

LAGOS STATE'S USE OF MOTORCYCLES FOR TRANSPORTATION: SWEET NIGHTMARE

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Abstract

In Lagos, the use of motorcycles as a mode of transportation has gained popularity. It is frequently used and favored by residents due to its capacity to help people save time, get rid of traffic jams and terrible roads, and attend to urgent needs. Despite its clear advantages, this means of transport has been blamed for an increase in ridership-related crimes. Therefore, the study looked at how Lagos perceived crime among Okada riders. A sample size of 400 respondents was used for the study, and data were gathered using methodological triangulation (the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies) (375 randomly selected respondents for the survey and 25 purposefully selected respondents for the qualitative data). The study also revealed that, although it is popularly believed that Okada riders commit crimes, the majority of people hold the opinion that not all Okada riders are hazardous. Findings demonstrate the seriousness of the effects Okada crimes have on their victims, including the loss of lives, destruction of property, physical harm, psychological distress, and stress. The study also finds that there is a strong correlation between the perception of crimes and the usage of Okada and that women are more vulnerable to Okada crimes than men because they are frequently viewed as weaker and simpler targets.

Keywords: Public Transportation, Okada, Okada rider, Perception

INTRODUCTION

Transport is indeed a basic necessity, but transportation systems are not cheap. As a result, private individuals and the government establish public transportation programs to both provide mobility for those who cannot afford this technology and control transportation systems. One of man's basic needs is movement and transport. Since the dawn of civilization, man has invented a variety of ways to satisfy these needs, including faster, more effective ways to transfer objects and goods between different regions of society. Along with the rapid advancements in information technology, transportation has undergone significant changes and continues to evolve. According to Ajah and Obi (2017), the deplorable state of the Nigerian economy, the failure of the public transportation system, and the inability of the current transport modes to keep up with the demands of the rapidly expanding urban population are just a few of the factors that forced the rise and growth in the use of commercial motorcycles as an accepted means of transport in Nigeria.

Public transportation in developing nations typically includes a variety of unusual modes. Studies by Onwuchekwe et al.,(2017) in Nigeria have demonstrated the prevalence of unusual public transport, one of which is the usage of motorcycles for public transit. Motorcycle use as a mode of transportation began in a few Nigerian urban areas in the early 1980s. Commercial motorcycles, also known as "Okadas," were first introduced, and they gradually developed into a common and more popular mode of transportation, especially in places where conventional public transportation is not readily available and where the available transportation systems are unable to meet the needs of the populace, Chidi,(2021). Similarly, Odugbesan,(2016) pointed out that the adoption of commercial motorcycles as acceptable alternative means of transportation in Lagos state was caused by a continual increase in population size without a commensurate increase or development in the transportation system.

The deplorable state of Nigeria's roads is another factor that made the growth of commercial motorcyclists necessary. Many Nigerian car owners have given up their private vehicles in favor of more practical means of travel to deal with their situation as a result of the state of these roads. In light of these facts, commercial motorcycles can be used as an alternate means of transport to prevent auto accidents and traffic jams. Because it offers the chance to avoid traffic, saves time, is relatively inexpensive, can navigate rough roads, is readily available, and can access non-motorable routes, commercial motorcycles, or Okadas, are used by all socioeconomic strata in Nigeria. According to Oluwaseyi et al. (2014), several people choose commercial motorcycles as an alternate mode of transportation over other forms of public transit in the nation because of all the benefits they offer. No question that using an Okada is a speedier option for transportation than using a bus, particularly in locations where traffic jams are a daily occurrence, which is a common occurrence in many Nigerian cities, including Lagos. Additionally, due to their modest size, commercial motorcyclists can wander and enter spaces that are inaccessible to automobiles and buses. Additionally, it appears that commercial motorcyclists have surpassed vehicles in many Nigerian states, particularly in urban areas (Onwuchekwe et al.,2017). Aside from the speedy transport services offered in Nigeria by commercial motorcycle riders, it also offers a real source of work to the growing number of youth without jobs in the nation. It is both intriguing and sad to notice that among commercial motorcycle riders, there are some well-educated individuals, even university graduates, who only took the job as a means of support and a last resort after years of futile job searching.

