

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the operations of Public Transport in Nigeria using the Kwara State Transport Service as a case study. Public transportation service in Nigeria is provided by both the public and private operators. While the public Corporations are established by governments, private service operations are uncoordinated and poorly organized. Due to the inability of transport operators to solve the mobility needs of Nigerians, the Federal Government established the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme in 1988 to ameliorate the transport situation in Nigeria. Through this programme, State Transport Corporations were established and assisted with buses and training in order to actualize the objectives of the programme. The study used data collected from passengers, through questionnaire administration, to determine users' views on the services provided by the Kwara State Transport Service. Data were also collected from records of the Transport Corporation relating to passenger traffic, bus fleet and types, fare charged and organizational structure to assess the operations of the Corporation. Results of the study revealed that operations of government owned Transport Corporations are defective in service delivery and reliability. Also, multiplicity of vehicle types usually affects vehicle maintenance. However, government owned Transport Corporation services are better patronized by travellers because of the comparatively lower fares charged in comparison with private operators. The paper recommends that in order to make the public transport service in Nigeria responsive to the mobility needs of the people, improvements are needed in the operations of government transport organizations. Such improvements are in the areas of bus types, route selection and vehicle maintenance. Further, there should be encouragement of private operators through government financial assistance.

Key Words: Operational Efficiency, Public Transport, Transport System, Kwara State

Introduction

The level of public transport provision in the third world is very low. Public transport supply cannot cope with the demand. This is due to rapid urbanization and the increasing economic activities in the developing countries, which make it difficult for the transportation needs of the people to be fully satisfied. According to Hilling (1997), there are 40 percent fewer buses per head of population in the third world and the average number of buses operated per 100,000 populations is 65, whereas in the United Kingdom, the figure is 90.

In the developing world, car ownership rates are also low. In 1997, World Bank figures showed an average of 64 cars per 1,000 residents in Latin America and the Caribbean, 15 cars per 1,000 residents in Asia and 13 cars per 1,000 residents in Africa (World Bank, 1999; De Souza et al, 1999). In 2000, about 70 percent of the world's automobiles were reported to be in more developed countries. The United States and a handful of other wealthy countries have more than 400 cars per 1,000 people. In contrast, less developed countries like Bangladesh, India and Sierra Leone had fewer

than 5 cars per 1,000 people in 2000 (World Bank, 2003). In the developed environment where similar mobility problems exist or where there are some signs of crisis the majority of the populace rely heavily on various forms of public transport for their movement (Nash, 1997).

The advantages of public transport are many; amongst them are its effective use of space, more energy efficient, emit less airborne pollutants, minimize the amount of land used for transport purposes including parking and generally result in better physical environment in urban areas (Hilling, 1996). Public transport has also proved to be an effective tool in combating congestion (Banister, 1998). Because of the numerous advantages of public transport, governments in third world countries are now becoming aware that for developing countries to be more productive, improving public transport should be one of the most pressing items on their agenda.

In countries where public transport services are provided, the need to make their operations more efficient in order to satisfy the mobility needs of the people is usually the concern of government. This relates to provision and sustenance of effective services and the planning of public transport operations (Lee, 1998). This has given rise to this paper. The objective of the paper is to examine the operations of public transport in Kwara State, Nigeria with a view to determining its adequacy and examining ways by which it could be made more responsive to the mobility needs of the people.

Public Transport Situation in Nigeria

Transport problems since the last two decades in Nigeria have been serious. These problems are caused by the influx of population into the urban centers, growth in industries and the inability of transport facilities to cope with the demand. The problems manifest in terms of long waiting time for buses, traffic congestion, parking problems and accident. There is a general shortage of public transport service in Nigeria relative to demand. The public owned transport operations in the few states where they exist are inefficient and the private sector operators of para-transit transport system are substandard and disorganized.

In Nigeria, two distinct public transport systems can be identified. These are the municipal bus services provided by government owned transport corporations and the various para-transit services provided by the private operators. Public transportation in Nigeria has been dominated by the private sector who operate in an uncontrolled manner and provide erratic and unreliable services. Usually no clearly defined routes are being plied by these private operators who are essentially demand responsive. A World Bank report revealed that, more than 98 percent of all urban public transport journeys in Nigerian urban centres were provided by private operators using taxis, minibuses (danfos) and buses (molues). This contrasts sharply with the situation in most cities of the advanced countries where public owned bus operators have the monopoly of public transport provision (Nash, 1997).

