

Article

Economic Transformation of Padyak Drivers in Intramuros Manila: Basis for Sustainable Livelihood Strategy in Tourism

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Received: Mar 21, 2025; **Revised:** May 07, 2025; **Accepted:** May 11, 2025; **Published:** Sep 29, 2026

Abstract: This study explores the economic transformation of Padyak Drivers through Tourism Sustainable Livelihood in Intramuros Manila. As a popular tourist attraction, local and foreign tourists are drawn to the community's historical landmarks. There are "padyak" that transport tourists to various sites within Intramuros. Despite the hard work and resilience required to be a padyak driver, it remains a vital income source for many families. This study investigates the economic transformation of padyak drivers in Intramuros, Manila, and explores sustainable livelihood strategies to enhance their economic self-sufficiency. Utilizing a descriptive, qualitative phenomenological approach, the study solicited feedback from the participants using interview guide questions. Representative from Intramuros Administration and the Department of Labor and Employment were interviewed as regard to their plans and programs as well as other reports, for the study's reference. Furthermore, this study did an incognito observation to investigate the conditions of Padyak drivers. Aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) #1,8,11,17, the study underscores the importance of community-based sustainable livelihood initiatives to support tourism sustainability. Recommendations include enhancing training and livelihood programs provided by the Department of Labor and Employment. These initiatives aim to improve the economic conditions of padyak drivers and promote their crucial role in tourism.

Keywords: Economic transformation, Intramuros tourism, Padyak drivers, Sustainable livelihood

1. Introduction

One of the most convenient means of transportation in most rural areas here in the Philippines is commonly known as the padyak, or eco-friendly pedicabs, or foot-pedaled tricycle. Intramuros in Manila is a popular tourist attraction and a preferred tourist destination because it offers cultural experiences. In fact, local and foreign tourists are drawn to the community's historical landmarks and friendly destinations (Torres, 2019). It is also proved by De Jesus (2021) that religious factors influenced them to visit the city. As one of the most popular ways to serve and transport guests or tourists on site tours, padyak vehicles are recommended in exploring various locations within Intramuros. It was also used in a promotional campaign for Intramuros tourism. There are five barangays in Intramuros, and each barangay is allowed to have 50 units of padyak which will be given a permit to operate within Intramuros. The respective barangay chairman has their own mandate regarding their constituents. There were situations where an overwhelming number of padyak units were roaming in Intramuros that the Intramuros Administration could not control; thus, conflicts started to occur.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) launched a new program, the "Sibol" Sustainable Livelihood Program (Loyola, 2023) which aims to support interventions on livelihood programs for innovation and responsiveness and also presents a five-year plan to further implement a relevant and effective sustainability program. Arquillano noted in his study that the local government should provide training on skills-based livelihood programs that cover initial capital or credit facilities, equipment, and necessary training.

In Intramuros, over PHP 1 million was given to an initial 120 pedicab drivers and ambulant vendors as livelihood assistance from the government (Patinio, 2022). In a ceremony, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) handed the grant. DOLE implements the livelihood program to raise the level of entrepreneurial services of DOT trained pedicab drivers as Tour Guides and to raise the level of tourism.

This study aims to determine the economic transformation of padyak drivers and explore the assistance provided to them by the local government units, providing comprehensive baseline data that will support the sustainable livelihood program in Intramuros, Manila. Thus, this also encourages the acceptance and continuous support of the Intramuros Administration and DOLE

in this effort owing to their accessibility and cultural affinity with the community towards the sustainable livelihood strategy in tourism.

2. Materials and Methods

The researchers initiated the study by seeking approval from the Intramuros Administration in Manila to use the locale and interview padyak drivers. Once approved, focus group discussions and individual interviews were scheduled with the Urban Planning Office of Intramuros Administration. These discussions were held at McDonald's Intramuros, while interviews with DOLE representatives and padyak drivers took place at Casa Blanca Intramuros.

Using a descriptive method with a qualitative phenomenological design, the study explored the experiences of padyak drivers, focusing on their livelihood, income, and potential opportunities such as training as tour guides. Self-made, validated guide questions with open-ended items were used for key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed thematically, combining inductive and deductive coding to uncover prominent themes and address specific research questions. This approach provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by padyak drivers in Intramuros.

