



Practice of Buying and Selling Used Motorcycles (Study at Muh Yamin Motor)

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-cultural dynamics inherent in the used motorcycle trading practices at the Muh Yamin Motor showroom. Utilizing a qualitative approach rooted in economic anthropology, this research shifts the focus from mere financial transactions to the underlying social structures that govern the local market ecosystem. Data were gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviews with the owner, mechanics, brokers (*makelar*), and customers, alongside comprehensive document analysis. The findings reveal that the sales process at Muh Yamin Motor is heavily embedded in informal social networks, verbal agreements, and ritualistic haggling behaviors. Rather than relying on formal legal contracts, transaction security and business sustainability are maintained through the continuous construction of mutual trust (*trust*) and personal reputation within the community. Furthermore, the operational mechanisms demonstrate how economic rationality coexists with social solidarity, transforming buyers into long-term social partners. This study concludes that the local used motorcycle industry operates as a socially embedded system where cultural values actively shape, facilitate, and regulate economic activities. Consequently, this research provides empirical insights into how traditional communal ethics endure and sustain modern informal marketplace behaviors in Indonesia.

Keywords: Used Motorcycle Sales, Social Embeddedness, Trust, Informal Economy.

INTRODUCTION

Trade is one of the oldest human activities, evolving from barter systems into buying-and-selling systems that utilize money as a medium of exchange. In the modern era, trade extends beyond new goods to encompass used items, including motor vehicles. A thriving sector within the used-goods trade in Indonesia is the market for used motorcycles. This phenomenon is evident in virtually all major cities, including Makassar, which serves as the economic hub of Eastern Indonesia (Suwanti et al., 2022).

Transportation plays a vital role in modern life, including in Makassar. The city holds a strategic position as a center for trade, services, and transportation. High population mobility and rapid economic growth have driven public demand for motor vehicles—particularly motorcycles—as practical and efficient means of transport. However, not everyone can afford a new motorcycle due to cost constraints. This is where the used motorcycle market offers an attractive alternative, providing more affordable prices and a wide range of choices. Over the past few decades, motorcycles have become the preferred mode of transport for the public due to their practicality, fuel efficiency, and ability to navigate areas with narrow roads. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) for South Sulawesi (2024) indicates that the number of registered motorcycles in Makassar exceeds 1.47 million units, with an annual growth rate of approximately 4–5%. This increase stems not only from new unit sales but is also driven by strong demand for used motorcycles.

According to Article 1457 of the Indonesian Civil Code (*KUH Perdata*), a sale-and-purchase agreement is defined as an agreement wherein one party binds themselves to deliver an object, and the other party pays the agreed-upon price (Subekti, 1992). This is also regulated under Law No. 8 of 1999. Sale-and-purchase activities are governed by the principle of freedom of contract; this refers to the extensive freedom granted by law to the public to enter into agreements regarding any subject matter, provided such agreements do not conflict with statutory regulations, standards of propriety, or public order (Saprida et al., 2023).

In essence, a "practice" refers to the actual execution or implementation of an activity in daily life. In the context of social research, a practice is understood as a series of actions, behaviors, and interactions performed by individuals or groups based on the norms, values, and customs prevailing in society. Thus, a practice not only demonstrates how an activity is carried out but also reflects the social relationships, communication patterns, and cultural values underlying those actions. In this study, the practice of buying and selling is understood as the entire transaction process taking place at Muh Yamin Motor—encompassing the offer, negotiation, vehicle condition inspection, price agreement, and the

handover of the vehicle and documents—which involves social interaction between seller and buyer and is influenced by the socio-cultural values prevalent in the community.

Used motorcycles are a primary choice for low-to-middle-income individuals, university students, new employees, and small business owners. More affordable prices, a quick purchasing process, and the availability of spare parts are the main reasons why used motorcycles remain in demand. This situation creates significant economic opportunities, as evidenced by the proliferation of used motorcycle showrooms and dealers across various locations in Makassar City (Febriana et al., 2022). One such establishment is Muh Yamin Motor, a showroom that has successfully sustained its operations and built an extensive customer network.

