Original Article

Perceptions of In-App Communication, Trust, and Satisfaction Among Ride-Hailing Users in Mandaluyong City

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Abstract

In-app communication helps riders coordinate journeys and evaluate digital transport services. This study examined distinct acceptance beliefs, direct trust, and satisfaction among ride-hailing users in Mandaluyong City. All 151 complete, consenting responses recorded April 21–29, 2026 were analyzed using five-item domain means, internal consistency, Pearson correlations with 95% confidence intervals, sensitivity checks, and exploratory employment comparisons. Direct trust (platform and driver items) correlated with usefulness ($r = .577$), ease of use ($r = .580$), and direct satisfaction ($r = .626$); all $p < .001$. Twelve respondents (7.9%) marked the highest option on all 65 items; excluding them reduced the trust–satisfaction correlation to .556. Employment groups did not differ in direct trust, $F(3, 147) = 0.183$, $p = .908$; the source report's student $p = .026$ did not replicate. Favorable beliefs, trust, and satisfaction co-occurred in this local sample. Cross-sectional self-reports cannot identify causal effects, and the distinct constructs need further validation.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, customer trust, in-app communication, ride-hailing services, technology acceptance

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1. Introduction

Ride-hailing services have become an important component of urban mobility in the Philippines, providing commuters with convenient transportation options through

mobile applications. These platforms offer features such as real-time booking, driver tracking, cashless payments, estimated arrival times, and digital communication between passengers and drivers. In highly urbanized areas such as Mandaluyong City, where traffic congestion and transportation demand affect daily commuting, ride-hailing applications provide an alternative for accessing transportation services. Nguyen-Phuoc et al. (2021) emphasized that the quality of ride-hailing applications involves several dimensions, including ease of use, functionality, information accuracy, route detection, privacy, and security. Similarly, Chuenyindee et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of service quality in understanding customer satisfaction with public transportation in the Philippines. These findings suggest that customers' experiences with transportation services extend beyond the physical journey and include the quality of information and services provided through digital platforms.

The increasing use of ride-hailing applications has also emphasized the importance of effective communication between passengers, drivers, and service providers. In-app communication allows passengers to confirm pickup locations, receive updates about driver availability, monitor trip progress, and communicate concerns before and during their rides. These functions may influence how customers perceive the service's reliability, transparency, and safety. Nguyen-Phuoc et al. (2021) found that perceived quality of the booking application and post-booking service quality are important considerations for understanding passengers' continued use of ride-hailing services. Likewise, Najjar and Dahabiyeh (2021) established that process transparency was positively associated with customers' trust in ride-hailing services. These studies demonstrate the importance of digital service interactions in shaping customer perceptions, particularly when passengers depend on timely and accurate information during transportation transactions.

Despite the convenience these applications offer, communication-related difficulties may still arise during service delivery. Delayed driver responses, unclear pickup instructions, inaccurate location information, insufficient real-time updates, and confusing automated notifications may create uncertainty for passengers. Such difficulties may contribute to misunderstandings, longer wait times, booking cancellations, or dissatisfaction with the overall service experience. Ong et al. (2024), in their study of motorcycle taxi services in the Philippines, found that service quality and trust were important factors associated with customer satisfaction. Similarly, Ricardianto et al. (2024) reported that service quality and perceived safety positively influenced passenger satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty in Indonesia's ride-hailing services. These findings indicate that transportation service experiences involve both functional service delivery and customers' perceptions of reliability and safety. However, the specific contribution of individual in-app communication features to these perceptions requires closer examination.

Customer satisfaction and trust are particularly relevant because ride-hailing transactions involve interactions between passengers and drivers who may not have previously met. Passengers depend on application-generated information, driver responses, and platform procedures when making decisions about their rides. Najjar

and Dahabiyeh (2021) explained that legitimacy and process transparency contribute to trust in ride-hailing services, suggesting that confidence in a platform is associated with the clarity and dependability of its service processes. Furthermore, Ricardianto et al. (2024) demonstrated that perceived safety and service quality were positively associated with satisfaction and loyalty. These studies support the importance of examining trust and satisfaction in digitally mediated transportation services, although they do not establish that specific communication tools independently determine these outcomes.