Despite the numerous advantages of using a commercial motorcycle for public transit, there are a disproportionately large number of drawbacks (Ajah et al.,2017). Hoodlums and miscreants have infiltrated the motorcycle industry, using it to commit heinous crimes against unsuspecting passengers and bystanders. According to Ajah et al.,(2017), hoodlums have penetrated the Nigerian Okada industry and are now committing crimes while riding motorcycles. The public at large has frequently voiced complaints about the attitudes of commercial motorcycle riders as well as rising crime, antisocial behavior, and deviance rates. Some of these actions include breaking traffic laws, disobeying traffic regulations and signage, abusing alcohol and other drugs, stealing from pedestrians, and riding a motorcycle to flee after committing robbery, among other crimes.

Problems Statement

Criminal activity involving commercial motorcycle riders has increased in Nigeria. According to Ukwayi, et al., (2017), he noted that, for riders and the general public, the increase in the number of crimes perpetrated on motorbikes has been shocking and concerning. Many commuters have also expressed worry as a result of it, as it appears to be difficult to distinguish between law-abiding commercial motorbike operators and crooks. The use of Okada in the commission of crimes has led to enormous losses in terms of lives lost and property destroyed (Ukwayi et al.,2017). Along with disregarding traffic laws, Kuforiji, (2013)noted that commercial motorcycle riders regularly engage in criminal activity such as stealing, raping, kidnapping, murdering, and stealing handbags and mobile phones. According to Dina et al.,(2015), there are several behavioral excesses associated with operators of commercial motorcycles (Okada riders) that raise the risk of accidents. These actions include excessive speeding, impatience, overloading, drug and alcohol use, inexperienced and unlicensed motorcycle operators, using cell phones while operating a motorcycle, and disobeying traffic laws, among many others (Dina et al., 2015; Oni et al., 2012; Ogunmodede, and Akengbe, 2013; Kranjcar, 2013). Fajan (2013) goes on to say that the use of commercial motorcycles in Lagos has been connected to an increase in robbery incidents and situations. Additionally, they engage in frequent criminal behaviors like rioting and extreme road rage. This forms the basis of this study to examine the level of influence of this mean on residents of the state. The study aims to answer the following situations and clarify.

Objectives of the study

(I) What categories of infractions are committed most frequently by commercial bike riders (Okada) in the study area? (II) How can the results of this survey benefit the state's bike (Okada) transportation policies?

Literature Review

The use of motorcycles for public transit is widespread around the world, although it is particularly prevalent in low- and middle-income nations (Dina et al., 2015). Tijani pointed out that the use of motorbikes, also known as "okadas," first developed as a mode of transportation in rural areas (Tijani, 2013). However, from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, this method of transportation made its way to the country's cities and more developed regions, where it was accepted as a form of public transportation (Kranjcar, 2013; Asekhome, and Oisamoje, 2013). Other factors include the service's accessibility, availability, and the lack of a clear transport policy structure to ensure the long-term expansion of the nation's transportation infrastructure (Oluwaseyi et al., 2014; Olusanya, 2011).

According to Oluwaseyi et al. (2014) the rise of commercial motorcycle operations in 1992 to meet the transportation needs of its population was a result of Lagos State's status as the former federal capital of the nation, the main commercial and industrial city, the leading port city, the most populous state in Nigeria, and the center of the nation's economy. In Lagos, Okada has experienced tremendous expansion and notoriety. This rise is sometimes attributed to the necessity of dealing with a variety of mobility problems and a lack of public transit, particularly the state's ongoing traffic problems. According to Dina et al., (2015), approximately 450,000 motorcycles were in use in Lagos. The most significant socioeconomic benefit of "Okada" in Nigeria, according to Dina et al. (2015) is its capacity to offer simple employment options to the growing number of unemployed youngsters, pensioners, and other quasi-operators who want to increase their regular income (Dina et al., 2015; Ogunrinola, 2011). The relatively simple process of acquiring and launching a commercial motorbike business also contributed to the expansion of their enterprise and saw a constant influx of migrant operators entering Lagos from various regions of Nigeria.