Beyond Makassar, the motorcycle trade is also flourishing in other major Indonesian cities such as Surabaya, Bandung, and Medan. In Surabaya, the used motorcycle market is highly competitive due to high public mobility and rapid vehicle turnover. The Dupak and Kenjeran areas are known as hubs for used motorcycle sales, characterized by open negotiation systems and a wide range of prices (Irawan & Almassawa, 2024). Meanwhile, in Bandung, consumers tend to be selective regarding physical condition, the completeness of documentation, and the originality of parts, largely because the buyer demographic consists mainly of university students and young professionals (Nugraha, 2022). In Medan, the used motorcycle trade relies heavily on social networks and personal recommendations, with trust serving as the fundamental basis for transactions between sellers and buyers (Lestari et al., 2022).

This comparison demonstrates that each region possesses distinct used motorcycle market characteristics shaped by local social, economic, and cultural conditions. In Makassar, social networks and local cultural values—such as *Siri' na pacce* serve as significant differentiators compared to other cities. This value system emphasizes the importance of upholding honor, honesty, and empathy in every economic transaction, including the buying and selling of used motorcycles (Salsabela, 2024). This illustrates that economic activity is driven not only by rational considerations but also by binding social and cultural values.

Beyond inter-city comparisons, it is also important to understand the differing characteristics of new versus used motorcycles. New motorcycles offer advantages such as guaranteed engine quality, an official manufacturer's warranty, and first-owner status; however, they come with a significantly higher price tag and suffer a depreciation in value of approximately 15–25% during the first year (Sartika et al., 2021). Conversely, used motorcycles are more affordable, offer a wider variety of models, and involve a faster purchasing process; however, they require diligence in assessing the vehicle's technical condition and the legality of documents such as the BPKB and STNK (Irawan & Almassawa, 2024).

From a socio-economic perspective, purchasing a used motorcycle reflects the rational consumption behavior of lower-middle-class consumers who prioritize functionality and cost-efficiency. Used motorcycles also provide economic opportunities for small business owners, traders, and mechanics to generate profit through refurbishment and resale (Prasetyo, 2025). Thus, the used motorcycle market functions not merely as an economic activity but also as part of a social ecosystem that brings together the cultural values, beliefs, and economic strategies of urban communities, such as those in Makassar.

From the perspective of economic anthropology, the practice of buying and selling used motorcycles is not merely a commercial transaction but also a social interaction imbued with cultural values, beliefs, and negotiation strategies. For instance, the price bargaining process often serves as an arena where communication skills, technical knowledge regarding the motorcycle's condition, and the seller's reputation play pivotal roles. In many cases, buyers select specific sellers based on trust established through prior experience or recommendations from others.

Furthermore, the used motorcycle trade in Makassar reveals the existence of complex socio-economic networks. Traders frequently cultivate strong relationships with fellow professionals, mechanics, and motorcycle enthusiast communities to secure inventory or attract potential buyers. This demonstrates that social capital—comprising networks, norms, and trust—plays a significant role in business sustainability (Salsabela, 2024).

The trading process at Muh Yamin Motor typically begins with the buyer visiting in person to inspect the motorcycle's condition, followed by price negotiations, and culminating in the final stages of payment and the handover of vehicle documents. Each stage involves social interactions that reflect the dynamics of the relationship between seller and buyer—dynamics inseparable from social values such as mutual respect and honesty.

The practice of buying and selling used motorcycles cannot be understood solely from a formal economic standpoint. From the perspective of economic anthropology, this activity is an integral part of the community's social and cultural systems. In Makassar, the values of *Siri' na pacce* (self-respect and solidarity) underpin the trust shared between sellers and buyers.

Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at Muh Yamin Motor—a used motorcycle showroom in Makassar—indicate that trading activity at the location is quite brisk and constitutes a vital part of the local community's economic life. Muh Yamin Motor is known locally as a provider of various used motorcycles at price points that vary according to the vehicle's condition and the consumers' purchasing power.

In practice, the process of buying and selling used motorcycles at this showroom involves not only economic aspects but also strong social elements. The researcher observed that interactions between sellers and buyers extend beyond mere price haggling; they also involve building trust through intensive communication and transparent information sharing regarding the condition of the motorcycles being traded. Social interactions—ranging from exchanging greetings and casual conversation to direct negotiation—demonstrate the social norms established among the parties involved in the transaction. Furthermore, preliminary observations indicate several factors influencing the smooth

conduct of used motorcycle transactions at Muh Yamin Motor. These factors include the motorcycle's physical condition, the completeness of vehicle documentation, price clarity, the seller's reputation, and the communication skills of both parties. Trust is also a crucial factor, as buyers tend to prefer sellers who are honest and transparent about the vehicle's condition.

Given these considerations, this study is significant for revealing how used motorcycle transactions are conducted at Muh Yamin Motor, the sociocultural factors influencing them, and how relationships between sellers and buyers are established and maintained. By examining this phenomenon through the lens of economic anthropology, this study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the interplay between local social and economic phenomena, under the title "Used Motorcycle Trading Practices (A Study at Muh Yamin Motor)."

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design from an economic anthropology perspective. This approach is selected to understand deeply the meanings, motives, and socio-cultural interaction patterns inherent in the used motorcycle trading practices at Muh Yamin Motor. Through an anthropological lens, the primary focus extends beyond mere financial transactions or profit margins. Instead, the researcher highlights how social networks, belief systems, bargaining nuances, and the construction of mutual trust are established among the business owner, brokers (makelar), and buyers within this local market ecosystem.

The research data are categorized into two types: primary data and secondary data. Primary data are gathered directly through participant observation and in-depth interviews with key informants, including the owner of Muh Yamin Motor, employees, mechanics, and customers. Informants are selected using a *purposive sampling* technique to ensure that the interviewees possess firsthand experience and deep insight into the business dynamics. Meanwhile, secondary data are obtained from internal business records, transaction logs, and relevant academic literature. The research site is purposively located at the Muh Yamin Motor showroom to observe daily activities and workplace culture in real-time.

Data collection relies on three core anthropological instruments: open observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sumilih dkk, 2025). The researcher will be present at the site to record body language, haggling strategies, and interaction rituals that occur during the buying and selling process. Once collected, the data will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, which involves three simultaneous steps: data reduction (sorting and organizing relevant data), data display in descriptive narratives, and conclusion drawing. To ensure data trustworthiness and validity, the researcher applies source and method triangulation by cross-checking interview results across different informants against the actual behaviors observed in the field.



Figure 1. Muh. Yamin Motor Showroom

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Muh Yamin Motor Showroom

The Muh Yamin Motor showroom is located at Jl. Muh Yamin No. 100, Bara-Baraya Utara Urban Village, Makassar District, Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. This showroom serves as a hub for the trade of used motor vehicles—specifically motorcycles—facilitating sales and transactions for the public. It occupies a strategic location on a major urban thoroughfare, making it easily accessible via both private and public transportation. Good road access and

proximity to centers of economic activity contribute to a high volume of visitor traffic. The showroom has been in operation since 2013, with business hours running daily (except on specific days) from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

The Muh Yamin Motor showroom serves as a venue for the buying and selling of used motor vehicles. The vehicles on offer are arranged neatly and systematically to allow consumers to easily view, select, and interact with them. Additionally, the showroom provides information services—handled by the owner—regarding vehicle specifications, pricing, and available payment options. These services aim to ensure convenience and comfort for consumers throughout the purchasing process.