In the early 1980s, government owned public transport companies operated in Lagos, Kaduna and Port Harcourt (Barret, 1992). Although, several other state-owned transport corporations also operated urban services in Kwara, Rivers, Oyo and Edo States in the past; these companies either ceased urban operations or closed down.

Public transport provision in Nigeria began to decline sharply with the introduction of various economic reforms by the Federal Government. With the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, the cost of producing vehicles spare parts and fuel rose astronomically to the extent that many car owners abandoned their

cars and the demand for public transport increased. There was a rapid decline in the acquisition of new vehicles and the few buses that were available could not cope with the situation. As shown on table 1.0, New registration of vehicles in Nigeria including public transport vehicles experienced a declining trend from 1981 – 1989.

Table 1.0: New Registration of Vehicles in Nigeria (1980-1994)

Year	Total Number of Vehicles Registered	Percentage Change
1980	295,472	-
1981	375,808	+ 27.19
1982	359,360	-16.45
1983	297,237	-17.29
1984	162,256	-45.41
1985	128,441	-20.84
1986	58,595	-54.38
1987	40,165	-31.45
1988	21,070	-47.54
1989	25,748	+ 22.20
1990	29,671	+ 15.24
1991	42,174	+ 42.14
1992	64,395	+ 52.69
1993	99,662	+ 54.77
1994	87,919	-11.78

Source: Oyesiku et al (2005)

Also, Federal Government expenditure on transport between 1971 and 1998 witnessed a significant decline. In real terms, measured in 1985 constant prices, Federal Government expenditure in transport fell from an annual average of about ₦3.3 billion in 1971 – 80 to about ₦0.77 billion in 1981 – 1990 and further fell to ₦0.22 billion in 1991 – 1998 (Jimoh, 2004).

Table 2.0: Average Annual Federal Government Expenditures on Transport

S/N	Expenditure	Period		
		1971-80	1981-90	1991-98
1	Total FGN Transport Expenditures in 1983 prices (₦m)	3,332.0	769.2	216.4
2	Share of Recurrent %	4.5	23.9	36.1
3	Share of capital %	95.5	76.1	63.9
4	Expenditures on Transport as % Total FGN Expenditure (%)	9.7	2.4	1.5
5	Expenditures on Transport as % GDP (%)	3.1	0.9	0.2
6	Expenditures on Transport as % Total FG Expenditure on Economic sectors (%)	45.9	18.4	11.0

Sources: (1) CBN Statistical Bulletin/IMF's (1970-1999b) (2) Jimoh (2004).

As can be seen from table 2.0, the total Federal Government transport expenditures as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was a mere 0.2 percent in 1991 – 1998 against a figure of 0.8 percent average for road transport alone in the Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries (World Bank, 1996).

Indeed, by 1988, mobility problem in Nigeria had reached a crisis stage. This was exemplified by inadequacy of public transport service relative to demand, inadequately funded and deficient public-owned transport operators, proliferated, disorganized and uncontrolled paratransit operators. Consequently, the Federal Government introduced the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme for the purpose of ameliorating the situation.

The main objectives of the Urban Mass Transit Programme introduced in 1988 were (i) to moderate the national urban transit system (ii) to alleviate the problems of urban commuters and the general masses and (iii) to lay the foundation for organized mass transit in Nigeria. The introduction of this programme served to reduce the overriding gap between the increasing public transport demand and the decreasing supply in the transport market. To date, almost all states in Nigeria and the Federal Capital, Abuja have benefited from the Federal Urban-Mass Transit Programme. Although, the existing level of service provided by most State Transport Corporations is not completely satisfactory, the mass transit service has gone a long way to alleviate the transportation problems of urban dwellers in Nigeria. But for effective services to be provided and sustained by the mass transit establishments, careful planning for their operations is necessary.

Public Transport Service in Kwara State of Nigeria

Kwara State is one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria. The population of the state was given as 2,371,089 in 2006. Kwara State is one of the largest states in Nigeria with a landmass of about 31,010sq.km. (CBN, 2006) and has remarkable socio-economic diversity.

In recognition of the place of transport in the spatial and economic growth of the state, government has accorded it special attention through the provision of transport infrastructural facilities and the encouragement of public transport owners. But due to increasing population growth, the demand for public transport has continued to grow significantly. Thus it has been difficult for both private transporters and the government to meet the transportation needs of the people.

