

Impact of Commercial Motorcycle Operations Ban on the Users in Lagos Metropolis

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Abstract

Though the emergence of commercial motorcycle operations (CMO) came as a big relief to the prevailing transportation and unemployment problems with other advantages such as curbing loss of economic man hour, lateness to work, and other challenges associated with traffic jam, the problem associated with its operations are enormous. The alarming report on crimes with the use of motorbikes and the apparent inability of the law enforcement agencies to prevent and control its persistence are part of what led to the ban of its operations in some part of Lagos metropolis. Oshodi-Isolo Local government was randomly selected among the 16 local government area that made up of Lagos metropolitan area and 200 structured questionnaires was administered. The principal findings of this study are that the ban has significantly reduce the accident cases on highway; also confirmed that Okada are often used for criminal activities and; that the ban on CMO has reduced the rate of criminal activities being perpetrated with the use of Okada. While it is also worthy to be noted that the CMO ban does not contribute to the increase in transport charges and cost.

Keywords: CMO, Transportation, Ban, Highway, Lagos metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

Africa's cities are growing rapidly—in the range of 4 to 6 percent annually. In 2000, one in three Africans lived in a city; by 2030, it is expected that one in two will do so. The cities are administrative, industrial, and commercial capitals, headquarters of at least 70 percent of the country's commercial banks, insurance companies, industries, more than 50 percent of the national manufacturing activities and account for a commensurate share of skilled manpower (Kumar 2011).

In spite of the economic and commercial importance of cities, authorities have had difficulty in meeting the basic needs of urban residents, particularly the poor, who are most dependent on public provision of water, electricity, transport, and other services, although, rapid growth impacts all segments of society. The absence of enforced policies on land use and economic development has led to urban sprawl, low density, uncontrolled growth on the extremities of cities. This multiplies the challenges posed by this rapid population growth. Declining population densities have increased the size of needed water, sewer and electricity distribution systems, increased travel distances and pushed up the cost of providing all basic services, including public transport.

Meanwhile, the rising use of private cars has choked roads for all users, endangering the safety of pedestrians and the health of city residents who breathe in vehicles emissions. It has also made all forms of surface public transport slower, less reliable and more expensive to provide. Due to the sensitivity of the population to transport issues and its impact on day-to-day life, any local incident involving mismanagement of the sector gets widely reported by the press and other media and makes national news. In developing cities worldwide, the private sector is the dominant supplier of public transport services and provides employment to a large number of people (Ume et al 2011).

It is paradoxical that in developing cities where vehicle ownership is low, dependence on public transport is high whereas the financial condition and performance of all forms of government-organized public transport, either state or privately owned, are in decline. This situation has forced people and the market to develop creative solutions to address daily travel needs. A search for these alternatives has led to rapid growth in non-conventional means of public transport, initially provided by minibuses and shared taxi/vans, and more recently by commercial motorcycles. According to Olobomehin (2012), the para-transit modes have become the dominant form of public transport but they also present clear disadvantages from a general public welfare perspective in terms of the negative externalities generated (noise, safety, pollution etc).

In Lagos, the commercial motorcycles operations (CMO) as a public transport began in 1980 by a group of individuals in the Agege local government area. They were initially used to supplement family incomes by working after normal work hours. With a decline in formal public transport system, the operation spread to other areas and became a popular mode by the early 1990s, and almost 10,000 motorcycles were registered for commercial purposes by 1995. Economic recession and high inflation contributed to the increasing popularity of this mode among unemployed, increasing to almost 200,000 by 2007 (Kumar 2007, Sumaila 2012, Osoba 2012).

Though the emergence of CMO came as a big relief to the prevailing transportation and unemployment problems with other advantages such as curbing loss of economic man hour, lateness to work, and other challenges associated with traffic jam, the problem associated with its operations are enormous. Akogun (2008)

observed that the problem with commercial motorcyclists is not only that of recklessness and non-adherence to traffic regulations, but that many of them have been accused of indulging in criminal activities.

The alarming report on crimes with the use of motorbikes and the apparent inability of the law enforcement agencies to prevent and control its persistence is still a major concern to government. The advent of CMO (also known as Okada) as means of public transport, ease transportation problem in Nigeria, but the abolition of CMO in some urban centres in Nigeria, Lagos for instance due to their reported involvement in crime have not only compounded transport problems but has rendered many jobless.



