

An Assessment of Commercial Motorcycle Transport Operators (CMTO) In Zaria Metropolis, Kaduna State

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Abstract

The presence and activities of Commercial Motorcycle Transport Operators (CMTO) is ubiquitous in Zaria metropolis and its growing effects fully felt. Consequently there is the need of a research focusing on its assessment. The aim of this study is to assess the activities of CMTO with a view to positively repositioning and regulating its activities for effectiveness. Accordingly, the researchers utilized primary data via the use of 250 questionnaires; collecting data on several research parameters relevant to this study. The study reveals that CMTO activities are indispensable in Zaria metropolis due to their significance in facilitating transportation activities in the study area. The study also shows that the number of people joining the business is on the increase and it is a readily available means of employment in the study area. Majority of the operators have experienced one form of accident or the other and expressed the view that the job is highly risky in nature due to fatal accidents that have led many operators to their premature graves. The study also highlighted some of the problems confronting the CMTO activities and proffered relevant workable solutions for ameliorating the problems.

Introduction

The impact of the rapid rate of urbanization on urban amenities in the Third World is disturbing. This is due to enormous pressure on basic infrastructures like portable water, waste disposal accommodation and transportation system. All these amenities have been over stretched in many aspects, especially transportation system in cities of the world. The importance of transport in any available environment cannot be underestimated. Man as a social and gregarious animal cannot live in isolation but in association, hence there is the need for interaction, which is enhanced by transportation. Bolade (1986) views transport as a derived demand, which serves to bridge the distance between origin and destination. In other words, transport serves as a connector while distance is a major determinant of the intensity of relationship between various sets of phenomena distributed in space. It is as a result of important key roles transportation plays in our society that brings about various modes of public transport in cities, some of which are unique. The common modes include: taxicabs, private cars, bus-services are integral part of Nigeria public transport system especially in our cities in recent time (Iyiola and John, 2003).

The problem of urban transport is particularly complex and has come to stay in some Nigeria urban centers as a result of the low level of public transport services as well as the ever-increasing demand by the general public transport for easy transportation system for their immediate use. Earlier works by Daniel (1983; Filani 1981; Herbert 1978; Knowles 1993; Ogunsanya 1993), were centered on importance of motorcycle transportation system in the country. However, the main demand for transport need as an alternative to supplement other modes has

been on the increase without satisfaction in recent times and writers focused little attention on this. This assertion has provided fertile ground for unconventional modes of transportation system in cities and urban centers of Nigeria; this is the focus of this work. One of such unconventional mode is that of the CMTO in our major cities and urban centres. This mode emerged recently in some Nigerian cities and urban centers even though, this CMTO were popular in rural settings in the early 80s but have continued to gain national acceptance in urban centers of our country in recent times.

This study aimed at assessing the role played by the CMTO as prerogative alternative means of supplementary other vehicular transport modes in Zaria metropolis. The objectives sought include: its operating characteristics and problems emanating from this rapidly growing mode of transportation, and if the emergence of this mode should be allowed to remain functioning in Zaria Metropolis, among others.

Conceptual Frame Work

Commercial Motorcycle Transport Operations (CMTO) simply refers to commercial motorcycles that are now being used to supplement efforts of other vehicles like bus services and taxicabs in Nigeria. It is one of the chief modes of transportation in some cities in the country, by far, the most common form of informal transport system of our time. The popularity and widespread acceptance of this mode of transport has rapidly risen.

CMTO have adapted easily to the prevailing economic climate in a contemporary Nigeria society when other modes are plagued by series of problems such as hyper-congestion, high cost of spare parts and the poor state of roads. But CMTO have become a

ubiquitous feature in Nigerian cities because of their low cost of purchase, easy accessibility to roads and lanes, as well as their fuel efficiency.

The activities of motorcycle operators in urban centers of Nigeria have been described as a unique experience by regular passengers and tourists (Coervero, 2005). In major cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kano, Kaduna, to mention but a few, where traffic congestions (and inevitably delays) represent an ever present threat to business individuals, government workers, students and other passengers. CMTO come to weave through traffic, and literally rescue countless helpless customers from the organize chaos on Nigerian roads. CMTO like all others elsewhere, have a far higher rate of and fatal accidents per unit distance than automobiles. In USA, a survey carried out in 2004 revealed that while about 15.0% cars out of 100 000 ended up in fatal crashes, the rate for motorcycles was 69.3 per 100 000 (US Transport, 2004).