Public transport provision in Kwara State has the same experience as that of the country in general. There is shortage of public transport service relative to demand, and the private sector operators of paratransit transport system run a substandard and disorganized service. Only a few private operators own very large fleet of vehicles for both intra-urban and inter-urban services.

In spite of the efforts of the private sector operators at providing transport services in order to meet the ever increasing demand for them, the changing economic situation in the country and the impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986 started to manifest on their operations. Between 1985 and 1988, the number of new vehicles registered in Kwara State fell from 2806 to 520 (Adesanya, 1996). This marked reduction was particularly evident in the public transport sector all over the country. It was in response to the importance government attached to urban public transport in Nigeria and the evolving urban mobility crisis of the mid-1980s that the Federal Assisted Urban Mass Transit Programme was initiated in 1988.

It is important to note however that the introduction of the Mass transit system in Kwara State dated back to 1975 when the state government introduced 'Kwara Line'. However, the system was established principally to operate intercity routes from the state capital Ilorin to Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Jos and also to some other cities and towns

in the country. The 'Kwara Line' however collapsed in 1980 due to amongst other reasons, inadequate and poor management, attitude of civil servants towards government properties since their salaries were always guaranteed at the end of the month, excessive bureaucracy leading to delays in decision making and policy implementation.

In line with the Federal government's objectives of stemming the tide of mobility crisis in the country, the Kwara State Transport Corporation was created by the Kwara State Government in 1989. The Corporation was charged with the responsibility to establish, operate and coordinate effectively and efficiently, all forms of motor transportation services, transportation of passengers or goods within and outside the state. The Corporation was also to see to operation and management of the Federal allocated and state-owned mass transit services.

Data Collection Strategy and Methodology

The study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of questionnaire administration to a sampled number of passengers. In all, 206 bus passengers were selected randomly for different intercity routes. Questions were asked on the users' perception of the services rendered by the Kwara State Transport Corporation. The emphasis was on why some passengers chose the bus mode and why others do not use their service. Factors considered were fares charged, safety, comfort, reliability and convenience. In addition, questions were asked on problems encountered by passengers. Factors considered were with respect to overcrowding, delays, organisation, frequency of breakdown and road condition.

The secondary data were obtained from records of the corporation and these included traffic data, bus fleet and types owned by the corporation, routes plyed, fares charged and organizational structure. Other secondary data were collected from books, magazines and journals.

The data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis and the results presented in form of tables and graphs.

Results and Discussion

The Mass Transit Service in Kwara State is run by the Kwara State Transport Corporation. The Kwara State government is the sole shareholder in the Kwara State Transport Corporation. The operations of the Kwara State Transport Corporation has been assessed in this paper by examining the types of service, vehicle fleet, passenger traffic and standard of service. Policy options have also been suggested to improve its services.

Types of Service

The Corporation provided two types of service. These are intrastate and interstate services. The intrastate service provides for transportation of passengers between Ilorin and different parts of the state, while interstate service on the other hand, provides services between Kwara State and other states in the federation.

Vehicle Types

The Corporation has different vehicle types in its fleet. These include Mazda E2000; Mercedes Benz 1414, Faccar MB 608D; Toyota Hiace, KIA Pregio and Nissan Urvan. The vehicles have different capacities as shown on table 3.0. The Corporation as at July

2007 operated 66 vehicles made up of 29 Mazda E 2000; 1 – Boxer, 4-Faccar MB 608 D; 16 – Toyota Hiace; 12-KIA Pregio; 18 – Nissan Urvan and 3 – Mercedes Benz 1414.

Table 3.0: Fleet Characteristics of Kwara State Transport Corporation

Vehicle Type	Capacity	Number in Fleet	Percentage	Number in Use	Utilization Rate
Mazda E 2000	18	29	43.94	11	37.93
Boxer	18	1	1.52	1	100
Mercedez Benz 1414	60	3	4.55	2	33.33
Faccar MB 608D	33	4	6.06	2	50.00
Toyota Hiace	18	16	24.24	15	93.75
KIA Pregio	18	12	18.18	12	100.00
Nissan Urvan	18	1	1.52	1	100.00
TOTAL		66	100.00	44	66.67

Source: Author's Analysis, 2008

Table 3.0 shows the fleet utilization rate of the corporation's vehicles as at July 2007. The overall utilization rate of the corporation's fleet is 66.67 percent. This indicates under-utilization of the corporation's fleet. With adequate maintenance and staff management it should be possible to achieve a fleet utilization rate of 80-90 percent. The proportion of the vehicles that can be put into service each day has a direct bearing on the productivity of the system. It very often indicates the effectiveness of vehicle maintenance, spares procurement, stock keeping, staff recruitment and management.