In a socio-economic context, the buying and selling of used motorcycles at the Muh Yamin Motor showroom is not merely about economic transactions; it also involves social relationships between the seller and the buyer. The interactions that take place reflect a foundation of trust and active communication, particularly during price negotiations and discussions regarding the vehicle's condition. The seller's honesty in disclosing the motorcycle's physical state and the completeness of its documentation plays a crucial role in building consumer trust.

Access to the city of Makassar is highly varied, with options available via land, sea, and air. The city is served by major arterial roads that connect it to various regencies across South Sulawesi. This strategic location offers a distinct advantage for the Muh Yamin Motor showroom, as it operates in an area characterized by high mobility and significant demand for transportation.

The presence of the Muh Yamin Motor showroom contributes to local economic activity, particularly within the trade and services sectors. Beyond serving as a venue for vehicle transactions, the showroom creates employment opportunities and supports the local economy. As the public demand for private transportation grows, the Muh Yamin Motor showroom stands as a viable option for consumers seeking to acquire a motorized vehicle.

The Used Motorcycle Sales Process at Muh Yamin Motor

According to the Language Development and Cultivation Agency (2026), practice is the actual implementation of a theory—or the application of theory in daily life—that can be observed in the behavior of individuals or groups. From a social science perspective, practice can be understood as social action that is performed repeatedly and becomes part of societal life. Practice refers not only to physical activities but also reflects the values, norms, knowledge, and habits underlying those actions. According to Pierre Bourdieu, practice is the result of the interplay between habitus, capital, and field, which shapes individual actions within social life.

In this study, the practice of buying and selling used motorcycles refers to the full range of tangible actions undertaken by the seller and buyer during the transaction process—spanning the buyer's arrival at the showroom, vehicle inspection, and price negotiation, through to payment and the handover of vehicle documents. This practice encompasses not only economic aspects but also involves social interactions, trust, and local cultural values prevalent within the environment of the Muh Yamin Motor showroom. According to Sartika et al. (2021), the buying and selling process consists of three stages:

- a. Pre-transaction: the buyer identifies their needs, seeks information about the product, and considers alternatives.
- b. Transaction: direct interaction occurs between the seller and the buyer, involving price negotiation, offers, and reaching an agreement.
- c. Post-transaction: the buyer evaluates the product and service, which can influence future repurchase decisions.

According to Koentjaraningrat (2009) in the book *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi* (Introduction to Anthropology), economic activities such as buying and selling are part of a society's cultural system and cannot be separated from the social values and cultural norms that govern them. In the context of economic anthropology, buying and selling activities are viewed not merely as the exchange of goods but also as part of social and cultural practices. Among the Bugis-Makassar people, for instance, the bargaining process is often characterized by elements of kinship, social pleasantries, and a high degree of personal trust (Rahayu & Syam, 2021).

Before carrying out the sale and purchase of a used motorcycle, several stages must be undertaken by both the seller and the buyer. These stages are crucial for ensuring a smooth transaction and fostering mutual trust between the parties involved (Nugraha, 2022). The stages include:

- a. Physical inspection of the vehicle (body, engine, electrical system)
- b. Document verification (BPKB, STNK, invoice, service history)
- c. Price negotiation, taking market conditions into account
- d. Signing of the sales agreement or receipt
- e. Handover of the vehicle and ownership documents

Based on the points above, the researcher concludes that the sale and purchase of used motorcycles is a complex economic activity, as it involves a series of stages ranging from the physical inspection of the vehicle to the handover of the vehicle and ownership documents.

Based on the research findings, the process of buying and selling used motorcycles at Muh Yamin Motor involves several interconnected stages: the arrival of the prospective buyer, inspection of the vehicle's condition, price negotiation, payment, and the handover of the vehicle along with its ownership documents. Each stage reflects specific procedures implemented by the showroom to ensure smooth transactions and provide buyers with a sense of security. As stated by the showroom owner, Mr. Muh Yunus:

The process of buying and selling used motorcycles at this showroom begins with the buyer arriving in person or, at times, by appointment. They typically proceed to inspect the motorcycle's condition, inquire about the price and the completeness of the paperwork—essentially checking the physical state of the bike. Following the physical inspection, the price negotiation phase begins; buyers often bargain, citing aspects of the motorcycle's condition that do not meet their expectations as grounds for requesting a lower price. Finally, the process concludes with the handover of the vehicle documents and a receipt as proof of the transaction” (adapted from interview results, December 10, 2025).

