



MOTORCYCLE AS ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT: A LESSON FROM A NIGERIAN CITY

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Motorcycle is a popular mode of public transport in most of the countries in Africa and is not a new transport mode in Nigeria. The use of motorcycles for public transport began in the mid-1970s and its widespread use for this purpose is intensifying. Indeed, both rural and urban areas in Nigeria are experiencing a surge in the use of motorcycles as alternative means of public transport and there are indications that this trend is unlikely to diminish in the near future. This study therefore examines the conditions which made it possible for motorized two-wheelers to become a major public transport mode in Ogbomoso, Oyo State and to highlight their role in daily travel. Data were collected through questionnaire administration and personal interview adopting simple random sampling method. Two types of questionnaires (A and B) were administered to motorcycle operators and passengers respectively, at 16 motorcycle terminus/stops within Ogbomoso metropolis. A total of 160 operators and 80 passengers were sampled for the study. In addition to the use of tables, percentages and graphs the Pearson chi-square technique was used to test for significant relationship between the level of income of users and the level of patronage of public motorcycles. Results show that commercial motorcycle operation is a major source of employment to the active male population in the area because, 61% of the operators fall within the age bracket of 21-50 years. In addition, all the operators are in the business either as a result of unemployment or as a means of augmenting their income from other poorly paying occupations. The study also confirmed that commercial motorcycles are patronized by both males and females and by people of different socio-economic status. The result of the Pearson Chi-square test shows that there is significant variation in the patronage level of motorcycle among different income groups. The use of motorcycle as a means of public transport is more popular with the low income group. Commercial motorcycles were however found to have poor safety records and are often used to perpetrate criminal activities. It is recommended that road worthiness of motorcycles should be enforced to ensure safety of both operators and passengers. In addition, the government should encourage the replacement of motorcycles with tricycles which have better safety records. Efforts should also be directed towards improving mass transit systems in Nigerian cities.

Keywords: *Transportation, Public Transport, Commercial Motorcycles, Road Safety.*