



PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM (PUVMP): IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE AMONG TRANSPORT COOPERATIVES AS BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study examined the relationship between the implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) and transport cooperative compliance in Iloilo City, Philippines. Findings from seven cooperative leaders revealed a “High Level of Implementation” and “High to Very High Compliance”; however, compliance was largely procedural-driven by regulatory pressure and survival rather than genuine belief in the program. While documentary and technological requirements were successfully met, the impact on livelihoods and internal governance remained moderate, indicating symbolic rather than substantive compliance. Although Chi-square tests showed no significant demographic differences or a statistical correlation between implementation and compliance, pattern analysis suggests that perceived support and meaningful engagement align with deeper levels of adherence. Stakeholders recommended the adoption of service contracting, fuel assistance, institutional capacity-building, and inclusive route planning. The study affirmed the principle that compliance follows capacity—not coercion.

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Keywords: *PUVMP, Policy Implementation, Implementation, Compliance, Transport*

Cooperatives

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Public transportation serves as the lifeblood of urban centers, providing mobility, economic opportunity, and social connectivity for millions. In the Philippines, however, the sector has long grappled with systemic challenges—aging fleets, fragmented operations, and chronic traffic congestion—that undermine both urban mobility and environmental sustainability. As noted by the Asian Development Bank (2018) and the Department of Transportation (2017), public transportation reform has long been a critical agenda in the Philippines, to address aging fleets, fragmented operations, and traffic congestion that undermine urban mobility and environmental sustainability.

This persistent need for transformation sets the stage for ambitious policy interventions like the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP), which seeks not only to upgrade vehicles but also to restructure the very foundations of public transport governance and service delivery.

In response, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) launched the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) in 2017, a transformative policy aimed at replacing outdated jeepneys and other public utility vehicles with safer, more efficient, and environmentally friendly alternatives (DOTr, 2017; Land Transportation Franchising and

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Regulatory Board [LTFRB], 2020). Central to this reform is the mandate for operators to consolidate into transport cooperatives or corporations, a structural shift intended to professionalize the sector and enable access to government financing and route rationalization (DOTr, 2017; LTFRB, 2020).

The ideal situation envisions a modernized, organized, and equitable public transport system where cooperatives operate efficiently, drivers enjoy social protection, and commuters benefit from reliable, low-emission services (DOTr, 2017; World Bank, 2020). However, the current reality reveals significant implementation challenges. Nationwide, compliance with PUVMP requirements remains uneven (ADB, 2021). Many cooperatives exist only on paper, lacking operational capacity, internal cohesion, or financial viability (ADB, 2021; Rutaquio & Santos, 2022). In regions outside Metro Manila—such as Western Visayas—implementation intensity varies widely due to differences in local government support, stakeholder engagement, and resource allocation (LTFRB, 2021).

Iloilo City, a growing urban center and regional hub, has been an active site of PUVMP rollout since 2019 (City Government of Iloilo, 2021). While the city government has expressed support and facilitated dialogues, numerous transport cooperatives continue to struggle with registration, vehicle procurement, and route consolidation (LTFRB, 2021).

Preliminary reports suggest that compliance is often driven by regulatory pressure rather than genuine institutional readiness, raising questions about the sustainability of the modernization effort (ADB, 2021; Rutaquio & Santos, 2022).

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Despite growing scholarly attention to the PUVMP, a critical research gap persists: there is limited empirical investigation into how the manner and intensity of program implementation at the local level influence the actual compliance behavior of mandated cooperatives. Most studies focus on national policy design, socioeconomic impacts, or driver resistance—but few examine the organizational response of cooperatives in relation to specific dimensions of implementation such as enforcement, support mechanisms, and communication strategies (World Bank, 2020; Rutaquio & Santos, 2022). Moreover, no known study has systematically analyzed this relationship within the context of Iloilo, a representative secondary city where national mandates intersect with distinct local governance dynamics.

This study sought to bridge that gap by evaluating the link between PUVMP roll-out implementation and cooperative compliance in Iloilo City, thereby contributing actionable insights for policymakers, local governments, and cooperative developers committed to equitable and effective transport reform.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter delineates the methodological framework employed in investigating the relationship between Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) implementation intensity and cooperative compliance within Iloilo City's transport sector. Adhering to established conventions in public administration research, this section explicates the research design, study locale, respondent selection criteria, instrumentation, data collection protocols,

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validity and reliability measures, and analytical procedures. The methodological choices reflect both epistemological alignment with mixed methods inquiry and pragmatic adaptation to contextual constraints inherent in fieldwork with specialized stakeholder populations.

Research Method

The quantitative phase operationalized Research Questions 1 through 6 through the structured measurement of demographic variables, perceived implementation intensity across three dimensions (regulatory pressure, support provision, and stakeholder engagement), and compliance extent across three domains (timeliness, completeness, and quality).