Causes and Consequences of CMTO Accidents In Nigeria Cities

Given the common incidence and serious consequences of motorcycles accidents in the study area, there has been surprisingly little contribution to the study of their causes and effects most especially in Nigeria. However, the followings are the root causes of accidents in the cities of Nigeria where CMTO services are being carried out:

- Riders do not pay attention to road signs and other motorists.
- Most riders are unlicensed and untrained; most of them make their commercial debut after a few hours of training sessions.
- Underage riders are not a rarity on Nigeria roads.
- Drunk or drugged riders are not uncommon.
- Shared-riders involving two or more passengers, mostly among the uniformed police officers are rampant.
- The poor state of most urban roads in Nigeria, which are typically riddled with potholes, also contributes to the problems highlighted.
- Graft and corruption among the road safety officials, and the Nigeria police, who are easily induced into condoning traffic misdemeanors when given bribes are also not uncommon.

Generally, transportation system in Zaria Metropolis is faced with some problems and the causes of these problems are partly because of urbanization processes, development of some new roads which are not motorable some years back or as a result of the increase in more vehicles owned by individuals, government, organizations and private business enterprises which are demanding for increased

transport services. However, all the above observations have not satisfactorily reduced the transportation demand by the masses in Zaria metropolis.

It is no gainsay that, the emergence of CMTO services in Zaria metropolis serves as a source of employment to thousand of youths, retrenched workers and retired civil servants, to have something to fall back to and also to sustain their livelihood. But the new mode of commercial transportation in the city is a succor to public easiness and relief to transport problems in the city. This aside, the CMTO services in Zaria metropolis have assisted in no small measure in reducing cost of transportation from one part of the city to the other. More especially, where taxis-cabs or buses services could not reach or ply due to bad roads or unfriendly terrain. Certainly, the ability of this mode of transportation (CMTO) to provide door-to-door services and plies both narrow and congested routes, this also gives a credence to the services render by this mode of transportation in Zaria metropolis.

However, apart from the easiness to access, quick to reach and provision of door to door services by CMTO system, this mode is not without its shortcomings. There are many records of CMTO accidents victims involving the riders and the passengers alike, as well as other unethical revelations about the behavior of some operators of this mode of transportation in Zaria metropolis. But the question to ask is, should CMTO mode of transportation that is now increasing in Zaria metropolis be regarded as alternative means to supplement taxi and bus services or the private car services called Kabukabu (now almost extinct in Zaria metropolis) despite all the dangers associated with its operation in Zaria metropolis? This assertion would be assessed in details in this study.

Study Area

Zaria metropolis comprises Zaria and Sabon Gari Local Governments of Kaduna State, Nigeria. Zaria is situated on the High Plains of Northern Nigeria and is approximately 670m above sea level. It is located on latitude 11° 42' E, about 664km away from the sea (Arowolo, 2000, in Obadaki, 2007). Zaria belongs to the tropical continental type of climate which corresponds to Koppen's tropical savannah climate (Aw), characterized by strong seasonality in rainfall and temperature distributions. It has two distinct seasons – the dry season (Oct – Mar) and wet season (Apr – Sep). Mean annual rainfall is about 1000mm, while mean monthly temperature is about 27°C but is

highest between the months of March and May; it is lowest in December/January reaching about 22°C.

The soil type is highly leached tropical ferruginous soils, developed on weathered regolith over lain by a thin deposit of wind-blown silt from the Sahara

desert. Natural vegetation is the northern Guinea Savannah with shrubs and a few scattered trees. The dominant shrub is *Isobertina doka* while the common grass is *Andropogon spp* (Kwabe, 1997 in Obadaki, 2007).