Existing studies have examined various factors associated with ride-hailing service experiences, including service quality, safety, perceived value, application usability, customer satisfaction, and continued usage intention. Nguyen-Phuoc et al. (2021) examined booking application quality and post-booking service quality, while Ong et al. (2024) investigated service quality, trust, and satisfaction in Philippine motorcycle taxi services. Najjar and Dahabiyeh (2021) focused on legitimacy and process transparency in relation to trust. Although these studies provide useful insights, they differ in their operational definitions and measurement approaches. In particular, locally contextualized evidence remains limited regarding how passengers evaluate communication-related features such as tracking, notifications, and in-app messaging alongside their perceptions of trust, satisfaction, and service performance. This presents an opportunity to examine these experiences among ride-hailing users in Mandaluyong City while recognizing that communication quality, technology acceptance, trust, and satisfaction are conceptually distinct constructs.

The present study is guided by the Technology Acceptance Model, the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing, and the Expectation-Confirmation perspective. The Technology Acceptance Model of Davis (1989) emphasizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as beliefs associated with technology acceptance and usage. Applied to ride-hailing services, this perspective helps explain how passengers evaluate the usefulness and convenience of application features such as booking systems, tracking functions, and communication tools. The Commitment-Trust Theory of Morgan and Hunt (1994) emphasizes trust as an important element in maintaining relationships between parties. In the context of ride-hailing services, trust offers insight into customers' confidence in platform operations, driver conduct, and service dependability. Meanwhile, the Expectation-Confirmation perspective, as discussed by Oliver (1980) and Bhattacherjee (2001), distinguishes initial expectations, confirmation of experiences, satisfaction, and continued usage intention. This perspective helps explain how customers evaluate their experiences after using a service.

These theoretical perspectives provide complementary explanations of technology use, service relationships, and post-use evaluation. However, the constructs identified by the three perspectives should not be treated as interchangeable or automatically assumed to form a causal sequence. Perceived usefulness and ease of use concern technology acceptance, while trust relates to confidence in the service relationship. Expectations, confirmation, and satisfaction represent different aspects

of customer evaluation. Although the questionnaire includes domains associated with these perspectives, the existing composite measures do not independently isolate every theoretical construct. Accordingly, the theories serve as interpretive foundations rather than a fully tested mediation or causal model. This distinction is important because the relationships examined in the study are based on the available questionnaire indices rather than separately validated measures of all theoretical dimensions.

Considering these concerns, the present exploratory study examines the experiences and perceptions of ride-hailing service users in Mandaluyong City, with particular attention to communication-related application features, customer satisfaction, and trust-related perceptions. Specifically, it describes respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses across separate questionnaire domains, including perceived usefulness and ease of communication tools; intention and self-reported use; platform and driver confidence; reputation- and safety-related perceptions; expectations and confirmation; satisfaction; performance; and future purchase intention. The study also examines the reported correlations between the original communication-related and trust-related composite indices, the relationships between trust-related and post-use indices, and the reported demographic comparisons. Given the scope of the available data and measures, the analysis does not establish causal relationships or demonstrate associations among independently validated measures of communication quality, customer trust, and satisfaction. Rather, it provides exploratory evidence on related aspects of passengers' experiences and identifies areas for further examination and construct validation in the local ride-hailing context.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Setting

The study used a cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational survey of ride-hailing app users in Barangays Malamig, Plainview, and Barangka Ilaya, Mandaluyong City, Philippines. The supplied response file records submissions from April 21–29, 2026, correcting the previously reported May 2026 period. Associations were observed at one time point; temporal ordering and causal effects were not evaluated.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

The response file contains 151 consenting, complete records: 51 from Malamig, 50 from Plainview, and 50 from Barangka Ilaya. The prior manuscript reported N = 150, but the exact published correlations reproduce using all 151 records; no documented exclusion criterion identifies a record to remove. The original description of stratified sampling is unverified because no sampling frame, stratum selection procedure, response rate, or power calculation was supplied. Participants were

predominantly 18–24 years old (100/151, 66.2%), female (106/151, 70.2%), and students (85/151, 56.3%). The results describe these respondents and do not represent all city riders.

2.3 Research Instrument

The response file contains 65 five-point items in 13 five-item domains. Usefulness and ease of use measure acceptance beliefs; intention and self-reported use measure distinct behavioral domains. Platform trust and driver trust directly address confidence; reputation is a cue, and the five positively framed items labeled "perceived risk" measure perceived safety or low concern, not risk in an adverse direction. Satisfaction is measured by its own five items, separate from expectations, confirmation, perceived performance, and purchase intention. All items were scored 1–5 as answered; no items were reverse-coded. Cronbach's alpha for the 13 separate domains ranges from .874 to .933; reliability alone does not demonstrate discriminant validity or a causal model.