Plate 1: Okada operators scouting for passengers

Crimes associated with commercial motorcyclists have been on the increase in Nigeria (Aborisade, 2010, Ukwayi 2013). The frequent occurrence of these crimes has become a major source of worry not only to the government but the generality of the masses. The proliferation of criminal activities with the use of Okada has resulted in the colossal loss of lives and properties (Bassey 2009). Apart from the lack of respect for traffic law, Ofuonyeadi (2008 cited in Olobomehin 2012), and Okache (2010), observed that on daily basis, commercial motorcyclists were accused of indulging in crimes such as murder, theft, handbag and mobile phone snatching, rape, kidnapping and ritual killings. The geometric increase in crime with the use of motorcycles has created fear in the minds of commuters, because it has become apparently difficult to differentiate between genuine commercial motorcycle operators and criminals.

The enormous crimes being committed by the Okada riders was a great concern to the government owing to the cries of the residents, the Lagos state government then thought it wise to nip it in the bud and placed a ban on the activities of the commercial motorcycle operations in some part of Lagos metropolis. This was greeted with mixed reactions, some agreed with the government while some thought otherwise.



Plate 2: Civil and Human Rights Society protest against ban on Okada business on Lagos major roads

The pertinent question is, are all commercial motorcycle operators criminals? Do the public see them as criminals? Does their ban affect the users? It is within this context that this study is designed to survey people's opinion on the purported involvement of commercial motorcyclists in criminal activities in Lagos Metropolis and the attendant consequence of its operational ban.

STUDY AREA

Lagos State is located in the south western part of Nigeria, on the narrow plan of the Bight of Benin, lying approximately on longitude 20 42' E and 32 2'E respectively, and between latitude 60 22'N and 60 2'N. Lagos state is bounded in the North and East by Ogun state of Nigeria, in the west by Republic of Benin, and stretches over 180 kilometers along the Guinea Coast of the Bight of Benin on the Atlantic Ocean. Its territorial extent and political jurisdiction encompasses the city of Lagos and the four administrative divisions of Ikeja, Ikorodu, Epe and Badagry and covering an area of 385,862 hectares or 3,577sq.km which represents 0.4% of Nigeria's

territorial landmass of 923,773sq.km. Lagos state is the smallest state in Nigeria yet, it has the highest urban population, which is 27.4% of the national estimate (Badejo, 2011). According to the 2006 National census, Lagos state has 20 local government areas with a population of 9,073,534 in relation to the National count of 140,003,542, among which 16 of the local government areas constitute the metropolitan area. However, based on the UN-Habitat and international development agencies' estimates cited by Odugbesan (2014), Lagos state is said to have about 18.5million inhabitant in 2008 and projected to be up to 35million in 2020. Of this population, metropolitan Lagos accounts for over 85% on an area that is 37% of the land area of Lagos state. With the above in view, Lagos state has a population density of about 5,171 person per sq. km as at 2008, following this trend and the fact that Lagos population is growing 10 times faster than that of New York and Los Angeles, and more than the population of 32 African nations combined, the movement and well-being of the residents in and around the city requires serious attention from the stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have been done on the use of motorcycles as means of public transportation in Nigeria; we can only review few of these studies. Ogunsanya and Galtima (1993) did a study on the use of motorcycle as means of public passenger traffic in Yola town, Adamawa State. The study identified economic depression and inadequate transport facilities as some of the factors that gave rise to the use of motorcycles as means of public transportation in Nigeria. In a similar manner, Adesanya (1998) focused on the evolution of motorcycles for public transportation in Ibadan. He looked at the socio-economic profiles of motorcycle operators, the characteristics of public motorcycles operations and the impact of motor bikes on passengers especially in terms of fares and safety.

Another writer, Fasakin also did a study on the factors affecting the daily profits of commercial motorcycle operators (CMO) in Akure, the capital of Ondo State, South West Nigeria (Fasakin, 2001). Furthermore, Oyesiku dealt with the subject of public transportation in his Inaugural Lecture. Among other issues, he looked at the rise in the use of Okada for public transportation in Nigeria pointing out that the decrease in the supply of new vehicles of all types since the 1970s contributed to the emergence of motorcycles for commercial transportation (Oyesiku, 2002).

