

UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION ON TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

*Students of public universities face many challenges of transportation issues which affect their well-being. The study investigated undergraduates' perception of transport issues in public universities in Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive study design. The sample of the study was undergraduates in public universities in four selected states in South-west in Nigeria using simple random sampling technique. The instrument employed for data collection was self-structured questionnaire tagged "Undergraduates' Perception on Transport Issues in Public Universities Questionnaire (UPTIPUQ)". The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and rank order to answer the research questions. Finding revealed that major problems of transportation issues in public universities in Nigeria as perceived by undergraduates was the limited available buses/cars in the school. The finding also revealed that major causes, effects and solutions to transportation issues were the limited available cabs/buses, spending long hours at the school park to board cabs/buses make undergraduates get home late and affected their learning activities. **It was recommended that** means of increasing transport service should be explored. Ensuring the punctuality of the students for lectures rests on the brief and cogent university transport strategy and policy in the university communities.*

Key Word: Transportation Issues, Undergraduates, Causes, Solutions, Public Universities

Introduction

Government at all levels and other stakeholders including parents and educators are constantly examining the best solutions that may improve the education system to provide education for all. The establishment of a university as the highest level of education is one of the prospects to access and acquire quality education for young learners. The success of universities in achieving their initial responsibilities of educating and socialising students depend on their regular and punctual attendance in schools. According to Jones (2006), attendance is a priority to educators. Good attendance indicates the level of learners' seriousness with the study, intended behavioural modification and attainment of educational goals of a particular level of the education. Committed facilitators take students attendance before teaching their subjects to determine the number of students who attended the class. This attendance depends on the mobility of students from their various destinations to the school which is referred to as transportation.

Transportation is an important part of human activity. It forms the basis of all socio-economic activities. In many developing countries, lack of transport facilities most of the times hinders economic development, a good transport system is essential to support economic growth and

development. Bad roads, heavy traffic trains, overcrowded aeroplanes and congested ports are common features in developing countries. Physical problems such as untrained transport managers and planners, capital restructuring and bureaucracies, ineffective traffic regulations are present in the country. Generally, transportation is the actual physical movement of people and goods from one destination to another (Ahukannah, Ndinaechi&Arukwu, 2003). Various means of transportation exist for both human and material resources. These means have emerged through the length of time of human existence on the planet.

Man, nations, regions and the world would not develop without transportation, which is a key factor in physical and economic growth (Oyesiku, 2002). Transportation systems and land use are interdependent. Indeed research findings indicate compelling and consistent connections between them (Ewing & Cervero, 2001; Polzin, 2004). According to Bailey, Mokhtarian, and Little (2008), transportation route is part of distinct development pattern or road network and mostly described by regular street patterns as an indispensable factor of human existence, development and civilisation. The route network coupled with increased transport investment result in changed levels of accessibility that reflected through Cost-Benefit Analysis, savings in travel time, and other benefits. These benefits are noticeable in increased catchment areas for services and facilities such as shops, schools, offices, banks, and leisure activities.

Road networks are observed in terms of its components of accessibility, connectivity and traffic density, level of service, compactness, and density of particular roads. Level of service is a measure by which the quality of service on transportation devices or infrastructure is determined. It is a holistic approach considering several factors regarded as measures of traffic density and congestion rather than the overall speed of the journey (Mannering, Walter & Scott, 2004). Access to major roads provides relative advantages upon which commercial users locate to enjoy. Modern businesses, industries, trades and general activities depend on transport and infrastructure, with the movement of goods and services from place to place, it is becoming vital and inseparable aspects of global and urban economic survival. Developments of various transportation modes have become pivotal to physical and economic developments. Such modes include human portorage, railways, ropeways and cableways, pipelines, inland waterways, sea, air and roads (Said & Shah, 2008).

Students' transport is very important, although, there is little attention by the government to impact significantly on its demands by students during peak hours. As a result of this, Lurdes Didier and Pascal (2003) reported that transport issues can discourage dropouts among children from poor homes. Numbers of studies have established that poor students' attendance is an important predictor of students' failure (Janes, 2009). Achievement gains in education are determined to an extent degree by time-on-task and time allocated for learning. Students who expend more time on task tend to demonstrate more achievement gains than those who spend less time on a given task (McKinney, 2000).