2.4 Data Collection and Ethics

All 151 included survey records explicitly indicate consent in the supplied response file. The original manuscript reports institutional and local permissions, but approval identifiers and recruitment records were not supplied. The authors should confirm the exact approval and sampling account against the study documentation before submission. The source response file contains email addresses and timestamps. These personal identifiers were excluded from calculations and from all reported tables. The authors confirmed that the consent and data-handling statements align with the approved protocol and that the identifiable response file is not shared with the manuscript.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

For each five-item domain, an individual score is the arithmetic mean of its five numeric 1–5 responses. Direct trust is the mean of the ten platform- and driver-trust items; direct satisfaction is the mean of its five satisfaction items. Means and sample standard deviations summarize these respondent-level scores; Cronbach's alpha assesses internal consistency. Pearson correlations with two-sided p-values and Fisher-transformed 95% confidence intervals quantify associations; Spearman correlations and exclusion of respondents who mark 5 on every item provide sensitivity checks. No factor or mediation model was estimated.

All 151 records were complete. The source paper's published broad-index correlations were independently reproduced from the four trust-related and five post-use domains, but these mixed composites were replaced in the primary analysis by

direct trust and satisfaction scales. For employment comparisons, "Student" (n = 85), "Employed" (n = 42), and "Self-employed" (n = 17) were retained and the remaining seven free-text/other entries were grouped as "Other." One-way ANOVA was used for exploratory group comparisons; Tukey's test was examined only to assess the original student claim. The prespecified analysis plan and group coding were unavailable, so demographic comparisons are exploratory.

3. Results

3.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1. Demographic and usage profile of respondents (n = 151).

Characteristic	Largest Category	n (%)
Age	18–24 years	100 (66.2)
Sex	Female	106 (70.2)
Employment	Student	85 (56.3)
Frequency of use	Several times weekly	64 (42.4)
Most-used app	MoveIt	84 (55.6)

The 151 respondents were predominantly younger women and students. Several-times-weekly use was the most common frequency (64/151, 42.4%), and MoveIt was most commonly named (84/151, 55.6%). Counts are from the supplied response file; prior N = 150 figures should not be reused.

3.2 Levels of the Major Variables

Table 2. Respondent-level scores for distinct questionnaire domains.

Domain	Dimension	Mean (SD)
Acceptance belief	Perceived usefulness	4.371 (0.550)
Acceptance belief	Perceived ease of use	4.354 (0.524)
Intention / use	Behavioral intention	4.298 (0.547)
Intention / use	Actual use	4.163 (0.647)
Direct trust	Trust in platform	4.134 (0.655)
Direct trust	Trust in driver	4.174 (0.621)
Reputation cue	Reputation	4.323 (0.609)
Safety perception	Perceived safety (originally "perceived risk")	4.147 (0.614)
Post-use domain	Expectation	4.207 (0.572)
Post-use domain	Confirmation	4.204 (0.587)
Direct satisfaction	Satisfaction	4.282 (0.560)
Post-use domain	Purchase intention	4.250 (0.548)
Post-use domain	Perceived performance	4.249 (0.568)

On respondent-level five-item means, all domains averaged 4.13–4.37. The sample standard deviations of domain scores in Table 2 differ from the original manuscript's reported dispersions. Usefulness, ease, intention, and actual use represent different stages; the safety items are positively worded. Satisfaction is reported

separately from expectations, confirmation, performance, and purchase intention. Twelve respondents (7.9%) selected 5 on all 65 items, consistent with marked positive response clustering.

3.3 Acceptance and Use Domains Versus Direct Trust

Table 3. Acceptance and use domains correlated with direct trust (n = 151).

Acceptance / Use Domain	r (95% CI)	p
Perceived usefulness	.577 [.459, .674]	< .001
Perceived ease of use	.580 [.463, .677]	< .001
Behavioral intention	.671 [.573, .751]	< .001
Actual use	.700 [.609, .774]	< .001

Using direct platform-plus-driver trust (ten items), usefulness correlated r = .577 (95% CI .459–.674), ease of use r = .580 (.463–.677), behavioral intention r = .671 (.573–.751), and actual use r = .700 (.609–.774); all two-sided p < .001 (Table 3). The earlier broad trust index also reproduces its four reported coefficients (.614, .611, .685, .664) using all 151 respondents, but it includes reputation and safety cues, so the direct-trust analysis is preferred. None of these associations establishes that communication quality causes trust.