Olobomehin (2002) tilted his research towards understanding the development and impact of motorcycles as a means of commercial transportation in Nigeria. The study among other issues observed that despite the significance of commercial motorcycle operations in people's mobility, critics of the Okada business maintained that the expansion in the business has increased the numbers of road accidents in the country and also constitute nuisance on the highways since many of the riders do not obey traffic rules. He then suggested ways of addressing some of the problems in his study, among which is the stiff measure such as an outright ban of Okada as a means of public transportation.

Ayanwuyi (2013) was of the opinion that Okada business had impacted on the community development from the rural dweller's perception. Similar study was carried out by Asekhome et al (2013), the study was on "Ban on Commercial Motorcycle operations in Benin City, Nigeria: An Appraisal of the Benefits and Business Opportunities. The paper posited that though the ban subjected many commuters to immense hardship, but it has some benefits among which is potential business opportunities creation.

The work of Ukwayi et al (2013) on the "Public Perception of the involvement of Commercial Motorcyclist in crime in South-South Nigeria" corroborated the fact that Okada riders actually committing heinous crime and mostly females and young people are victims because they go out often and board motorcycles more frequently.

It could be deduced from all the works reviewed that lots have been said about the emergence of the Okada as a means of transportation, its significance in mobility of people and employment generation; and the problems emanated from the its operations which led to its ban by various state governments in Nigeria, but much have not been said on the consequential effect of the ban of commercial motorcycle operations on the people's mobility. This identified vacuum is what the paper intend to fill, with the believe that it will guide the policy makers in formulating a more socio-economic policy that will not only enhanced the residents mobility, but also enhanced their socio-economic well being.

RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

Oshodi-Isolo Local government area with a population of 621,509 according to the National Population Commission (2006) and a projected population of 1,506,399 (Lagos Bureau of Statistics, 2012) was randomly chosen among the 16 local government that constitute the Lagos metropolitan area. 200 questionnaires was considered adequate by the author for this research, and the questionnaire was structured to elicit information from the respondents on their socio-economic characteristics; their perception on commercial motorcycle operation; perception on the ban of Okada operations; also on the involvement of the CMO in criminal activities and the impacts of its ban on the respondents. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship

between the respondents support for the ban; if the ban increase delay and difficulties in getting to their destination; if the ban increase transport charges; if the ban placed an untold hardship on the public transport users; if it has reduced the accidents cases on highway; if the motorcycle are being used for a criminal activities; if the ban has reduced the rate of criminal activities perpetrated by Okada riders and; if the Okada ban has increase safety.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

The gender distribution of respondents was fair with 49.5% male and 50.0 female (See table 1). The age distribution of respondents as it shown on table 1 indicates that 8% of the respondents are below 20 years, while 12.5%, 13.0%, 50.5% and 16.0% are between 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and above 50 years respectively. From table 1, it could be deduced that most of the respondents are adults who could understand the situation and give a valid responses. Marital status of respondents (see table 1) shows that 82.5% are married while 12.5 are single and 5.0% are divorced. The educational qualification of respondents shows high level of literacy of the respondents with 53.0% of respondents with tertiary education, 21.0% with secondary education while 26.0% belong to others.

The occupational characteristic of the respondents as it shown in table 1 indicates that the respondents were mixture of different professionals. 8.0% (students), 13.0% (artisans), 18.0% (business/self employed), 16.0% (private sector workers), 15.5% (civil servant) and 29.5% (trader). The distribution of the occupational characteristic indicates that the result will not be skewed towards a particular professional view on the issue under consideration. Table 1 also shows that the majority of the respondents belong to the medium income group, this reflected on their vehicle ownership status where 50.5% of the respondents own a vehicle and 49.5% do not own a vehicle (see table 1).

Table 1: Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents		Frequency No	Percentage %
Gender	Male	99	49.5
	Female	101	50.5
	Total	200	100
Age	Below 20 years	16	8.0
	21-30 years	25	12.5
	31-40 years	26	13.0
	41-50 years	101	50.5
	50 years and above	32	16.0
	Total	200	100
Marital status	Single	25	12.5
	Married	165	82.5
	Divorced	10	5.0
	Total	200	100
Educational Qualification	Secondary	42	21.0
	Tertiary	106	53.0
	Others	52	26.0
	Total	200	100.0
Occupation	Students	16	8.0
	Artisan	26	13.0
	Business/Self Employed	36	18.0
	Private Sector Worker	32	16.0
	Civil Servant	31	15.5
	Trader	59	29.5
	Total	200	100.0
Income Level	Less than #10,000	16	8.0
	#10,000-#30,000	26	13.0
	#30,000-##50,000	41	20.5
	#50,000-#70,000	25	12.5
	#70,000-#90,000	65	32.5
	Above #90,000	15	7.5
Total	188	94.0	
Vehicle Ownership	Yes	101	50.5
	No	99	49.5
	Total	200	100

