of the stakeholders on road risk, accidents, and fatalities in Boracay Island and out of its findings, a Model of Malay Transportation Development and Management.

Objectives

1. To describe the lived experience of the

stakeholders experiencing the road accidents in Boracay Island;

2. To identify gaps and challenges in legislations and its implementations; and
3. To propose a Model on the Malay Transportation Development and Management.

Literature Review

Public Conveyance Vehicles (PCV) are persons including corporations or firms that carry people or goods, by land, water, or air. The services are offered to the public for a fee. This traditional transport services are registered to the relevant government agencies like Land Transportation Office (LTO), Marina, and Malay Transportation Office (MTrO).

In the Philippines, one could notice the presence of motorcycles used to ferry the riding public for a fee coveting passengers from train, bus, and jeepney terminals and stations to the far flung areas of the country. This informal vehicle is built of a motorcycle retrofitted single wheel or two-wheel pauses threats for many and blessings for some.

There are three forms of motorcycles: side-cab, center cab, and open cab. This emerging informal vehicle known as *Habal-habal* is already part of our transportation network. This prevalence of Habal-habal can be ascribed to a lack of laws, rules, and regulations from the government institutions handling our transportation system (Guillen and Ishida, 2004). For the drivers, these informal utility vehicle drivers are required to take extraordinary diligence that means to handle lives and goods with utmost care and safety. During the accidents and fatalities, the law assumes that a Habal-habal driver shall take full responsibility and accountability therefore not free of any litigations and sanctions of the law. The law intends to promote the general safety and welfare of the riding public including their property. In the situation where the vehicular accidents happened, the driver will take responsibility and liable for payment of death, indemnity for the passenger's capacity for work, and other related damages. Meanwhile, the driver and passenger capacity to earn their living due to road accidents will have a domino effect on their family and loved ones and on those who will attend in them should they be hospitalized. The deprivation to work

by the Habal-habal driver and the riding public would hinder them to contribute to their family source of income reasons why extra care must be observed when commuting.

Malaysia in Asia dominated the road accidents among ASEAN countries that involves fifty (50%) of fatalities caused by motorcycles. Manan and Varhelyi (2012) revealed that sixty (61%) percent of road accidents and fatalities in Malaysia were in the rural areas and transpired during evenings and weekends.

A study conducted by Williams and Hoffman (1979) revealed that lack of vehicle's visibility attributed factors that comprise of 64.5% of automobile/motorcycle collisions. This is vital in understanding the underlying factors that causes the fatalities brought by the motorcycle to humans and property every day in the country. One could just avoid it or if not reduced its impact on the lives of the passenger and the driver that may be involved.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study. A research approach that facilitates exploration of phenomena within its context using Mayring's approach in the data analysis procedure to establish the rigors of the research. The study was conducted in Boracay Island from October 2018 to February 2019. There were ten (10) participants that participated in the research. They were road accident victims, Habal-habal drivers, passengers, the arresting or apprehending officers, and the investigating officer selected using the Purposive Sampling. Data gathered were analyzed right after every interview to immerse the researchers with the data. Research protocols were observed as embodied in the research ethics throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

The data collected from the interview that was audio recorded were transcribed. From the transcription, it was analyzed to form a pattern, identifying significant statements to form a cluster theme. The themes that surfaced from the narratives of the participants are:

THEME # 1. DRIVING WITHOUT LICENSE INVOLVING JUVENILE DELINQUENT

Road accidents described in this study happened in Boracay Island involved juvenile delinquent driving without a license. These young individuals were students particularly males motorcyclists are at risk since they drive Habal-habal in the evenings and weekends. The problems with these drivers are they cannot be detained nor be fined or penalized since they are minors (juvenile) except the motorcycle can be subjected to impounding. RA 9344 strives to foster the value and future role of our youth in the development of this land therefore their holistic development and well-being must be protected. The doctrine of *parens patriae* asserts that the state should protect its citizens including the youth.

In the case of Boracay Island, the full execution of laws can be realized through coordination and cooperative activity with the various agencies by conducting activities that would engross our juvenile delinquents to focus on their schooling and not to engage in child labor. The impact of the road fatalities can be traumatic and injury to the juvenile delinquent driver, passenger, and other parties.

THEME # 2: UNDER REPORTING OF ROAD ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES

It makes it difficult to make a road safety analysis for motorcycles because not all road accidents are reported. When the two (2) parties in a road accident come to an understanding, chances are both will agree on something among themselves that will result in no reported case. Shortcomings that can be treated of these road fatalities can be avoided through traffic seminars, but because it was not reported then it remains to be duplicated as time passed by. Therefore, the offense remains unaddressed and will be repeated without improvement.

THEME # 3: NON-USE OF SAFETY GEAR DURING FLIGHT.

Republic Act 10054 was enacted to protect the welfare of the driver and the riding public. It was observed that most motorcycle drivers

do not use protective gear thereby hurt themselves and their passengers when they meet a road accident.

Conclusion

Regulating the Habal-habal as public utility transport through legal means by creating a statute or municipal ordinance and strict implementations of the underlying laws will eliminate road accidents made by motorcycle-propelled informal transport. By requiring Habal-habal drivers to register, they can form an association or transport service cooperative hand in hand with the Memorandum Order No 116, series of 2003, with benefits like establishing cooperatives that will allow them, among others, put up gasoline stations and the likes.

Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that the full implementation of RA 10054 or the Motorcycle Helmet Act of 2009 a protective gear for Habal-habal drivers and passengers during road accidents. Report all accidents to improve the database of every Local Government Unit for them to mitigate road accidents and fatalities particularly on motorcycle-related incidents. Monitor the juvenile delinquent drivers and strictly implement the law. Only drivers with licenses can drive a motorcycle vehicle. Maming - Imbong's Model of Transport Development and Management- "Habal-habal Transport System" is proposed for effective and efficient transport development and management on Boracay Island. Further studies will also be conducted.

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