**USERS’ SATISFACTION OF TRICYCLE AS URBAN COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION IN MINNA, NIGERIA**

**Owuri Aishat Ize & Aliyu Kawu**

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal University of Technology, Minna

This study analysed the satisfaction that the tricycle users derive from the use of tricycle as a means of urban commercial transportation in Minna, central Nigeria. The core objectives of analysing users’ and operators’ satisfaction and providing recommendations for enhanced satisfaction revealed that tricycle as a means of urban commercial transportation is yet to meet the main requirements of the users as problems such as avoidable delays, longer time travel, discomfort, lack of access and on-transit discomfort with excessive noise are still being faced. Although, it was shown that operators derive high occupational satisfaction with the mode of transportation, it has little to do with ease of accessing the vehicles, comfort of usage, and the needed cooperation from other road users, passengers, law enforcement agents and even the revenue mobilization. This study utilized cluster sampling on the major traffic routes and bus terminus in the study area to generate primary data. Physical and socioeconomic surveys of major transit routes in Minna metropolis, intensive physio-economic analyses and interview of passengers, tricycle operators, and other road users, this study recommended the provisions of a more reliable, affordable, safe, comfortable, secured and satisfactory mode of commercial transportation in Minna. However, tricycles are recommendable as urban commercial transportation on certain routes, particularly with road rehabilitation, provision of additional road furniture, public enlightenment, gradual enforcement of peculiar traffic rules and regulations, in addition to training and re-training of tricycle operators to reduce the observed anomalies and increasing rates of accidents and on-transit discomforts.

**Keywords:** Affordability, Comfort, Poverty alleviation, Tricycles, Urban management, Urban mobility

**1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Transportation is one of the basic needs of life and the builder of cities and nations. Transportation can only exist efficiently if it successfully moves people, goods, and information (Mabogunje, 2008). Hence, the term transportation is often seen by many as the movement of people, animals, goods and information from one location to another and it is one of the basic human needs. Transportation is paramount to human existence because all of life’s necessities and pleasures cannot possibly fit within the reach of our static body. It is either we have to move ourselves to things or have things moved to us. The provision of transportation facilities is very crucial to the economic, political, social and cultural life of a country (Akinbabi & Fadare, 2008) as it enables trade between people which is essential for the development of communities and nations (Elbert, 2006). Urban transport system provides access and mobility for people and goods, linking origins and destinations both internal and external to the areas of interest, and also responds to well-designed economic policies geared towards accomplishing improved urban life. Public transportation is an integral backbone of urban life and it’s also one of the factors which determine the form and socioeconomic development of a cities (Santhumar, 2003).