3.4 Trust-Related Domains Versus Direct Satisfaction

Table 4. Trust-related domains correlated with direct satisfaction (n = 151).

Trust-Related Domain	r (95% CI)	p
Trust in platform	.541 [.417, .645]	< .001
Trust in driver	.628 [.520, .716]	< .001
Reputation	.555 [.434, .657]	< .001
Perceived safety	.617 [.507, .707]	< .001

Direct trust correlated with direct satisfaction at r = .626 (95% CI .518–.714, p < .001). Table 4 reports each trust-related domain's association with the five satisfaction items: platform r = .541, driver r = .628, reputation r = .555, and positively worded safety r = .617 (all p < .001). The source broad post-use coefficients (.629, .689, .576, .687) reproduce using all 151 respondents, but that outcome mixes expectations, confirmation, satisfaction, purchase intention, and performance. Differences between overlapping coefficients were not formally tested.

3.5 Demographic Differences

In a transparent employment comparison of direct trust, the student group (n = 85; M = 4.132) did not differ in the four-group omnibus test, F (3, 147) = 0.183, p = .908; Tukey's student-versus-employed adjusted p = .894. The original student-category p = .026 was not reproducible using these direct-trust scores and stated

coding. The original analysis specification is unavailable, so its source cannot be diagnosed. The other categories included employed (n = 42), self-employed (n = 17), and other/free-text (n = 7); sparse groups limit comparison. Results do not establish demographic equivalence.

4. Discussion

The respondents evaluated usefulness and ease of use favorably, and both domains were moderately associated with direct trust (r = .577 and .580). This pattern is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model, in which usefulness and ease of use shape favorable evaluations of a technology (Davis, 1989). It also accords with a Southeast Asian review showing that perceived usefulness commonly supports ride-hailing adoption or continuance, whereas evidence for ease of use is less uniform across settings (Chalermpong et al., 2023). In the present study, however, usefulness and ease were measured as beliefs about the communication features rather than as objective indicators of communication quality. The results therefore show that favorable technology beliefs co-occur with trust; they do not demonstrate that the features caused trust.

Behavioral intention and self-reported actual use were more strongly related to direct trust (r = .671 and .700) than were usefulness and ease of use. This pattern suggests that trust is particularly relevant once users move from evaluating a feature to relying on it during trips. The descriptive difference between intention (M = 4.298) and actual use (M = 4.163) also indicates that willingness to use a feature does not necessarily mean that it is activated on every ride. Prior Southeast Asian evidence similarly distinguishes acceptance beliefs from continued use and notes that usefulness, safety, security, and service experience jointly shape ride-hailing behavior (Chalermpong et al., 2023). Because the current survey is cross-sectional, the direction may also run the other way: repeated satisfactory use could strengthen trust and favorable beliefs.

The use of separate platform- and driver-trust items clarifies the role of the two parties in a platform-mediated service. Ride-hailing involves a triadic relationship among the passenger, driver, and platform; trust may therefore depend on both the digital system and the person delivering the trip. Najjar and Dahabiyeh (2021) found that process transparency—complete, timely, and accurate information about drivers, vehicles, routes, and service procedures—supports trust by reducing uncertainty. This provides a plausible interpretation of why communication-related beliefs were associated with trust in the present sample. Nevertheless, the questionnaire did not directly measure message timeliness, accuracy, delivery failure, or response quality, so transparency remains an evidence-informed explanation rather than a tested mechanism.

Direct trust was positively associated with direct satisfaction (r = .626), supporting the broader proposition that confidence in the platform and driver accompanies a favorable service evaluation. The magnitude is meaningful but not

evidence of mediation or causation. Research in a developing-country setting found that privacy, security, social protection, safety, and comfort contributed to favorable ride-hailing evaluations and future preferences (Ali et al., 2022). Likewise, service-quality research identified reliability as especially important for ride-hailing and security as central to shared services (Kumar et al., 2022). Together, these studies support interpreting trust and satisfaction as connected yet distinct evaluations: trust concerns whether the platform and driver can be relied upon, whereas satisfaction reflects the user's appraisal of the service experienced.