While the "Okada" operation's beneficial economic contribution to job creation is noteworthy, Lagos State's citizens and government suffered significantly as a result of the near absence of regulation in the areas of social, environmental, economic, psychological, and health (Dina et al., 2015). Several prohibiting laws, including the Lagos traffic law among others, have been passed to limit the activities of "Okada" riders on certain roads within the state with an associated penalty for violators as a result of the numerous obstructions caused by Okada riders to the health, peace, and security of the Lagos government and residents. These rules are meant to safeguard the well-being, safety, and lives of "Okada" riders as well as other motorists against perceived excesses on the part of cyclists, which frequently result in high rates of collisions, injuries, and fatalities among cyclists, passengers, and other motorists. As noted by Onwuchkwue et al., (2017) Okada riders commit all types of crimes. from snatching bags to kidnapping to armed robbery to assault, rape, stealing vehicle parts, money, electronic gadgets such as phones, laptops, etc., and other valuables. They also often inflict physical injuries and a significant number of Okada riders are involved in many forms of property crime. Most of these crimes often include theft, robbery, physical harm or injury against victims, threat, use of guns, and other arms, etc.

Recent arrests of 72 commercial motorcycle (Okada) riders and an impound of 169 motorcycles in Lagos as reported by Adesanya (2018) due to the reports made to the Lagos State Task Force on the increased rate of threat and violence suffered by the general public by Okada riders. According to Adesanya (2018), there are more negative opinions of Okada riders among the general public than positive opinions. Accordingly, members of the general public make complaints about the increasing negative activities of these motorcycle riders/operators such as increased terror of innocent members of the public, both day and night, stripping them of valuables such as funds, phones, jewelry, and bags.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design. To adequately cover the scope of this study, the target population includes Okada riders (Males only) and inhabitants of selected areas of Lagos state. who can give detailed information about the phenomena being studied. The sample is a smaller, manageable version of a larger group (population). It is the subset containing the characteristics of a larger population. For this study, the population size was measured using Yamane's formulae of sample size determination at a 95% confidence interval. The Yamane's formulae are given as
$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; N = total population;
 n = sample size; $e = 0.05^2$.

Using NPC's (2016) population figure for stat, the sample size is calculated as;

$$\frac{1,288,714}{1 + 1,288,714(0.0025)} = 399.87$$

Results

Prevalence and Types of Crimes among Okada Riders

The frequency and sorts of crimes committed by Okada Riders in Area, Lagos, are discussed in this section. Table 1 below, which shows the frequency and percentages of each variable measured, supports the discussion in this section. According to the table, the majority of respondents (78.8%) have at least once used the Okada as a form of transportation, while only

21.2% have never done so. In terms of the percentage of respondents who said they had used the Okada at least once, 50.2% said they use it often, 28.3% said they use it occasionally, and 21.8% said they only use it during significant times.

Table 1 . Percentage Distribution of the Prevalence and Types of Crimes among Okada Riders

Variable		Frequency (N=375)	Percent (100%)
Ever Used Okada	Yes	293	78.8
	No	79	21.2
Frequency of Use		372	
	Always	147	50.2
	Once in a while	82	28
	Only important periods	64	21.8
If No, Why Not?		293	
	No Reason	10	16.4
	Scared	19	31.2
	I have a car	17	27.9
	Because of Kidnapping	1	1.6
	They don't have a conscience	1	1.6
	Over speeding	2	3.3
	I don't like it	11	18
Ever Had a Bad Experience Using Okada		61	
	Yes	139	37.8
	No	229	62.2
	Hit & Run	4	2.9
	Accident	52	38.2
	Over Speeding	33	24.3
	Theft	16	11.8
	Disobedience of Traffic	9	6.6
	Killing	1	0.7
	Robbery	6	4.4
	Drunk Driving	2	1.5
	Fighting & Rudeness	12	8.8
	They are dirty	1	0.7
		136	

Source: Authors,2023

Researchers also interviewed respondents who said they had utilized the Okada at least once before to see if they had ever had a negative experience. 62.2 percent of respondents said they had never had a poor experience using the Okada, compared to 37.8 percent who said they had at least one negative experience. Among those who reported having a negative experience, 2.9% mentioned hit-and-runs, 38.2% mentioned accidents, 24.3% mentioned speeding, 11.8% mentioned theft, 6.6% mentioned breaking traffic laws, 0.7% mentioned killing, 4.4% mentioned robberies, 1.5% mentioned drunk driving, 8.8% mentioned fighting and rudeness, and 0.7% noted that Okada riders are filthy.