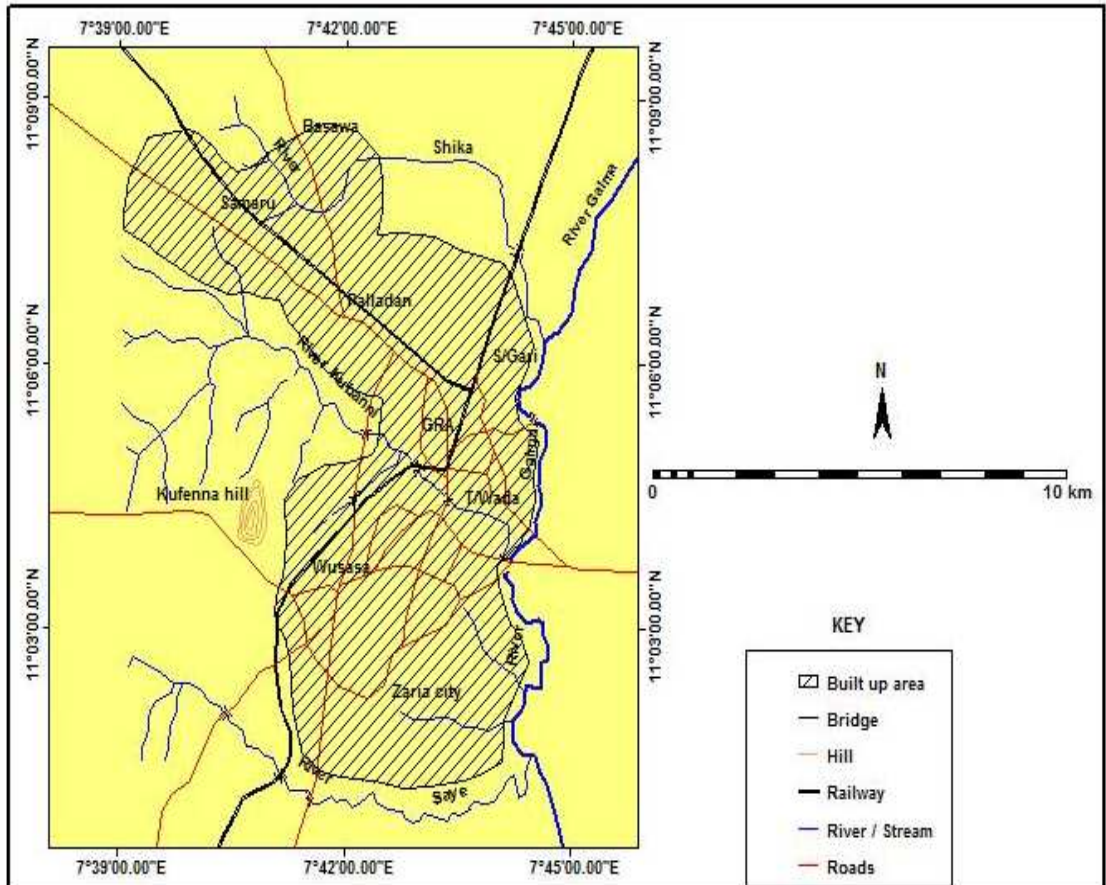


FIGURE 1: LOCATION OF STUDY AREA
 Source : Adapted and Modified from Topographic Map of Zaria, 2012

Based on the researchers' knowledge of the study area, Zaria Metropolis was zoned into eight CMTO zones for the purpose of reliable research findings. The results in table 1 obtained from the eight zones show that Sabon Gari Axis has 19.8% being the zone with the highest CMTO activities followed by Park road to Depot Barracks Axis with 18%; A.B.U. North Gate to ABUTH Shika has 16.5% while Kano road to Dogarawa Axis has the lowest rate of 6%.

highest number of participants in CMTO followed by age bracket 26-30, 31-35 and 36 – 40 respectively. This reveals that youths have the highest number in CMTO activities in Zaria Metropolis. It also shows that people of virtually all age groups participate in CMTO activities in the study area. This could be because it seems to serve as the last resort of means of livelihood for the participants. The study therefore, shows that CMTO occupation is not restricted to a particular age.

Table 1 Shows CMTO Zones of Operation and Number of Operators Administered Questionnaire

S/no	Zone	Location	No.of resident	Percentage
1.	Zaria City	Kofa to Interior Zaria City	30	12
2.	Samaru	A.B.U North Gate to ABUTH Shika	40	16.5
3.	Kongo	Agoro Junction to FCE Zaria axis	32	13
4.	PZ	GRA/MTD to Agoro Junction	17	7
5.	Sabon Gari	Entire Sabon Gari Axis	48	19.8
6.	Kwagila Axis	Kano road,to Dogarawa Axis	15	6
7.	Depot Barracks	Park Road to the entire Depot Barracks	44	18
8.	Gaskiya Axix	Gaskiya to Wusasa	16	6.6
Total			242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 2 Percentage Distribution CMTO Based on Age

Age	No. Of respondents	Percentage
16 – 20	30	12.3
21 – 25	46	19
26 -30	38	15.7
31 -35	36	15.7
36 -40	33	13.6
41 – 45	28	11.6
46 – 50	21	8.7
51 – 55	10	4
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 3 reveals that although respondents who fall within >1year and 1 – 3 years have the highest respondents of 25.6% and 19.5% respectively. However, CMTO activities involve people of all the age brackets given above. This could be attributed to the fact that more and more people enter into the business frequently while those already into the business remain in it since they hardly find any other means of livelihood and are therefore being reluctant to lose their only source of livelihood. Thus, spending more years in CMTO activities.