Driver trust ($r = .628$) and perceived safety ($r = .617$) had stronger descriptive associations with satisfaction than platform trust ($r = .541$) and reputation ($r = .555$). These coefficients were not statistically compared, so their ordering should not be treated as proof that one factor matters more. Even so, the pattern is compatible with recent evidence from an emerging urban market showing that driver performance, application performance, privacy, and safety risks influence willingness to use ride-hailing services (Mageto & Luke, 2025). It also explains why the original "perceived risk" label was misleading: the items assess feelings of safety, protection, and unconcern about misuse, so higher scores indicate lower perceived risk.

Reputation remained positively associated with satisfaction, although its coefficient was smaller than those for driver trust and safety. One possible interpretation is that ratings and platform reputation help users form expectations before a trip, while direct interaction with the driver and the perceived safety of the ride provide more immediate information during service delivery. This interpretation is provisional because the design did not compare pre-trip and in-trip judgments. It is nevertheless consistent with evidence that ride-hailing trust is strengthened by transparent service processes (Najjar & Dahabiyeh, 2021) and that performance, privacy, security, and financial risks can contribute to discontinuance decisions (Lu & Shi, 2025). A longitudinal design could test whether reputation initiates trust and whether subsequent trip experiences reinforce or weaken it.

The employment-group analysis did not identify a difference in direct trust ($F(3, 147) = 0.183$, $p = .908$), and the previously reported student-specific result could not be reproduced. This finding should be interpreted as insufficient evidence of a group difference, not as evidence that employment groups are equivalent. The sample was dominated by respondents aged 18–24 years, women, and students, while the combined "other" employment category contained only seven respondents. Recent ride-hailing research likewise cautions that the determinants of use and discontinuance can vary across age, income, usage frequency, and local market conditions (Lu & Shi, 2025). More balanced recruitment and a prespecified subgroup analysis are needed before demographic conclusions can be generalized.

The findings have practical implications for platforms operating in dense urban settings. Message timestamps and delivery confirmation can make communication status visible; editable map-linked pickup instructions can reduce ambiguity; route and arrival updates can improve process transparency; and masked contact details, accessible in-trip assistance, and trackable complaint tickets can address privacy and

safety concerns. These recommendations align with evidence emphasizing process transparency (Najjar & Dahabiyeh, 2021), reliability and security (Kumar et al., 2022), and risk mitigation related to application performance, drivers, and privacy (Mageto & Luke, 2025). Platforms should evaluate these features through controlled pilots using objective measures such as message latency, failed delivery, pickup errors, complaint-resolution time, and validated trust and satisfaction scales.

The study contributes localized evidence by separating direct trust and satisfaction from the related domains of acceptance, reputation, safety, expectation, and intention. This distinction addresses a common interpretive problem in which broad composites can obscure which beliefs are actually associated. At the same time, the results remain exploratory. The shared survey method, uniformly positive wording, ceiling concentration, and lack of factor validation may inflate relationships. The reduction of key correlations after excluding uniform maximum responders reinforces the need for response-quality checks, balanced item wording, confirmatory measurement analysis, and behavioral or platform-log data in subsequent research.

Construct validity remains the main limitation: no factor analysis or discriminant validity test has established separation among acceptance beliefs, direct trust, satisfaction, and related perceptions. Common method and positive item wording can inflate associations. Among 151 respondents, 12 (7.9%) chose 5 for all 65 items, and 37.7% of item responses were 5. After excluding the 12 uniform maximum responders (n = 139), usefulness–trust fell from .577 to .509, ease–trust from .580 to .506, and trust–satisfaction from .626 to .556; these sensitivity results are descriptive, as the exclusion was not planned and may introduce selection bias. Cross-sectional sampling and unverified recruitment prevent causal and population claims.

Future studies should document a sampling frame and recruitment flow, pilot direct items for communication clarity, timeliness, accuracy, and responsiveness, and validate the factor structure and discriminant validity of separate trust and satisfaction measures. The provided data support exploratory domain-level associations, not a confirmed causal or mediation model. Larger, more balanced samples and observed communication logs would improve precision and enable testing of links between communication performance and service outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Among 151 consenting ride-hailing users in three Mandaluyong barangays, usefulness and ease of use were positively correlated with direct trust ($r = .577$ and .580), and direct trust was positively correlated with satisfaction ($r = .626$). These cross-sectional associations survive a sensitivity analysis that excludes uniform maximum responders, but they become smaller. They do not establish a causal path from communication quality → trust → satisfaction. Practical proposals include reliable message delivery indicators, map-linked pickup guidance, timely status notifications, protected contact details, and transparent complaint tracking. These

proposals follow the issues motivating the study and require independent evaluation before their benefits can be claimed.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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