Table.2. Percentage Distribution of the Prevalence and Types of Crimes among Okada Riders

Awareness of Crime Occurrence among Okada Riders	Yes	114	89.1
	No	14	10.9
Ever Been a Victim of Okada Crimes		128	
	Yes	115	31.3
Type of Crime	No	253	68.8
		368	
	Accident	15	13.4
	Theft	31	27.7
	Fighting	11	9.8
	Drunk Driving	8	7.1
	Over Speeding	13	11.6
	Robbed	15	13.4
	Driving against traffic	12	10.7
	Kidnapping	7	6.3
Date of Last Occurrence		112	
	0-1 year ago	55	55
	2-4 years ago	20	20
	4 years ago	14	14
	Every night	11	11
		100	

The majority of respondents (89.1%) also mentioned that they are aware that criminals frequently target Okada riders in Lagos, and 31.3% of them had been the victims of such crimes. According to respondents, some of these crimes include accidents (13.4%), theft (27.7%), fighting (9.8%), driving while intoxicated (7.1%), over-speeding (11.6%), robbery (13.4%), driving against traffic (10.7%), and abduction (6.3 percent). For 20% of respondents, the last time an Okada crime occurred was 2-4 years ago; for 14% of respondents, the last time an Okada crime occurred was 4 years ago; and

for 11% of respondents, they experience Okada crimes almost every night. Of the respondents, 55% also mentioned that the last time an Okada crime occurred was 0–1 year ago.

Types of Crimes Mostly Associated with Okada Riders

The crime index based on an analysis of the crimes most frequently associated with okada riders is shown in Figure 1. includes theft (15%), fighting (11.1%), driving while intoxicated (12.5%), driving too fast (17.8%), disobeying traffic laws (13%), hit-and-run (11%), driving in the wrong direction (13.2%), and kidnapping (6.4 percent).Figure 4.2.2: Types of Crimes Mostly Associated with Okada Riders in Lagos.

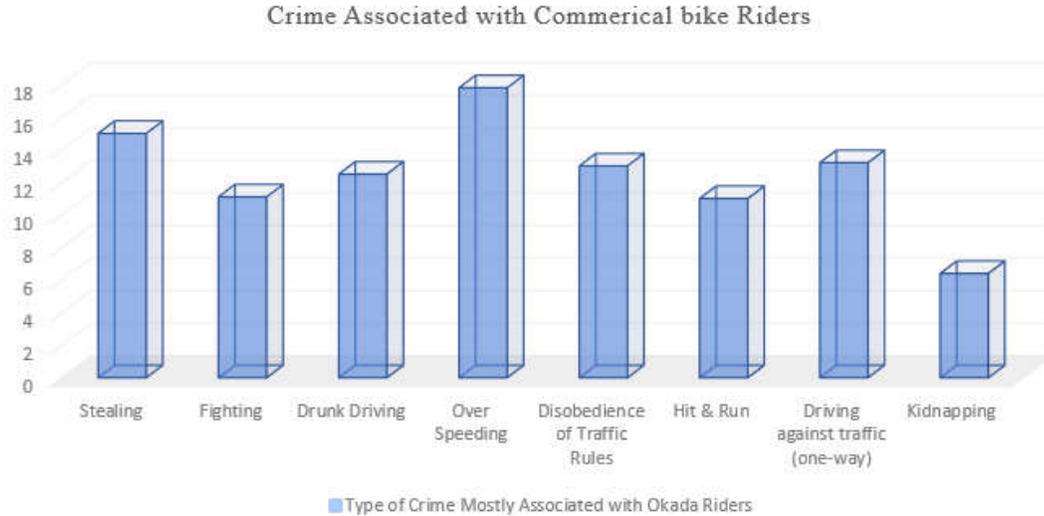


Figure 1: Crime Associated with Commercial bike Riders
Source: Authors,2023.

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of People’s Perception of Okada Riders in Alimosho

Perception of Okada Riders	Frequency (N=375)	Percent (100%)
All Okada riders are dangerous people	57	3.5
Not all Okada riders are dangerous people	249	15.2
There are more bad Okada riders than good ones	170	10.4
All Okada riders have the potential to commit a crime	124	7.6
Young Okada riders are more likely than older Okada riders to commit a crime	208	12.7
Using Okada is dangerous because riders Overspeed	225	13.7
Okada riders are rude	131	8
Okada riders are nice	102	6.2
Some people have decided never to use Okada transport again due to high rates of crime	234	14.3
Despite the occurrence of crime among Okada riders, I still prefer Okada	140	8.5
	1640	

Source: Authors,2023.