The qualitative phase—comprising embedded narrative responses within the survey instrument—addressed Research Questions 7 and 8 by eliciting stakeholders' experiential accounts of implementation challenges and normative suggestions for policy refinement. This sequential integration allows quantitative patterns to be contextualized through qualitative depth; this methodological synergy enhances both analytical credibility and practical utility for transport governance (Ivankova et al., 2006).

Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, in which quantitative data collection and analysis preceded and informed the subsequent qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This configuration is particularly salient for policy-oriented research that seeks not only to document implementation patterns but also to elucidate their underlying mechanisms and generate contextually grounded recommendations (David, 2022).

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Respondents of the Study

Given the specialized nature of the target population—cooperative leaders possessing direct knowledge of PUVMP implementation processes—and the exploratory character of the investigation, purposive sampling was employed to identify information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). This non-probability technique aligns with methodological imperatives for qualitative depth in policy implementation research, where statistical representativeness is superseded by analytical relevance (David, 2022). Eligibility criteria required respondents to hold formal leadership positions (e.g., board director or officer) within PUVMP-registered transport cooperatives and demonstrate active involvement in compliance processes.

Sampling Design

The final sample comprised seven (7) cooperative leaders: five officers (71.4%) and two board directors (28.6%). All participants represented large-scale cooperatives (51+ members) and possessed college-level educational attainment. This purposive selection yielded a homogeneous yet strategically significant subsample of leaders who successfully navigated the MC 2018-008 consolidation mandate, thereby enabling a focused analysis of implementation experiences among consolidation "survivors."

While this sampling approach precludes statistical generalizability to the broader cooperative population, it generates rich, contextually embedded insights into leadership perspectives on policy execution—a recognized strength in exploratory public administration research (Yin, 2018). The methodological limitation of restricted demographic variation is explicitly acknowledged and addressed through transparent reporting and theoretical

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triangulation with existing literature on implementation patterns in Western Visayas (Balgos et al., 2023).

Research Instrument

A single integrated instrument was developed by the researcher to capture both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the research problem, thereby enhancing methodological coherence and reducing respondent burden. The researcher-constructed survey questionnaire comprised four distinct sections.

Part I: Demographic Profile documented the respondent's position within the cooperative (board director, officer), years of involvement in public transport (<10 years, ≥10 years), highest educational attainment (vocational/TVL, college graduate), and cooperative size (31–50 members, 51+ members). Part II: Level of PUVMP Implementation measured perceived implementation intensity through fifteen (15) items distributed across three theoretically grounded subscales: Regulatory Pressure (Items 1–5), Support Provision (Items 6–10), and Stakeholder Engagement (Items 11–15). All items employed a 5-point ordinal scale (1 = Very Low to 5 = Very High), with item phrasing derived from a policy text analysis of the OFG, MC 2018-006, and MC 2018-008 to ensure construct validity.

Part III: Extent of Compliance assessed compliance depth through fifteen (15) items organized into three dimensions: Timeliness (Items C1–C5), Completeness of Adoption (Items C6–C10), and Quality of Compliance (Items C11–C15), utilizing the same 5-point ordinal scale.

Finally, Part IV: Open-Ended Narrative Prompts elicited qualitative insights through two unstructured questions soliciting stakeholder perspectives on implementation challenges

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and policy recommendations. This integrated approach generated data for Research Questions 7 and 8 without necessitating separate interview protocols, ensuring a streamlined yet comprehensive data collection process.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Instrument validation proceeded through a multi-stage process. Initial content validity was established through a review by three subject matter experts—two public administration professors specializing in Philippine governance and a transport policy practitioner with LTFRB experience—who assessed item relevance, theoretical alignment, and contextual appropriateness. This review utilized the 5-point criteria for content validation (Good and Scates, as cited in Peñafiel, 2023). Face validity was further confirmed through cognitive interviewing with three cooperative leaders not included in the final sample, which served to refine item clarity and cultural resonance.

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection adhered to rigorous ethical protocols approved by the researcher's academic institution. Prior to fieldwork, necessary permissions were secured from cooperative leadership and the Iloilo City Transport Office. Each respondent completed the questionnaire individually during scheduled cooperative meetings; the researcher was present to clarify procedural questions while maintaining neutrality regarding substantive responses.