According to Olomola (2003), inadequate provision of transport facilities and services provide a basis for the incidence of poverty across various Nigerian communities, especially in areas. The categories of transport problems that can be identified are bad roads, scarcity of fuel (high fuel price,

shortage of fuel supply and consequential high transport cost), traffic congestion (long waiting time, bad driving habits, traffic hold-ups among others), inadequate high passenger capacity/mass transit, vehicles and overloading, high cost and shortage of spare parts, poor vehicle maintenance and archaic vehicles. It is established that inadequate transport facilities and services, as well as the constraints imposed on the mobility and accessibility of people to facilities such as markets, hospitals and water sources, hinder the progress and development of African nations.

Despite the crucial role transportation plays in the socio-economic development of every society, most developing countries are characterised by the inadequate transport system. Since transport is one of the major problems facing students in public universities to attend their classes at a specific time due to distance where the schools located is a great challenge. Students have an issue with boarding bus, car and most difficultly tricycles on campus. This makes it difficult for students to trek the long distance to the school park after the long lecture hours to meet a long queue at the park. It is difficult for students to get to school in the morning as a result of poor transportation. People and other road users compete with them to board public buses when they are going to schools (Onyango, 2012). Transport has consistently caused problems for students although the school management has tried to make an effort to improve the transport services the problem is still persistently increasing as the students' population on continuously rises. In summary, the urban transport challenges in Nigeria today include traffic congestion, parking lots, accidents and environmental pollution. In some major cities, vehicles are seen crawling on the roads especially in both the morning and evening peak or rush hour periods. This amounts to a daily loss of time and energy in the various urban centres.

Also, Traffic delay problems are manifesting in many of the major urban centres in Nigeria. They are indeed becoming a menace to free flow of traffic in these cities. These problems are caused by ineffective use of road space and growth in the number of vehicles on the roads. The issue of traffic delay (especially at road intersections) in South-west like many other states in Nigeria draws significant attention each day. Intra-urban movements to work, recreational centres, markets, shops and schools are becoming more and more difficult and are characterized by discomfort, delays, waste of time, energy and resources. The problem is more pronounced during the rush hour of morning and evening when vehicles standstill in long queues resulting in stress and reduction in the productive hours of commuters. Although the situation in private universities has not grown out of control signs of potential bottlenecks of vehicles are already emerging along some routes in public universities. It is on this menace that the study wishes to look into the transportation issues among undergraduates in public universities in Nigeria.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate undergraduates' perception of transport issues among public universities in Nigeria. Specifically, this study investigated undergraduates' perception of transport issues, causes, effects and solutions to transport issues in public universities in Nigeria. The following questions answered in this study.

1. What is undergraduates' perception of transport issues in the Nigerian public universities?
2. What are the causes of transport issues in Nigerian public universities?
3. What are the effects of transport issues in Nigerian public universities?
4. What are the solutions to the transport issue in Nigerian public universities?

Methodology

This study focused on the transport issues in public universities in Nigeria as perceived by undergraduates. This study was a descriptive design of a survey type. Eight hundred (800) undergraduates were sampled from four (4) public universities in four states in Nigeria. Four states were selected in the South-west geo-political zone using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument employed for the collection of data was self-structured questionnaire tagged “Undergraduates' Perception on Transport Issues in Public Universities Questionnaire (UPTIPUQ)”. It was divided into two sections 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' comprises the demographic data of respondents like age range, gender, faculty and level while section B consisted of items that elicited undergraduate perception of transport issues in the University of Ilorin. The questionnaires were structured with closed responses which were restricted to the respondents for a set of responses on four points Likert type scale. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and rank order were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: *What is undergraduates' perception of transport issues in the Nigerian public universities?*

Table 1: Rank Order on Transportation Issues in the Nigerian Public Universities as Perceived by Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Limited available buses/cars in the school constitutes a problem of transportation service in the Nigerian public universities.	3.70	1 st
2.	Long distance between the school main park and some faculties discourages undergraduates from boarding cabs at the main park.	3.27	4 th
3.	Inadequate hostel accommodation within the university poses transportation issues in the Nigerian universities.	3.65	2 nd
4.	Fuel scarcity at times poses as a problem to transportation issues in the Nigeria public universities.	3.46	3 rd
5.	Schedule of lecture constitutes transportation issues as all undergraduates would want to go to school at the same time.	3.24	5 th

Table 1 indicated that out of five items that address problems of transportation issues in public universities in Nigeria as perceived by the undergraduates, items 1, 3 and 4 which were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively are prevalent transportation issues in public universities in Nigeria among undergraduates. However, the least of the items were items 2 and 5.