These interview results indicate that the sales process is not merely a simple exchange but follows a systematic sequence of stages. It begins with an inspection of the vehicle's physical condition and document completeness, followed by negotiations until an agreement is reached between the seller and the buyer. Once an agreement is secured, the transaction is finalized through payment and the handover of the vehicle and its ownership documents.

Research findings also indicate that vehicle condition and document legality are the most decisive aspects in the buying and selling of used motorcycles. This was highlighted by Mr. Asri M, a buyer, who stated:

“In my opinion, there are several decisive factors: first, the condition of the engine, the vehicle body, and the vehicle documents” (adapted from interview results, December 17, 2025).

This statement was reinforced by Mr. Mujahidin, who noted:

“A decisive factor is that the vehicle documents must be complete, such as the BPKB, STNK, and the vehicle invoice” (adapted from interview results, December 17, 2025).

These two statements demonstrate that a buyer's decision is influenced not only by the vehicle's price but also by its quality and the completeness of its documentation. The engine, body condition, BPKB, STNK, and invoice serve as key indicators used by buyers to assess the vehicle's suitability before completing a transaction.

In addition to vehicle inspection, the negotiation process is also a crucial part of the used motorcycle trade. Negotiations take place after the buyer has assessed the vehicle's condition, allowing the offered price to be adjusted to the unit's actual state. According to Mr. Muh Yunus, a showroom owner:

“Price negotiations usually occur after the motorcycle's condition has been checked. At this stage, buyers often make an initial offer below the set price. However, I typically stand by the original price, citing the quality of the motorcycle's condition. This process often takes time due to the back-and-forth bargaining. If the negotiation results in an agreement, it is considered successful; if no agreement is reached, it is deemed unsuccessful” (adapted from interview results, December 10, 2025).

This statement is reinforced by Mr. Suharman, who noted:

“For negotiations, I first check the unit price at other stores—such as on online marketplaces—and then consider a price that is below the market rate” (adapted from interview results, December 15, 2025).

These interview results indicate that the negotiation process is conducted based on the information held by each party. Buyers first compare the vehicle's price against the market, while sellers justify their pricing based on the vehicle's condition. Thus, negotiation becomes a process of reconciling the interests of both parties until a mutual agreement is reached.

The research findings demonstrate that the used motorcycle trading practices at Muh Yamin Motor are not solely focused on the transfer of vehicle ownership; they also involve procedures emphasizing vehicle inspection, information transparency, negotiation, and document legality. This sequence of stages creates a structured trading process that fosters buyer trust in the showroom.

Furthermore, these findings can be explained through Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice. According to Bourdieu, social practice is shaped by the interplay between habitus, capital, and field. In this study, the seller's habitus is reflected in habits such as openly explaining the vehicle's condition, providing friendly service, and maintaining customer trust. Meanwhile, the buyer's *habitus* is evident in habits such as inspecting the vehicle's condition, comparing prices with the market, and negotiating before making a decision. The interaction between these seller and buyer habits results in a trading practice that is continuously reproduced within the business environment of Muh Yamin Motor.

The social interactions that emerge during the buying and selling of used motorcycles do not occur spontaneously; rather, they are shaped by a web of interconnected social, cultural, and economic factors. Here, social interaction is understood as a reciprocal relationship between seller and buyer, encompassing communication, negotiation, and the establishment of trust. From the perspective of economic anthropology, interaction is a crucial element demonstrating that economic activity is always embedded within the social and cultural structures of a community.