Results from table 4 shows that CMTO activities with regards to ownership pattern falls into these major categories namely, self-ownership, hirer purchase, poverty alleviation scheme and making returns. However, self-ownership pattern has the highest rate (33%) followed by hirer purchase method (19.4%). This implies that most of the operators prefer to own their own motorcycles that could be the reason for preferring self-ownership method which could be arrived at after saving for some period of times and hire purchase method which will give them the opportunity of being personally owners of the motorcycles after off-setting their debts.

Table 3 Percentage Distribution of CMTO Based on Years in CMTO Service

Years in CMT Service	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
>1	62	25.6
1 – 3	47	19.4
4 – 6	38	15.7
7 – 9	40	16.5
10 – 12	30	12.3
13 – 15	25	10.3
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 4 Percentage Distribution of CMTO Based on Pattern of Motorcycle Ownership

Pattern of CMTO Ownership	NO. OF RESPOHDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Self Owned	80	33
Hirer Purchase Pattern	63	19.4
Via Poverty Alleviation Scheme	46	19
Making Returns	53	21.9
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

As tabulated in table 5, the research also reveals that most of the operators have other occupational activities they engage in probably to supplement their earnings from the CMTO activities. Some of the respondents responded that they have some occupations but they participate in CMTO activities to support their meager earnings. Thus, 43.8% of the respondents engage in CMTO activities on full-time basis, 36.4% respondents on part- time basis while 19.8% respondents participate on irregular basis i.e. once in a while. This last mode of operation consists of individuals who occasionally engage in CMTO activities probably when need arises and they

urgently need money; this constitutes the irregular operators with the lowest percentage.

Table 6 supports the fact that CMTO activities are prone to accident. 72.7% of the respondents have been involved in one form of accident or the other while 66% of the respondents have not experienced any form of accident. Those who have experienced accidents reported that some of the accidents were severe and others less severe. Most of those who did not experience accidents were probably those who are new in CMTO activities.

Table 5 Percentage Distribution of CMTO Mode of Operation

Mode of Operation	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Full Time	106	43.8
Part Time	88	36.4
Once in a While	48	19.8
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 6 Percentage Distribution of CMTO Based on Involvement in Accident

Accident	NO. OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
Yes	176	72.7
No	66	27.3
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 7 Percentage Distribution of CMTO Based on Challenges of CMTO

Nature of Challenges	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Fuel Scarcity	25	10.3
Poor Road Network	20	8.3
High Cost of Spare Parts	30	12.4
Harassment by Law Enforcement agents	42	17.3
Harassment by Other Road Users(Cars, Taxis etc)	15	6.2
Harassment by Local Government Officials	54	22.3
CMTO Union	36	14.9
Miscellaneous	20	8.3
TOTAL	242	100

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2011

Table 7 shows that CMTO activities in the study area are faced with numerous problems. The highest percentage response of 17.3% shows that harassment from law enforcement agents is the greatest problem facing the CMTO activities. This is followed by problem posed by the CMTO union itself on members with 14.9%. Respondents responded that the compulsory payment they pay to CMTO union in the form of receipts payments at every junction is a serious problem to their operations. These are followed by other problems as tabulated above.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, this study has assessed the activities of Commercial Motorcycle Transport Operators in Zaria Metropolis. The study reveals that with the increasing demand for transportation services and the relatively ease of accessibility of motorcycles compared to other means of transportation, it becomes necessary that the activities of CMTO becomes commonly found in the study area. The CMTO activities provide very useful services to the people of Zaria metropolis and has gone a long way to cushion the effects of high cost of vehicular means of transportation. However, the activities of CMTO are faced with certain problems highlighted in this studies that need to be addressed for the purpose of effective operation of CMTO activities in the study area, and accordingly, this study has proffered some workable solutions to the identified problems. The following recommendations are made based on the finding of the study:

1. There is the need for good roads to be constructed to make for easy accessibility for CMTO activities in the study area and to reduce the rate of accident as poor road network is one of the major causes of accidents.
2. The activities of the CMTO union need to be checked to stop the incessant exploitation of fellow members by some unscrupulous union members who regularly forcefully collect payments from members at every junction as this is highly discouraging and frustrating.
3. The activities of CMTO should be properly regulated by the appropriate government agency such as the road safety to ensure full compliance

to traffic rules and regulations and the use of good motorcycles on our roads.

4. There is need for the Road Safety Authority to make it mandatory for all participants in commercial motorcycle business to always wear protective helmets alongside their passengers. This will go a long way to curb the excessive cases of reckless accidents resulting from CMTO activities in Zaria Metropolis.

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