Source: Field work, 2015

Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations (Okada)

Respondents perception on the appropriateness of operations of Okada on the highway indicates that 17.5% of the valid responses are yes, while 74.5% believes that it's not appropriate to carry out their operations on the highway (see table 2). On their patronage of Okada, 13.0% patronize very often, 8.0% often, 21.0% sometimes, 34.5% few times, while 23.5% do not patronize Okada. On their reason for patronizing the Okada, 31.5% were of the opinion that other means of public transport are unreliable, 63.5% believes that they patronize the Okada to avoid traffic hold-up and delay, while 5.0% believes it's more convenient to ride with Okada than other means of transport.

Table 2: Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations (Okada)

Perception on Commercial Motorcycle Operations		Frequency No	Percent %
Is it appropriate for Okada to operate on highway?	Yes	35	17.5
	No	149	74.5
	Total	184	92.0
Patronage of Okada before its ban	Very often	26	13.0
	Often	16	8.0
	Sometimes	42	21.0
	Few times	69	34.5
	Not at all	47	23.5
	Total	200	100
Reason for patronage	Other means of public transport are reliable	63	31.5
	To avoid traffic hold up and delay	127	63.5
	It's more convenient to ride on Okada than other means of transport	10	5.0
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Field work, 2015

Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations Ban

Majority of the respondents (69.0%) supported the ban, 23.0% did not, while 8.0% were undecided. 15.0% agrees that Okada ban has increased transport charges and cost, 45.0% agrees that it has not increased the transport charges, while 40.0% are not sure (see table 3). 13.5% of respondents believes that Okada increases delay and difficulties in getting to their destination, 41.5% thought otherwise and 45.0% are undecided. The pattern of the respondents on whether the Okada ban increases the hardship on public transport users was similar to others, 5.0% believes the ban do contribute, 50.0% says it does not, while 45.0% are not sure (see also table 3).

Table 3: Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations Ban

Perception on Commercial Motorcycle Operations ban		Frequency No	Percent %
Support of Okada ban	Yes	138	69.0
	No	46	23.0
	Undecided	16	8.0
	Total	200	100.0
Does the Okada ban increase transport charges and cost	Yes	30	15.0
	No	90	45.0
	Not sure	80	40.0
	Total	200	100.0
Does Okada ban increase delay and difficulties in getting to respondents destination	Yes	27	13.5
	No	83	41.5
	Undecided	90	45.0
	Total	200	100
Does the Okada ban increase hardship on public transport users	Yes	10	5.0
	No	100	50.0
	Not sure	90	45.0
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Field work, 2015

Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations (CMO) as a cause of accidents on highway

15.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that CMO is a major cause of accidents on the highway, 58.0% agreed and 21.5% disagreed, while 5.0% strongly disagreed. This pattern of responses depicts that the Okada operations actually contribute to the accidents on the highway (see table 4). Further inquiry to know if the Okada operation has reduced the cases of accidents on the highway shows that 71.0% of the respondents believe that it has

reduced the rate of accidents while 13% said no and 12.5% are not sure (see also table 4).

Table 4: Perception of Respondents on Commercial Motorcycle Operations (CMO) as a cause of accidents on highway

Perception on CMO as a cause of accident on highway		Frequency No	Percent %
CMO as a cause of accident on highway	Strongly agree	31	15.5
	Agree	116	58.0
	Disagree	43	21.5
	Strongly disagree	10	5.0
	Total	200	100
Does Okada ban reduce the accident cases on the highway?	Yes	142	71.0
	No	26	13.0
	Not sure	25	12.5
	Total	193	96.5

Source: Field work, 2015

Perception of Respondents on CMO involving in Criminal Activities

The responses as it shows in table 5, indicates that 45.0% strongly agreed to the assertion that CMO are often used for criminal activities, 37.0% agreed to the assertion, 13.0% disagreed while 5.0% strongly disagreed. Further inquiry to know if its ban has reduced the rate of criminal activities indicates that 74.0% agrees to yes, while 26.0% are not sure (see table 5). Also to know if its ban has increased safety, 41.5% says yes, 8.0% says no, while 50.5% are sure.