Research Question 2: *What are the causes of transport issues in the Nigerian public universities?*

Table 2: Ranking Order on the Causes of Transportation Issues in the Nigerian Public universities as Perceived by Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Large number of undergraduates on campus is a major cause for transport issue in public universities.	3.05	4 th
2.	Early/Late lecture hours lead s to transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities.	3.20	2 nd
3.	Prohibition of cabs/buses conveyingundergraduatesto and from each faculty lead to transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities.	3.04	5 th
4.	Limited available cabs/buses lead to transportation issues	3.50	1 st
5.	Unavailability of a formal park at each faculty leads to transportation problem in the Nigerian public universities.	3.09	3 rd

Table 2 indicated that out of five items that address the causes of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates, items 4, 2 and 5 which were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively are the prevalent causes of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates. However, the least of the items are items 1 and 3 which are ranked 4th and 5th respectively.

Research Question 3: *What are the effects of transport issues in the Nigerian public universities*

Table 3: Rank Order on the Effects of Transportation Service Problems in the Nigerian Public Universities as Perceived by the Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Spending much hours at the school park to board cab/buses makes undergraduates to get home late and affect their study.	3.69	1 st
2.	Undergraduates are not able to read their books due to fatigue as a result of transportation issues in getting off/on campus.	3.43	3 rd
3.	Transportation delay wastes undergraduates' time in terms of traffic jam at the park and along the university road.	3.41	4 th
4.	Traffic delay at time forces undergraduates to go home on foot thereby preventing them from attending lectures the following day.	3.19	5 th
5.	Struggle to get transport leads to damage and loss of undergraduates' property and at times causes injuries on them.	3.51	2 nd

Table 3 indicated that out of five items that address effects of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates, items 1, 5 and 2 which were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively are prevalent effects of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates. However, the least of the items were items 3 and 4 which are ranked 4th and 5th respectively.

Research Question 4: *What are the solutions to the transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates?*

Table 4: Rank Order on the Solutions to the Problems of Transportation Issues in the Nigerian Public Universities as Perceived by the Undergraduates

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank Order
1.	Management should endeavour to fast track quick completion of park under construction.	3.56	3 rd
2.	Car parks should be made available at different locations or faculties.	3.21	6 th
3.	Lecture times should not be highly restricted to evening time.	3.32	4 th
4.	Provisions of more hostel accommodations should be encouraged.	3.67	2 nd
5.	More cabs / buses should be made available to undergraduates.	3.69	1 st
6.	There should be provision of alternative routes leading to the school.	3.23	5 th

Table 4 indicates that out of six items that address the solutions to problems of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates, items 5, 4 and 1 which are ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively are prevalent solutions to problems of transportation issues in the Nigerian public universities as perceived by the undergraduates. However, the least of the items were items 6 and 2, which are ranked 5th and 6th respectively.

Discussion

This study examined the undergraduates' perception of transport issues in Nigerian public universities. Findings revealed that major problems of transportation issues in public universities as perceived by undergraduates was that limited available buses/cars in the school constitute a problem of transportation service in public universities. This finding is consistent with Basorun and Rotowa (2012) who reported that the main problem of transportation issues was the limited available buses and cars.

Another finding revealed that one of the major causes of transportation issues in public universities as perceived by undergraduates was that the limited available cabs/buses lead to transportation issues. This finding is contrary to that of Mugoro (2014) who reported that the major cause of transportation in community secondary schools in Darus Salaam City, Tanzania is limited buses.

Furthermore, finding also revealed that major effects of transportation service in public universities as perceived by undergraduates was that spending many hours at the school park to board cab/buses which made undergraduates get home late and in turn affect their study negatively.

This finding is in line with that of Mugoro (2014) who reported that the effect of transportation problems was on a student than other school attendance.

The last finding revealed that the major likely solutions to the problems of transportation issues in public universities in Nigeria as perceived by the undergraduates were that more cabs/buses should be made available to undergraduates. This finding is line with that of Sunday and Olatunde (2011) who posited that funds should be provided to private transporters by the government.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that limited available buses/cars in the school constituted the problem of transportation in the Nigerian public university's students. Spending long hours at the school parks to board cabs/buses make undergraduates get to school and get home late and affects their learning process. The major likely solutions to the problems of transportation issues in public universities in Nigeria is that more cabs/buses should be made available to undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the means of increasing public transport should be explored in public universities. Meeting the travel demands of the commuters, therefore, rests on a concise and cogent university transport system. The thrust of easy transportation should be promoted to sustain high-quality links for undergraduates to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the transport system. Transportation sector should also be assisted with funds through soft loans/grants to enhance their operations in the public universities. These recommendations if fully implemented, would contribute significantly to the technical capabilities of operators and lead to the more effective transportation system in the Nigerian public universities.

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