Verbal informed consent was obtained prior to participation, accompanied by explicit assurances of anonymity through respondent coding (R1–R7) and cooperative anonymization. Completed instruments were collected immediately to ensure data integrity. Furthermore, field

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notes documenting contextual observations—such as meeting dynamics, environmental factors, and nonverbal cues—were maintained contemporaneously to enhance methodological transparency and facilitate "thick description" during analysis (Emerson et al., 2011). The entire data collection process was completed within a three-week period to minimize temporal variation in policy implementation conditions.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data underwent sequential yet integrated analysis following established mixed-methods protocols (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Quantitative Analysis. Given the ordinal measurement level of the Likert-scale responses and the small sample size (n=7), non-parametric descriptive statistics were prioritized to avoid violating parametric test assumptions

Qualitative Analysis. Narrative responses from Part IV underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase protocol: (1) repeated immersion in transcripts to achieve data familiarity; (2) generation of initial descriptive codes capturing semantic content; (3) collation of codes into candidate themes; (4) iterative review of themes against the full dataset; (5) refinement and naming of themes; and (6) selection of vivid exemplars for analytical reporting.

Analysis was conducted manually to preserve interpretive nuance, with emerging themes directly addressing Research Question 7 (implementation challenges) and Research Question 8 (stakeholder recommendations).

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Quantitative and qualitative results were synthesized through the construction of a joint display—a tabular juxtaposition of statistical patterns (medians, response distributions) with corresponding thematic narratives. This method generated explanatory connections between measured phenomena and lived experiences (Guetterman et al., 2015).

This integration directly informed the evidence-based policy recommendations for Research Question 8, ensuring that suggestions were grounded in empirical patterns rather than anecdotal assertions. All analytical procedures adhered to strict ethical protocols to ensure respondent anonymity and data security.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the relationship between the level of implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) and the extent of compliance among transport cooperatives in Iloilo City. Data were gathered from seven cooperative leaders—five officers and two board directors—representing large cooperatives (51 or more members). Among the participants, six held college degrees, and five had less than ten years of experience in public transport.

The overall level of PUVMP implementation was rated as “High.” All three dimensions—regulatory pressure, support provision, and stakeholder engagement—received high median scores, indicating consistent perceptions across these areas. The highest individual rating was given to the item: “LTFRB holds public hearings before approving consolidated franchises,”

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while the lowest rating was for the statement: "There is strong pressure to replace old vehicles within three months after consolidation approval."

This suggests that, compared to other program aspects, cooperative leaders felt the urgency regarding the three-month replacement window was only moderate—not as intense or feasible as requirements like document submission or training attendance.

The overall extent of compliance was also rated as "High." Documentary compliance (e.g., timely submission of consolidation documents and CDA registration) and technological compliance (e.g., installation of GNSS, CCTV, and other mandated devices) received "Very High" ratings. In contrast, items related to infrastructure development, livelihood impact, and belief in the program were rated only "High."

Chi-square tests showed no statistically significant differences in the level of implementation or the extent of compliance when respondents were grouped by position, years of involvement, educational attainment, or cooperative size. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between the level of implementation and the extent of compliance. Stakeholders identified three main challenges: the exclusion of transport groups from LPTRP planning until after key decisions are made; inconsistent frontline implementation due to shifting personnel; and a pronounced imbalance between "hardware" (vehicle/technology requirements) and "software" (livelihood support, governance capacity, and financial sustainability).

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In response, stakeholders recommended financial support through service contracting, fuel assistance, and equity funding; continuous training for board members and management; and stronger internal unity through collaborative decision-making.

Conclusions

The study reveals that transport cooperative leaders in Iloilo City generally perceive the PUVMP as being actively implemented, with particular appreciation for transparent procedures such as public hearings. However, this perception of robust implementation is not uniformly matched by operational realities—especially regarding the feasibility of rapid vehicle replacement and infrastructure development. While cooperatives demonstrate strong adherence to documentary and technological requirements, their compliance appears largely procedural rather than substantive. Compliance is often driven by the need to retain legal operating status rather than a genuine belief in or capacity to sustain the program’s long-term objectives.

Stakeholders consistently identified a disconnect between policy design and on-the-ground experience. Key concerns include the limited meaningfulness of stakeholder consultations, inconsistent interactions with frontline implementers, and a pronounced imbalance between hardware-focused mandates and the absence of parallel support for financing, terminal development, and internal governance. These gaps suggest that compliance, while formally achieved, remains fragile and potentially unsustainable without deeper institutional and livelihood support.

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These findings resonate with established theories of institutional isomorphism, which posit that organizations often comply with external pressures to gain legitimacy, even when such compliance does not translate into functional capacity. The experience in Iloilo City underscores a broader insight: sustainable modernization cannot be achieved through enforcement alone. Instead, it requires building the organizational, financial, and social capacities that enable cooperatives to comply out of capability and conviction rather than fear.

In sum, while the PUVMP has succeeded in establishing a framework of formal compliance in Iloilo City, it has yet to foster the conditions necessary for equitable and resilient transformation. Policy efforts must shift from rigid timelines and regulatory checkboxes toward a supportive, participatory, and capacity-oriented approach that recognizes modernization as a process of human and institutional development.

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