In terms of operational performance, only the Boxer, Toyota Hiace, KIA Pregio and Nissan Urvan with utilization rates of 100 percent; 93.75 percent, 100 percent and 100 percent respectively meet the standard average utilization rate. The Mercedes Benz 1414 with a utilization rate of 33.33 percent represents the worst level of vehicle effectiveness in Kwara State Transport Corporation's operations.

Passenger Traffic

The trend in passenger traffic carried by the Corporation for the period 1990 – 2007 is as shown on Table 4.0. The trend studied is in respect of intrastate and interstate traffic. The intrastate service experienced fluctuations in passenger traffic between 1990 – 2007. Noticeable values of high passenger traffic here are in 1992 with 275,541 passengers. 2006 with 325,412 passengers and 2007 with 321,152 passengers. Also the lowest value of passenger traffic was in 1996 with 19,835 passengers. The total number of passengers carried for the eighteen-year period of study was 2,932,380 which formed about 49.04 percent of total traffic carried by the Corporation for the study period. The average number of passengers carried on the intrastate service was 102,910 passengers per annum.

The interstate service also fluctuated in passenger traffic between 1990 and 2007. The highest number of passenger traffic of 345,946 passengers was recorded in 1991 when the Corporation was just commencing the interstate service. This figure declined steadily to its lowest value of 71,599 passengers in 1996. Though the number of interstate passengers patronizing the Corporation's service rose steadily again from 108,624 passengers in 1997 it continued to experience fluctuations in its performance. The total number of passengers carried on the interstate service for the eighteen-year period was 3,046, 749 people which formed 50.96 percent of total passenger traffic

carried by the Corporation for the eighteen-year period. The average number of interstate passenger traffic for the eighteen-year period was 169,264 passengers per annum.

Table 4.0: Kwara State Transport Corporation-Trend in Passenger Traffic (1990 – 2007)

Year	Intrastate Traffic	Interstate Traffic	Total Traffic
1990	254,983	258,094	513,077
1991	230,492	345,946	576,438
1992	275,541	339,241	614,782
1993	153,036	240,040	393,076
1994	124,085	147,068	272,053
1995	57,754	87,351	145,105
1996	19,835	71,599	91,434
1997	40,796	108,624	149,420
1998	25,774	109,405	135,179
1999	44,550	130,512	175,062
2000	63,167	141,458	204,625
2001	81,203	150,268	231,471
2002	165,065	158,067	323,132
2003	256,937	115,812	372,749
2004	249,272	105,036	354,308
2005	243,326	136,906	380,232
2006	325,412	187,304	512,716
2007	321,152	213,118	534,270
18-Year Total	2,932,380	3,046,749	5,979,129
Percentage of Total	49.04	50.96	100.00
Average	162,910	169,264	332,174

Sources: 1 Kwara State Transport Corporation 2. Author's Analysis, 2008

The general trend in passenger traffic for the 18-year period shows an almost equal performance of both the intrastate and interstate services in terms of total passengers carried. Indeed, the Kwara State Transport Corporation services are better patronized by travelers because of the comparatively lower fares charged and their reliability of service in comparison with the private operators. Figure 1.0 shows the trend in passenger traffic for both the intrastate and interstate services for the study period.

Fare Structure

The routes plied by the Kwara Express are categorized into three, namely:

- a. Short routes covering a distance of 100km between the origin and destination.
- b. Intermediate routes which are services covering a distance of 400km between the origin and destination points.
- c. Long routes covering a distance above 400km between the origin and destination points.

Tables 5 and 6 summarise the routes plied by the Kwara State Transport Corporation Service including their distances and fares.