Table 1. Research Participants.

Participants	Current Job	Tenure (No. of years)	Weekly Earning (Peso)	Do you support your family?	Years of Residency Intramuros	Are you trained as a Tour guide?	Challenges as Padyak Driver
1. Participant A	Padyak Driver	9	4,800	Yes	9	Yes	Physically tiring
2. Participant B	Padyak Driver	30	4,900	Yes	Since birth	No	Hot weather
3. Participant C	Padyak Driver	27	4,900	Yes	27	No	No passenger during pandemic
4. Participant D	Padyak Driver	11	4,000	Yes	11	Yes	Rainy season challenge
5. Participant E	Padyak Driver	7	4,000	Yes	7	Yes	English language with foreign tourists
6. Participant F	Padyak Driver	9	4,500	Yes	9	No	Competition with other drivers
7. Participant G	Padyak Driver	20	4,800	Yes	20	Yes	Competition with other drivers
8. Participant H	Padyak Driver	11	4,500	Yes	11	No	Competition with other drivers
9. Participant I	Padyak Driver	9	4,500	Yes	9	No	Competition with other drivers
10. Participant J	Padyak Driver	8	4,500	Yes	8	No	Competition with other drivers
11. Participant K	Padyak Driver	8	4,500	Yes	8	No	Competition with other drivers
12. Participant L	Padyak Driver	5	4,500	Yes	8	No	Competition with other drivers
13. Participant M	Padyak Driver	7	4,500	Yes	10	No	Competition with other drivers
14. Participant N	Padyak Driver	6	4,500	Yes	10	No	Competition with other drivers
15. Participant O	Padyak Driver	9	4,000	Yes	11	No	Low income due to competition
16. Participant P	Padyak Driver	10	4,000	Yes	12	No	Low income due to competition
17. Participant Q	Padyak Driver	12	4,000	Yes	13	Yes	Low income due to competition
18. Participant R	Padyak Driver	10	4,800	Yes	12	Yes	Low income sometimes if holidays
19. Participant S	Padyak Driver	9	4,800	Yes	10	No	Low income sometimes if holidays
20. Participant T	Padyak Driver	6	4,800	Yes	7	Yes	Low income sometimes if holidays

As revealed in Table 1 above, participants currently work as padyak drivers; therefore, their backgrounds qualify them for an interview and their responses will contribute to the significant findings in the study. Most of them are working for six to 30 years, with a weekly income between Php4,000 to 4,900 pesos. Since they lived in Intramuros for more than ten (10) years, they know how to greet the guests without formal training. Moreover, they experienced several challenges fighting to live, having mentioned competing with co-padyak drivers, causing low income. Overall, padyak driving provides a source of income that supports the livelihood and basic needs of the family. Having this as an advantage, long time drivers also experienced challenges in addressing their role, which limits their economic and employment benefits (Hancock, 2020).

3. Results

Along with DOLE representative, 20 padyak drivers participated as key informant participants, providing data for the study. Padyak drivers earn ranging between 500 and 800 pesos which they use to support their families. Their main source of income is providing transport services by driving Padyak.

The expected monthly income, based on Business Ideas' 2009 rates, is Php 11,204.45 after all operating expenses of Php 9,595.55 are subtracted from the total revenue of Php 20,800.00. Because basic income is unconditional and customized for everyone, private life is eliminated. It is neutral as regards the number of children or marital status (Gamel, 2005).

Theme 1: Economic Benefits

Being a padyak driver provides a viable means to support the needs of the family since it is the source of income that capitalizes on the economic benefit. By offering transportation services, they can earn daily. Based on the interview, participants declared the following statements:

Table 2. Economic Benefits.

Padyak Drivers	Statements on Economic Benefits
Participant A	"Sa pag pa padyak lahat po kami ay dito kinukuha ang pangkabuhatan." (We obtain all our livelihood by being a padyak driver)
Participant B	"Para sa akin ay malaking tulong po ang DOLE. Katulad ng may mga anak akong nag aaral. Tatlo po ang anak ko. Bumili po ako ng isang kaban na bigas pagkakuha ko po ng cash aid na binigay sa amin." "DOLE's assistance is a big help for me because I have 3 children and with the cash aid they gave, I was able to buy a sack of rice. ")
Participant C	"Nabigyan po kami ng pera tsaka po yung mga pedicab po naming ay pinagawa po nila". (DOLE gave us cash aide and they repair our padyak vehicle.)
Participant D	"Nakatanggap po ako ng livelihood assistance sa DOLE." (I received livelihood assistance from DOLE.)