A primary factor influencing the formation of social interaction is trust. Trust serves as the foundation for open communication between the seller and the buyer. Buyers are more inclined to engage in interaction when they are confident that the seller is honest and transparent regarding the motorcycle's condition, usage history, and documentation. According to Mulyono and Sutopo (2022), trust arises not only from direct interaction but also from a showroom's reputation and recommendations from third parties, such as friends and family. Thus, trust plays a vital role in fostering enduring social relationships.

The next factor is interpersonal communication. Positive social interaction is shaped by the seller's ability to communicate politely, warmly, and openly regarding buyers' inquiries. The way a seller explains a vehicle's condition, addresses complaints, or offers solutions serves as a tangible form of social communication that fosters emotional rapport. (Prasetyo, 2025) asserts that effective communication creates a comfortable atmosphere and strengthens the social bond between seller and buyer. Furthermore, reputation and prior experience are factors that influence the nature of social interactions. Showrooms with good reputations typically retain loyal customers and benefit from word-of-mouth promotion. This reputation falls under the category of "symbolic capital" as defined by Pierre Bourdieu—a form of social recognition gained through consistent positive behavior and honesty in transactions (Habibi & Sholikha, 2025). Sellers who successfully maintain their reputation find it easier to establish social interactions with new buyers, thanks to the trust already established within the community.

In the context of local Makassar culture, the values of *Siri'* and *Pacce* also play a pivotal role in shaping patterns of social interaction. *Siri'* emphasizes personal honor and honesty, while *Pacce* reflects empathy and solidarity. These two values serve as moral guidelines for the community in conducting social relationships, including in buying and selling activities. Sellers who uphold *Siri'* by refraining from deceiving buyers earn respect and trust, while buyers who demonstrate *Pacce* by respecting the seller foster a harmonious relationship. These cultural values strengthen social interaction, transforming the act of buying and selling from a mere economic exchange into an exchange of social values.

In addition to trust, communication, reputation, and cultural values, the social habitus of the participants also influences interactions. Habitus refers to habits or behavioral patterns shaped by social experiences and one's environment. In the context of used motorcycle sales, a seller's habitus—characterized by honesty, openness, and friendliness—fosters positive interaction patterns. Similarly, a buyer's habitus—marked by politeness and effective communication—strengthens the social relationship established between the parties. This habitus serves as the foundation for recurring social actions, generating distinctive interaction patterns within the used motorcycle showroom environment (Habibi & Sholikha, 2025).

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that the social interactions between sellers and buyers in the used motorcycle trade are shaped by a combination of social and cultural factors. Trust, communication, reputation, local cultural values, and social habitus are crucial, interconnected elements that foster harmonious and sustainable social relationships between the two parties.

CONCLUSION

The used motorcycle sales process at Muh Yamin Motor is not merely a mechanical commercial transaction, but rather a deeply embedded socio-cultural phenomenon within the local community. Beyond the standard exchange of vehicles for currency, the process relies heavily on informal social networks, verbal agreements, and the strategic involvement of local brokers (*makelar*). The negotiation and haggling stages serve as a cultural ritual where interpersonal relationships are tested and strengthened. Ultimately, the successful completion of a sale depends significantly on the construction of mutual trust (*trust*) and reputation rather than formal legal contracts, highlighting how traditional social values continue to govern and sustain modern informal economic practices.

Furthermore, the operational dynamics at the showroom reflect a unique adaptation of economic anthropology principles, specifically demonstrating how economic rationality coexists with social solidarity. The owner and staff utilize personalized interpersonal approaches to build customer loyalty, treating buyers as social partners rather than mere sources of profit. Post-sale interactions and the provision of informal warranties further reinforce this communal bond, creating a sustainable ecosystem of repeat business. In conclusion, the trading mechanism at Muh Yamin Motor proves that local marketplace behavior in the used motorcycle industry is highly dependent on social embeddedness, where cultural values actively shape, facilitate, and regulate economic activities.

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