Table 5: Perception of Respondents on CMO involving in Criminal Activities

CMO involving in criminal activities		Frequency No	Percent %
CMO using for criminal activities	Strongly agreed	90	45.0
	Agreed	74	37.0
	Disagreed	26	13.0
	Strongly disagreed	10	5.0
	Total	200	100.0
Has Okada ban reduce the rate of criminal activities?	Yes	148	74.0
	Not sure	52	26.0
	Total	200	100
Do you think the ban has increase safety?	Yes	83	41.5
	No	16	8.0
	Not sure	101	50.5
	Total	200	100

Source: Field work, 2015

Perception of Respondents on CMO ban and its impact on the users

From table 6, it shows that most of the respondents (91.0%) have not been robbed by bandits operating on Okada, while 9.0% have been a victim. The respondents' involvement in an Okada accidents revealed that 34.5% has involved, while 65.5% of the respondents have not. The respondents responses on the CMO ban impact on the people shows that 65.0% of the respondents agreed to the assertion that it has been of more good, 26.5% believes it has created more havoc, while 8.5% are not sure.

Table 6: Perception of Respondents on CMO ban and its impact on the users

CMO ban and its impact on the users		Frequency No	Percent %
Have you been robbed by bandit operating with Okada?	Yes	18	9.0
	No	182	91.0
	Total	200	100.0
Have you been involved in an Okada accident?	Yes	69	34.5
	No	131	65.5
	Total	200	100
Effect of Okada ban on the users	Been of more good	130	65.0
	It has created more havoc	53	26.5
	Not sure	17	8.5
	Total	200	100

Source: Field work, 2015

Relationships between CMO ban and its challenges

The correlation analysis as it shown in table 7 indicates that there is relationship between the support for the ban of Okada and the reduction in the accident cases on the highway; the agreement that CMO are often used for criminal activities and; the agreement that CMO reduce the rate of criminal activities perpetrated with the use of Okada. The result also shows that there is relationship between the CMO ban increase hardship on public transport users and the ban increase the delay and difficulties in getting to user's destination. However, the result indicates that the CMO ban does not in any way increase transport charges and cost with a negative correlation (see table 7). The result of the correlation implies that all the variables are distinct, since the values obtained are all small. This established that the respondents actually believed that each of the factors is important in determining their relationship with the CMO ban.

Table 7: Relationships between CMO ban and its challenges

	x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6	x7	x8
x1	1							
x2	.266*	1						
x3	-.017	.660**	1					
x4	.011	.723**	.540**	1				
x5	.717*	.004	-.157*	.121	1			
x6	.585**	.209**	-.293**	.277**	.676**	1		
x7	.573**	.255**	-.016	.219**	.665**	.765**	1	
x8	.158*	.070	.131	.223**	.534**	.453**	.565**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

x1 - Are you in support of CMO ban?

x2 - Does CMO ban increase delay and difficulties in getting to your destination?

x3 - Does the CMO ban increase transport charges and cost?

x4 - Does the CMO ban increase hardship on public transport users?

x5 - Does the CMO ban reduce the accident cases on the highway?

x6 - Does the CMO ban reduce the accident cases on the highway?

x7 - Does CMO ban reduce the rate of criminal activities?

x8 - Do you think the CMO ban has increase safety?

Source: Field work, 2015

CONCLUSION

The study has looked critically into the supposedly would be the implication of CMO ban in Lagos Metropolis. The relationships between the support of the CMO ban and some challenges it could pose were determined.

The principal findings of this study are that the ban has significantly reduce the accident cases on highway; also confirmed that Okada are often used for criminal activities and; that the ban on CMO has reduced the rate of criminal activities being perpetrated with the use of Okada. While it is also worthy to be noted that the CMO ban does not contribute to the increase in transport charges and cost.

To some extent, the CMO ban has some implication in the socio-economic well-being of the users. In the sense that, it has reduced the rate at which people lost their valuables to the bandits on Okada; the cost of hospitalization when involved in an accident, as well as reduction in the rate at which the Okada is constituting nuisance.

Conclusively, it is then recommend that the government should be more alive to their responsibilities in the provision of an efficient integrated public transport system that will meet the demand of the public in terms of their mobility without much delay; the law enforcement should ensure that the commercial motorcycle operators comply with the directive on their restriction from some parts of the city; and, the commercial motorcycle operators and the public should be enlightened more on the danger inherent in operating on the highway.

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