Participants' responses revealed that they acknowledged the benefits of their job as padyak driver. It was highlighted in the interview that the Department of Local and Employment (DOLE) offers assistance. It has Livelihood Assistance Program for the residents of 5 Barangay in Intramuros. There were 120 recipients of 1.9M project that enhance the existing transport service of Padyak catering to local and foreign tourists as well as public riders. In addition, there is Pedicab Rehabilitation Package from the livelihood component programs of Dole Integrate Livelihood Program (DLIP). It includes free makeover of their Padyak transport and service quality training to raise their level of tourism and entrepreneurial services.

Theme 2: Learning and Skills Development Benefits

Padyak driving can offer opportunities to enhance learning and develop skills for professional growth. This covers improvements in communication skills, customer service, good grooming, and soft skills as well as daily interactions with different tourists. This was made possible through the joint programs of DOLE, IA, and DOT. Padyak drivers benefit from the tourism sustainable livelihood program through service quality training and refurbishment of their Padyak as transport that caters to their main livelihood. DOLE offers a number of trainings as well as product quality.

Table 3. Learning Skills and Development Benefits.

Padyak Drivers	Statements on Learning and Skills Development Benefits
Participant F	"Ang mga natutunan ko po sa workshop ay ang tamang pagbati sa mga sumasakay sa amin sa padyak na mga turista." ("I learned to greet the tourists properly".)

Participant R	<i>Nakatulong po ang training workshops sa amin dahil lumawak ang aking kaalaman tungkol sa mga historical landmarks ng Intramuros.” (“The training workshops helped me to become knowledgeable about historical landmarks in Intramuros.”)</i>
Participant E	<i>“Natutunan ko po na batiin ng may mgiti ang mga turista sa pagsakay po nila sa padyak naming. No.1 po lagi ang pagbati at dapat ay lagging masaya. Dapat rin po ay malinis lagi ang aming padyak. Kailangan po ay presentable kami lagi malinis at mabango para sumakay sila.” (I learned to maintain the cleanliness of my Padyak vehicle and always greet the tourists with a smile.”)</i>
Participant C	<i>“Dapat po ay batiin ang mga turista ng may ngiti ng maakit sila na sumakay sa Padyak”. (“I should greet the tourists with a smile so that they will be encouraged to ride in my Padyak vehicle.”)</i>
Participant G	<i>“Natutunan ko naman ay kung paano I entertain hindi lang ang mga foreigner kundi kapwa natin Filipino. Katulad ng pagbati, Magandang umaga o good morning. Pagkatapos ng tour ay dapat magpasalamat pa rin sa pasahero nasayahan man sila o hindi.” (“I learned to greet and entertain both local and foreign tourists.”)</i>
Participant S	<i>“Ang natutunan ko sa seminar ay dapat laging malinis ang padyak at ito ay dapat I maintain para na rin sa mga turista na sasakay.” (I learned to maintain the cleanliness of my Padyak for all tourists.”)</i>
Participant F	<i>Mahalaga ang pakikisama sa kapwa padyak driver lalo na kung paano mo dadalhin ang pasahero na mga turista sa tour guiding.” (“I learned to cooperate with my fellow Padyak drivers especially in helping the tourists with their tour.”)</i>
Participant A	<i>“Nung nagkaroon ng libreng seminar ay doon naming natutunan na mahalaga ang pagbati. At naisip namin na ah, ito pala un.” (Through the seminar, I learned the importance of greetings.”)</i>
Participant I	<i>“Kailangan ay marami kaming alam sa maraming bagay dito sa Intramuros. Halimbawa kung saan pwede dalhin ang mga turista na may makakainan, kunyari mga muslim, dapat dalhin naming sila sa makakainan na may Halal foods.” (“It is important that we are highly knowledgeable of Intramuros so that we can bring the tourists to their right destinations such as finding restaurants that serves Halal food for Muslim tourists.”)</i>
Participant Q	<i>“Natutunan naming na dapat knowledgeable kami. Hindi katulad ng mga dayo dito di nila alam paano I explain ang mga lugar. Isasakay lang nila pero hindi nila alam paano ipaliwanag ang mga historical landmarks dito sa Intramuros.” (I learned to be knowledgeable unlike others who cannot explain historical landmarks here in Intramuros.)</i>