Figure 1: Kwara State Transport Corporation - Trend in Passenger Trafficc (1990 - 2007)

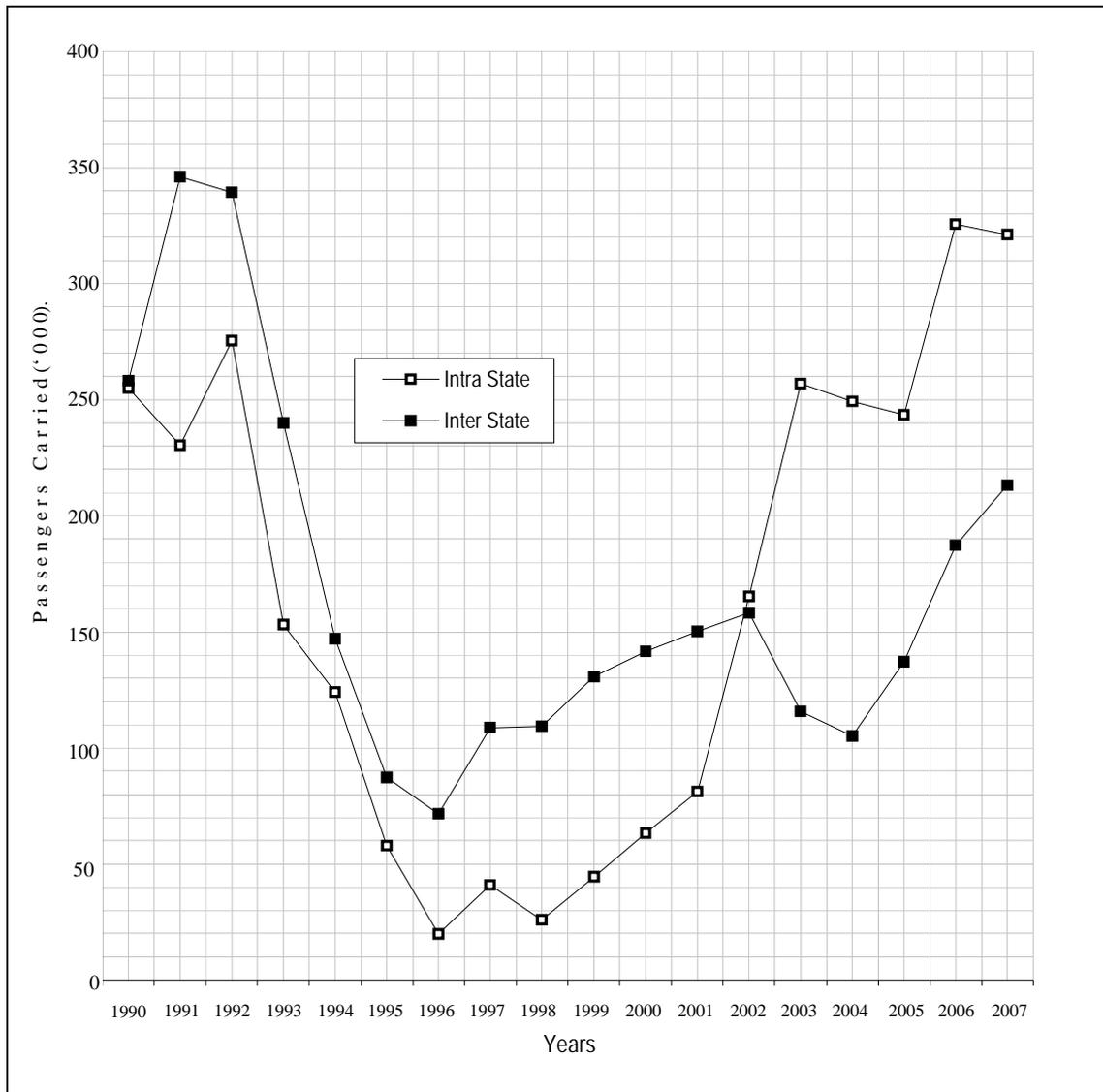


Table 5.0: Interstate Routes and Fares of the Kwara State Transport Service

S/N	Routes	Fare (Naira)	Distance (Kilometre)	Fare per Kilometre (Naira)
1	Ilorin – Abuja	1,500.00	500	3.00
2	Ilorin – Akure	700.00	191	3.64
3	Ilorin – Bauchi	2,000.00	913	2.14
4	Ilorin – Enugu	1,800.00	498	3.61
5	Ilorin – Jos	1,800.00	781	2.30
6	Ilorin – Kaduna	1,300.00	600	2.17
7	Ilorin – Kano	1,800.00	850	2.12
8	Ilorin – Lagos	800.00	306	2.61
9	Ilorin – Lokoja	900.00	310	2.90
10	Ilorin – Makurdi	2,000.00	651	3.07
11	Ilorin – Minna	1,000.00	437	2.29
12	Ilorin – Onitsha	1,500.00	640	2.34
13	Ilorin – Owerri	2,000.00	604	3.31
14	Ilorin – Owo	800.00	282	2.84

Source: Kwara State Planning Commission, 2007.