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| The importance of public transport stemmed from the fact that it provides mobility for those who cannot afford to buy personal car and helps in creating and maintaining liveable communities by relieving highway congestion and assuring long term sustainability in terms of resource consumption and safe environment (Paul, 2001; Oni, 2003).  The acknowledgement of the importance of transportation has led to the research of the different modes of transportation including the tricycle. People use different means of transportation in order to move from one place to another but the satisfaction, derived, in newly introduced mode is the topmost priority of many researches. Besides enriching the number of available modes, it is also important to ascertain users’ and operators’ satisfaction in using this mode of transportation in bourgeoning cities.  **The Research Issue**  Cities are locations having high levels of accumulation and concentration of economic activities supported by transport systems. The most important transportation problems are often related to urban areas and takes place when transport systems, for a variety of reasons cannot satisfy the numerous requirements of the people (Rodriguez, 2013). The use of tricycles as means of commercial transportation has become the dominating and readily available means of public transportation in Minna, Niger Sate. Prior to this, motorcycles were chiefly used for similar activities until this was banned following several attempts by the authorities to curtail their incessant misuse.  Tricycle is a popular new mode of transport even in affluent industrialized cities like Osaka, Japan, where it is reported that about 250,000 people use tricycles in their daily movement to work. This movement is normally by commuting to train station and on return in the evening commute back to the city by tricycles. The city has also built parking facilities for 51,000 tricycles at 90 stations and planning to build more (Replogle, 2004). However, the use of tricycle for city transportation is important within and outside a city, but not without its own emerging transportation problems ranging from parking terminals, time delay, unequal fair charges, passenger and goods overloading, pollution, and so on. In Nigerian cities, the high rate of car ownership and other transportation services has not been able to solve the increasing rate of transportation demand as such the need to meet up with this demand has led to the introduction of other paratransit services especially tricycles (Bolade, 2007; Mabogunje, 2008a).  This research analyses the extent of satisfaction in which the users of this mode of transportation derive from the common and readily available means of commercial transportation within Minna. This was achieved by identifying and examining the: benefits of tricycle as urban commercial transportation, the challenges of tricycles as means of urban commercial transportation; users’ satisfaction of tricycle as means of urban commercial transportation; and, enlisting physical planning approaches for the use of Tricycles (popularly known as Keke-NAPEP) for sustainable urban commercial transportation in Minna and similar cities.  **Extent and Justification of the Study**  The study will observe the positive and negative impacts, which will then determine if it is a satisfactory means of public transportation. The aerial extent of the study is limited to the core areas of Minna town that include Tunga, Maitumbi, Mobil, Bosso, Kpakungu, Dutsen-Kura and Barkin-Sale). The peripheral neighbourhoods of Minna, such as Gidan kwano, Gidan mangoro, Maikunkele, are excluded as commercial tricycle are less committed to long distances or function as intercity means of transportation.  Studies have been conducted on urban transportation in relation to planning of transport services ((Mabogunje, 2005, 2008a; Mabogunje & Kates, 2004; Muktari & Kawu, 2013)). However, less attention is paid to users’ precise satisfaction and expectations; leading to inadequate information for effective policy formulation, and or implementation without the users’ perception, involvement and considerations. Detailed studies will provide useful inputs in the measurement of the performance of public transport systems like the tricycle services by the documentation of users’ satisfaction particularly in terms of its affordability, reliability, availability, manageability, and security.  **Concept of Urban Transportation**  Urban transportation issues are important to support the passengers and freight mobility requirements of urban agglomerations of the present urban century. Transportation in urban areas is complex because of the various modes involved, the multitude of origins and destinations and also the increasing amount of traffic as cities experience further growth and expansions in all directions. The focus of urban transportation has for long been on passengers as cities were viewed as locations of utmost human interactions with intricate traffic patterns linked to commuting, commercial transactions and other similar activities (Rodrigue, 2013). Urban transit is an important dimension of mobility notably in high-density areas (Mabogunje, 2008b; Rodrigue, 2013). Sustainable mobility in towns and cities means creating safer, cleaner and more efficient and effective transport systems that is crucial for sustainable economic and social development.  Public transportation is a crucial part of the solution to nation’s economic, energy and environmental challenges by helping to bring a better quality of life. Every aspect of the society benefits from public transportation. A key instrument for optimising the transport sector is the integration in traffic planning which considers the needs of the population, pay attention to the public and private sector of transportation, health and environmental concerns (GIZ, 2009).  Urban transport systems provide access and mobility for people and goods, linking origin and destinations both internal and external to the urban areas. It has many elements including public transport (collective transport), non-motorized transport (pedestrians, cyclist) freight and business traffic. The targeted objectives for urban transport are to fulfil the demand for accessibility with efficient and quality service, while at the same time promoting sustainable patterns and levels of traffic that take account of economic, social, environmental and safety concerns. Effective urban transport systems are essential to economic activity and the quality of life. They open up opportunities to access essential services as well as social and leisure activities.  **Benefits of Urban Transportation**  Public transportation has helped to enhance personal opportunities by providing mobility and freedom for people from every aspect of life. It gives people transportation options to get to work, schools, and visits. In general, it allows easy conveyance of people to job opportunities and livelihood places, reduce congestion, enhances affordability and also reduction in pollution generated from continuous use of multiple modes of transportation (APT, 2015).  **Prospects of Urban Transportation Systems in Nigeria**  As cities become the engines of economic growth and development, city officials and professionals in decision-making faces serious challenges of developing and maintaining efficient urban transport systems. Coupled with these are the complexities of urban systems that makes choosing the right strategy for many transport professionals a difficult task. As urban transportation stimulates and improves human existence and reduces man’s trip (Akinbabi and Fadare, 2008), the type of available transport and how they are used tells a great deal about a society and its values (Oni, 2003).  Several social, environmental and economic problems affect the transportation systems in Nigeria. However, inadequate planning and coordination, and continued concentration of transport development on intra and intercity linkages and the relative neglect of rural transport, have largely received much attention by many studies.  Urban transports remain one of the most common problems of transportation in Nigeria today. The activities present in the urban areas have led to the increase in population, thereby resulting to social and environmental problems (Aderamo, 1998). Road congestion tends to occur when the demand of transportation is more than the supply. Due to the problem of congestion the problem of parking becomes difficult to effectively handle as a result of the unavailable space (Kombs, 1998). In addition to congestion, is the issue of increasing occurrence of road accidents that are mostly the result of general impatience and nature of the road users, conflict between pedestrians and the different means of road transport in cities (Ogusanya, 2013).  As a result of these problems, there is urgent need to engage professionals in achieving functional, responsive, and sustainable transport system in Nigeria; which is the objective of a sustainable urban transportation: to maximize the use of transportation system to achieve economic and related social and environmental goals without sacrificing the ability of future generations to do so (Spaethling, 1996). Hence, the increasing need to assess users’ satisfaction and to also enlightened the public on best practices like regular maintenance of vehicles, good driving habits, use of alternative energies and low emission (Oni, 2002) |
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