Their responses above somehow express their appreciation for their daily encounters, learning and being proud of their knowledge and mastery in the Intramuros area, where they reside for several years, so that they can serve the customers effectively. This also reveals that padyak drivers are the best resource people who can introduce local traditions, customs, heritage, culture, and food in Intramuros as Asia’s leading tourist attractions (Rocamora, 2020).

Theme 3: Impact of work income

The goal of the DLIP program is to provide service quality and to improve the livelihood and increase the income of the Padyak drivers. According to the DOLE Central Director, other programs of the agency the Padyak drivers. In the website of Institute for Labor Studies, it is stated that to contribute to the realization of the national goal of poverty reduction and inclusive development, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) implements the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) Kabuhayan Program. DILP specifically seeks to assist vulnerable workers such as the self-employed, landless farmers, unpaid family workers, displaced workers, parents of child laborers and low-wage seasonal workers. Selected beneficiaries are provided with livelihood opportunities, as well as training support, to help them augment their incomes and consequently reduce their vulnerability.

Table 4. Impact of Work Income.

Padyak Drivers	Statements on the Impact of Work Income
Participant D	<i>“Minsan matumal ang kita dahil umuuwi ako sa tanghali para ihatid ang mga anak ko sa school pati rin sa aumaga.” (“Sometimes I just earn a little because I need to fetch my kids to school.”)</i>
Participant L	<i>“Sa akin depende ang kita ko minsan maganda minsan ay wala ring pasahero lalo na nung nagdaang pandemic.” (“For me, it depends. Sometimes I earn a little especially during pandemic.”)</i>
Participant E	<i>“Kaya naging matumal ang kita namin ay dahil sa ebike at etrike na ka kumpetensya naming dito sa loob ng Intramuros.” (“We had a low income because of competitions with other vehicles transporting tourists such as electric bicycle and electric tricycle.”)</i>
Participant F	<i>“Dahil po sa kumpetensya minsan gusto na rin naming mag ebike dahil mas mabilis at mas maganda” (“Because of the competitions, I thought of driving electronic bicycle too.”)</i>

4. Discussion

Implementing Proper Regulation and Legal Recognition

1. The absence of clear and consistent fare guidelines has caused confusion between padyak drivers and passengers, which hurts the image of local transport and reduces the quality of the tourist experience. Studies show that well-regulated fare systems help build trust among commuters and improve urban transportation (UN-Habitat, 2022). To address this, the Division of Urban Planning and Community Development should implement a standard fare matrix for padyak drivers. For the local government, strictly monitor the issuance of permits to padyak owners and ensure that only accredited drivers operate within Intramuros.

Improving Infrastructure and Safety Measures

Local government units under the Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992 (RA 7279) and the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749) are encouraged to promote non-motorized transport and develop infrastructure that ensures safety for all road users, including padyak drivers. In Intramuros, dedicated lanes, parking areas, and improved road surfaces are recommended to enhance safety and efficiency.

Access to Financial Support

Those padyak drivers who own their units may be eligible for micro-financing programs through cooperatives or livelihood support via DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). LGUs can partner with these agencies to offer low-interest loans or grants for vehicle maintenance or livelihood enhancement.

Improving Earnings Against Exploitation

LGUs can issue local ordinances that mandate fair pricing through fare matrices and regulate operators to avoid overcharging or underpaying drivers.

Enhancing Health and Welfare Programs

Through PhilHealth's Informal Economy Program, padyak drivers can access health insurance even without formal employment. LGUs may also subsidize their premiums or enroll them under local universal health care programs in line with the Universal Health Care Act (RA 11223). This ensures they have access to medical services.

Addressing Weather-Related Challenges

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act (RA 10121) supports local strategies that include urban poor and vulnerable sectors like padyak drivers. Providing shelters or designated waiting areas during rain, subsidizing waterproof gear, and offering weather-related livelihood insurance can be institutionalized at the barangay or city level.