Table 6.0: Intrastate Routes and Fares of the Kwara State Transport Service

S/N	Routes	Fare (Naira)	Distance (Kilometre)	Fare per Kilometre (Naira)
1	Ilorin – Bacita	300.00	92	3.24
2	Ilorin – Lafiagi	400.00	112	3.57
3	Ilorin – Lesho Baruba	700.00	134	5.15
4	Ilorin – Offa	160.00	54	2.86
5	Ilorin – Oke-ode	250.00	90	2.78
6	Ilorin – Okuta	800.00	148	5.41
7	Ilorin – Oro Ago	250.00	110	2.27
8	Ilorin – Pategi	550.00	150	3.67

Source: Kwara State Planning Commission, 2007.

The fare structure shows a range of 2.12 – 3.64 Naira per kilometre on the interstate routes while the intrastate routes have a fare range of 2.27 - 5.41 Naira per kilometre implying that the fares per kilometre on the intrastate routes are higher in most cases than on interstate routes.

Standard of Service

The standard of service is evaluated through users' perception of the standard of service measures. The assessment is based on what the users report as the attractive standard of service attributes of the Corporation's operation (Filani and Abumere, 1993). In particular, the emphasis is on why some individuals choose them and others do not use their service.

The assessment was carried out through random selection of passengers using the Corporation's interstate and intrastate services. The questions include whether and why travellers' prefer the Corporation's services to other operators.

Table 7.0: Advantages of Kwara State Transport Service

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Total
Cheapness	66	32.04
Safety	50	24.27
Comfort	45	21.85
Reliability	30	14.56
Convenience	15	7.28
Total	206	100.00

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2008.

As indicated in table 7.0, 32.04 percent believed that the Kwara State Transport Service is relatively cheap because the fare charged is really lower than those charged by the private operators. For example, Ilorin to Lagos is ₦800.00 per trip by Kwara Express while it is ₦1,000.00 by private operators.

On the issue of safety, 24.27 percent of the respondents confirmed that the Kwara State Express is safer because the drivers are better-educated on road safety measures, which they fervently adhere to especially since they want to keep their jobs. Essentially, the government has made the acquisition of spare parts readily available for the Corporation buses. The Corporation also has a standard workshop for routine checks and proper maintenance, a clear departure from the common practice among the private operators who are believed to be out only to maximize profit at the expense of people's safety and comfort.

An added advantage of the Kwara State Express is that of passenger comfort enroute their journeys, 21.85 percent of the respondents are of the view that the Kwara State Transport Service has passengers' comfort in mind as evident in the provision of sheds at the major terminal/depot in Ilorin. These are installed with some facilities such as benches for passengers to sit while waiting for buses.

The buses are by rule, not expected to exceed passenger capacity level so as to avoid overcrowding, which is inimical to commuters' comfort. This is why some inspectors are randomly dispatched for monitoring exercises to ensure compliance on the part of the Kwara Express bus drivers.

As for problems encountered by passengers, overcrowding, delays, poor organization, frequent breakdowns and inadequate buses are the fundamental problems. As shown on table 8.0 approximately 33.0 percent of the respondents are of the view that the Kwara Express services are poorly organized, characterized with constant breakdown and incessant delays. Inadequate supply of transport facilities in the face of poorly maintained government roads are other problems usually encountered by users.

Table 8.0: Problems of Users of Kwara State Transport Service

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Total
Organization	68	33.01
Frequent Breakdown	45	21.84
Delays	28	13.59
Overcrowding	25	12.14
Inadequate Buses	22	10.68
Bad roads	18	8.74
Total	206	100.00

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems encountered in the operations of the Kwara State Transport Services are common to most transit services all over the country. Emerging issues in this study require adequate and effective consideration in order that operations of public transportation in Nigeria can meet the mobility needs of the masses. From the analysis in this study, the following recommendations are made:

Types of Service

The transport organizations in Nigeria should carry out feasibility study of passenger traffic for the different types of service and use the results to decide what proportion of their fleet should be allocated to the different types of service.