The chart also shows that 13.7% of respondents think using an Okada is risky because Okada riders frequently exceed the speed limit. The majority of people have reportedly decided never to use the Okada as a means of public transportation due to the high rates of crime among Okada riders, according to 14.3 percent of respondents. However, 8.5 percent of respondents said that they still prefer the Okada, even though crimes do occur among Okada riders.

Consequences of Okada Crimes on People

This section discusses the consequences of Okada crimes on people. Table 4 below also provides support for the discussion in this section by illustrating the frequency distribution and percentages of each variable measured.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of the Consequences of Okada Crimes on People

Variable	Frequency (N=375)	Percent (100%)
Consequences of Okada Crimes on People (Multiple Options)	Fear	86
	Loss of Property	171
	Emotional Stress	206
	Physical injury	147
	Death	12
	622	

Source: Authors,2023.

Table 4 shows that among the effects of Okada crime on victims were fear (13.8 percent), property (27.5 percent), psychological anguish (33.1 percent), physical injury (23.6 percent), and occasionally death (2 percent). Many people

have suffered greatly as direct or indirect victims of the atrocities committed by Okada riders. One interviewee mentioned that she had to go without a phone for roughly two months when an Okada rider stole her belongings, which cost her relationships and business that she would have gained had she had a phone.

Discussion

The majority of people in Lagos State use okadas as their primary form of public transportation. According to the most recent study, the majority of people choose to use Okada, for obvious reasons such as the state of Lagos's roads and the city's frequent traffic jams, as well as to save time and get to appointments and business. This conclusion is corroborated by the findings of Ajah et al. (2017), who observed that Okada's widespread use and multiple advantages are to blame for this. This study has also demonstrated that crime occurs and is common among Okada riders. The survey shows that Okada riders frequently commit specific crimes, including stealing, violating traffic laws, driving against the flow of traffic, driving while intoxicated, hit-and-run accidents, over-speeding, and rudeness, among others.

This conclusion was further reinforced by the work of Ajah et al. (2017), who highlighted that hoodlums have entered the Okada industry and are using it as a means of committing crimes. The current study found that, in addition to being the primary victims of crimes, members of the public are also secondary victims of Okada crimes and suffer severe emotional trauma and terror after seeing Okada crime scenes. In addition, Dina et al., (2015) contend that the psychological damage that shock and loss cause victims and witnesses of Okada crimes. The study also revealed a strong correlation between public use of Okada and how the public perceives crimes committed through the app.

Conclusion

Despite the perceived value of Okada as an alternate mode of transportation and a way to avoid the frequently congested traffic in Lagos, avoid bad roads, save time, and attend key meetings and run-around throughout the city, the use of Okada as a tool for crime is common. The results of this survey suggest that crimes are rampant among Okada riders in Lagos State, with theft, disobedience of traffic laws, driving against the flow of traffic, drunk driving, hit-and-runs, over-speeding, fighting, rudeness, and kidnapping as the most common forms of crimes. Victims of Okada crimes suffer serious repercussions, including the loss of life, damage to property, bodily injury, tension, emotional distress, and stress. According to research, Okada crimes do not always target passengers; they can also target other drivers, law enforcement officials, and pedestrians. In addition to being the primary victims of Okada crimes, members of the public can also become secondary victims by seeing crime scenes. According to the study, the most common misconception about Okada riders is that not all of them are dangerous individuals. This helps to explain why some people continue to use Okada as an alternative option, while others have noted that Okada riders are dangerous, rude, over-speeding, and dirty, and some have, for these reasons, decided not to use it.

Recommendation

It is necessary to grant licenses to prospective commercial motorcycle riders depending on their degree of education and those who have undergone psychological testing and been found to be psychologically fit for the job; One of the main factors cited by respondents as encouraging crimes among Okada riders is the lack of employment. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government, corporate institutions, and investors to formalize the Okada transportation system as a legitimate job sector with strict employment laws and administration, rather than just as a business opportunity open to "anybody."; The control of Okada speed by enforcing speed limits is another key to curbing crimes among Okada riders. Regulatory agencies and law enforcement officials should also be saddled with the responsibility and power to sanction erring riders

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