Social Integration and Public Awareness

Recognizing the need for a more holistic approach, Chief Division Head added that the Urban Planning and Community Development Division includes a community development component. If the opportunity arises, we can engage social workers to address poverty-related concerns. A social worker with expertise in community development and social work is essential, as I fully understand the needs of the community. Certain areas in Intramuros require proper management, including the welfare of Padyak drivers.

Education and Skills Training

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) offers community-based training programs that can be made accessible to padyak drivers. Skills training in bicycle maintenance, basic entrepreneurship, or tourism-related services could improve their livelihood and help them transition into broader roles in the tourism sector.

Government Support Programs and Welfare Initiatives

In a recent Focus Group Discussion between the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Padyak drivers, DOLE emphasized that providing livelihood assistance would be more effective if the drivers formed an organized group. It would be more secure for the Padyak drivers to obtain financial and welfare assistance from the national government.

As stated by the Chief Division Head of Intramuros Administration, the socio-economic realities faced by Padyak drivers are multiple layers to poverty, including lack of education, limited financial management skills, and a pressing need to earn a living. "The standard fare matrix has already been publicized, and only Padyak drivers are beneficiaries of the program. E-bikes, Tuktoks, and Tricycles are not allowed as they are not within the mandate of the Intramuros Administration." He further explained.

Promote Sustainability and Green Transportation

The life of padyak drivers in Intramuros is filled with challenges, as they constantly face the pressures of daily life and additional stress from their working environment. Despite government initiatives offering livelihood assistance, many struggle to sustain themselves. Factors such as increased competition, where more drivers lead to lower fares and reduced earnings, further strain their livelihoods. Environmental issues like inadequate infrastructure, air pollution, unpredictable weather, and traffic congestion hinder their ability to provide efficient services. Moreover, the social stigma associated with their occupation, often tied to low social status, negatively impacts their self-esteem and well-being, further affecting their livelihood sustainability. Strict

regulatory policies governing transport services in Intramuros also limit their earning potential, adding to the stress of adapting to ever-changing regulations.

5. Conclusions

The life of padyak drivers in Intramuros is filled with challenges, as they constantly face the pressures of daily life and additional stress from their working environment. Despite government initiatives offering livelihood assistance, many struggle to sustain themselves. Factors such as increased competition, where more drivers lead to lower fares and reduced earnings, further strain their livelihoods. Environmental issues like inadequate infrastructure, air pollution, unpredictable weather, and traffic congestion hinder their ability to provide efficient services. Moreover, the social stigma associated with their occupation, often tied to low social status, negatively impacts their self-esteem and well-being, further affecting their livelihood sustainability. Strict regulatory policies governing transport services in Intramuros also limit their earning potential, adding to the stress of adapting to ever-changing regulations.

This study calls for collaboration among stakeholders to develop a comprehensive program addressing the economic needs of padyak drivers, aiming to improve their livelihoods and overall quality of life. Supporting their sustainability will ensure the availability of reliable, authentic transportation for tourists, enriching their experience. Initiatives like training programs, infrastructure improvements, and social support can enhance Intramuros' image and community resilience. By integrating the needs of padyak drivers into tourism development, the area can foster inclusivity, sustainability, and economic growth.

Author Contributions: Both authors contributed to the drafting and development of the manuscript. They have reviewed and approved the final version for submission.

Funding: This research was funded by the Lyceum of the Philippines University, College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management officials and Research and Innovation Center.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data are not publicly available.

Acknowledgments: The authors extend their sincere gratitude to the Lyceum of the Philippines University, College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management officials, chairpersons, faculty, and staff for their invaluable support in making this study a meaningful research endeavor. Sincere appreciation is also given to the Intramuros Administration and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for generously sharing their knowledge and encouragement in the development of this research manuscript. Likewise, the researchers are deeply grateful to the padyak drivers who willingly participated in the focus group discussion. Furthermore, the authors acknowledge the unwavering love and sacrifices of their families, whose support served as a primary source of motivation in completing this study. Above all, the researchers express their utmost appreciation to the Lord, Almighty God, for His countless blessings, wisdom, and opportunities. To God be the highest glory.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest in the submission of the manuscript. The authors have no competing interests to declare relevant to this article's content.

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