Although, variations exist amongst different States in Nigeria as in the types of services on which to concentrate, the interstate and intrastate services are the primary emphasis of most State Transport Corporations as these are found to be more profitable than intra-city services.

Selection of Bus Types

The government transit services in Nigeria show a multiplicity of different makes and models of buses. This consists of both imported and locally built ones but the number of imported buses exceeds the locally assembled ones. For operational efficiency, governments embarking on provision of bus service in Nigeria either intrastate or interstate should from the onset take definite stand on the make of buses to be procured for the exercise. The practice whereby some transport organizations have a wide range of make of buses in their fleet is counter-productive.

Although, imported buses have been found to be cheap to operate and maintain having regard to availability of spare parts, components and abundant service facilities, the answer to the fleet operations of intercity bus service in Nigeria lies in locally built buses. While imported buses can be used for the take-off of fleet operations of intrastate and interstate bus service, locally built buses can be introduced to supplement imported buses.

Route Selection

The location, function, facilities and equipment of routes are of great importance to the operations of transport agencies. The objective of appropriate route selection is how to maximize the services provided by the transport network. Selection of routes for transit operations is usually made after careful field study. The result of such surveys

often portray the profitability or otherwise of routes amongst many other information that would be derived. Hence the poorly performing routes can be identified especially in terms of causes and location while economically viable routes can also be identified and improved. Using these, appropriate recommendations can be made as to re-routing of buses, provision of lay-bys and other techniques that would improve performance.

Vehicle Maintenance

Maintenance and servicing are essential for continuous and effective performance of vehicle fleet. As transport systems develop, it is very essential that the new maintenance culture in Nigeria be applied from an early stage to maintain the operational capability of the vehicle fleet. Operators should apply the principle of regular preventive maintenance according to the prepared schedules. Another important requirement for a successful and efficient operations of a transport organization is regular procurement of fast moving spare parts depending on the fleet size.

Training of vehicle operators and regular maintenance of the vehicles by the engineers are also essential. It is equally essential that the fleet purchased remain serviceable and available for work not only in the early stage but throughout the economic life of motor vehicles.

Mass transit organizations should also invest in special workshop tools. In addition, well-organized modern workshops help to a large extent in prolonging the life span of motor vehicles. Rather than patronizing ill-equipped roadside mechanics, transport organizations should endeavour to set up ultra modern workshops of their own. Where the cost of establishing organized modern workshops will present financial burden to new transport organizations, it is advisable for such organizations to patronize organized workshops approved by the manufacturers of buses or their local representatives.

Administration

There is no doubt that the administrative structures of some of the mass transit companies are defective in terms of quality of personnel. Running a mass transit company is a professional job and should not be left in the hands of unqualified people. For example, the engineering workshops of some of the companies are manned by technicians who rose through the ranks instead of qualified engineers.

With respect to employment of drivers and conductors, mass transit organizations should screen very carefully all the prospective drivers before offering them employment. They should also be encouraged to undergo training programme for drivers of buses organized by local representatives of manufacturers of some buses. Conductors should also be of good behaviour and refresher courses for the bus conductors should be organized periodically. For speedy and hitch-free recovery of broken down buses, transport organizations require heavy-duty recovery vehicles with front-wheel drive mechanism.

Conclusion

Public transport is the most dependable means of alleviating the mobility problem of the masses in many parts of the world. The level of public transport provision in the third world countries including Nigeria is however very low.

In Nigeria, public transportation is provided through government owned transport corporations and private transport operators. The performance of both operators however, fell short of the demand of the public especially in the early 1980s. This forced the Federal Government to introduce the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme in 1988 for the purpose of reducing the mobility problem of the people in Nigeria.

All States in the Federation including the Federal Capital Abuja benefited from the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme. They operated the mass transit services through the establishment of State Transport Corporations and this has gone a long way to alleviate the transportation problems of urban dwellers in Nigeria.

The operations of Kwara State Transport Corporation has been studied as a typical example of state mass transit services in the country. This has been done by examining the type of service, vehicle fleet, passenger traffic, fare structure and standard of service of the Corporation. Problems encountered by users of the service have also been highlighted.

In order to improve the operations of public transport services in Nigeria, appropriate recommendations have been made.

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