

Evaluation of Livelihood Opportunities in The Informal Sector: A Case of Commercial Motorcycle Riding in BDA, Niger State, Nigeria

YAKATUN MOHAMMED MUSA¹, KUSO UMAR², UMAR HALIRU VULEGBO³, JIBRIL ADAMU MUHAMMAD⁴, FAROOQ HASSAN GIMBA⁵

^{1,2,3}*Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Niger State Polytechnic Zungeru*

⁴*Department of Quantity Surveying, Niger State Polytechnic Zungeru*

⁵*Department of Estate Management and Valuation, Niger State Polytechnic Zungeru*

Abstract- Poor transportation system and inadequate means of transports have forced urban residents to take succour in paratransit. Livelihood is inevitable in the existence of human being. Commercial motorcycle riding is one of the fast-growing livelihood strategies among the poor/low-income youths in the city. However, commercial motorcycle riding is an informal economic activity, and therefore, a marginal livelihood. It serves as a means through which people secure their basic necessities of life while the commercial motorcycle operation is seen as a channel of movement in everyday activities and overall means of living of people. The study investigated the livelihood opportunities of commercial motorcycle riding. The main objectives of the study were to examine the socioeconomic characteristics of commercial motorcycle operators, spatial attributes patterns of commercial motorcycles, relationship between participation and livelihood wellbeing and commercial motorcycles operation. Stratified simple random sampling was adopted in selecting a representative from commercial motorcycles parking places to administer structured questionnaires to 215 commercial motorcycle riders in the study area. The study adopted both descriptive and inferential techniques to analyse the data collected. Analysis was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The study concluded that, commercial motorcycle operation contributes significantly to livelihood improvement of the operators and facilitate movement of individual, hence increase social integration. The study therefore recommends that the government should consider and recognize commercial motorcycle operation as one of the means of living activities that fill the gap of youth employment problem. Provision of support in terms of loans to the operators of commercial motorcycles especially for those riders who hire/lease their motorcycles is also suggested. These will contribute to the reduction in unemployment and poverty rates.

Keywords: Livelihood, Opportunities, Commercial Motorcycle, Riding, Transportation

I. INTRODUCTION

Livelihood is about the way people earn and mobilize resources that make them to exist, either in the urban or non-urban areas. It comprises activities which make human being achieve the requirements for living like food, water and housing (Young et al, 2002; UNHCR, 2014) and as observed by de Haan, Quarles and van Ufford (2002) this is not as similar as acquiring a permanent job. However, deducing out of Chambers and Conway (1992), livelihood consist of capabilities, assets and human activities needed for existence: livelihood is sustainable if it is able to withstand and recover out of stress and shocks, sustain or improve the abilities and properties, make possible sustainable livelihood chances towards next generation and which provides to different livelihoods both at global, continental, regional, national and local levels for a specific period. However, livelihood outcomes attained by the less privileged (poor) follow their utilization of properties within agreed set of organizational terms. Commercial motorcycle can also be seen as important in everyday means of living of the unemployed youths (Hodder, 1965).

The study of commercial motorcycles is very important as they serve as channel of movement in everyday activities and overall means of living for the people in the area. It also provide employment for most people, which provide a means of survival by generating excitement, and standard vehicles are

desirable, particularly since there may be other options. Commercial motorcycle business can be flexible, and allowing other income-generating works (Kemtsop and Starkey, 2013; World Bank, 2011).

Therefore, those engaged in commercial motorcycle riding have reduced transportation problems faced most especially by the people and occupied essential part of the public transportation system in many places. By means of commercial motorcycle, human beings are able to move to places earlier inaccessible with vehicles. In recent time, many people are adopting commercial motorcycle as a means of living. As a result of extreme poverty facing most people and inadequate formal sector employment in most part of the country, a large number of the poor and unemployed citizens have been forced to engage in commercial motorcycle operation as means of living (Abdussalam, 2014).

As examined by the World Bank (2010), income poverty is a major challenge in the world today where Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions highly affected by poverty due to youth unemployment. While contending with the current economic crisis in the world, African countries will not cope with the growing number of economic crisis such as income poverty unless serious measures and alternative strategies are developed. In trying to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the Millennium Development Goals encourage development by improving socio economic conditions. Some of these conditions can be improved through job creation (Abdussalam, 2014).

Ajay (2011) conducted a study in third world countries and revealed that vehicle ownership is low and dependency on public transport is high. However, the financial conditions and performance of all forms of government-organized public transport are ineffective and are in decline. This situation has forced people and the market to develop creative solutions to address daily travel needs, hence a resort to motorcycles either for personal mobility in addition to public transport. Ebonugwo (2009) has revealed that in Sub-Saharan Africa, motorcycle taxi popularly referred to as “Okada” in Nigeria or “Bodaboda” in Eastern Africa, has become generally accepted as a means of commercial transportation,

also as possibly the best form of flexible public transportation system.

DFID (2000) established that livelihood framework is a tool to improve our understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihood of the poor. It was developed over a long period of time by the Sustainable Rural Livelihood Advisory Committee, building on earlier work by the Institute of Development Studies. The framework is centred on people. It does not attempt to provide a model of reality and does not operate in a linear fashion. Its goal is to facilitate organized and cohesive discussion among stakeholders with various viewpoints regarding the various elements that impact livelihoods, their relative significance, and their interactions. This should therefore aid in determining suitable entry points for livelihood support.

Schafer (2002) revealed that livelihood approach views the individuals and social groups who are trying to make a living in volatile conditions and with limited assets. It provides a framework for understanding the opportunities and assets available to poor people and the sources of their vulnerability, as well as the impact upon them of external organizations, processes and policies. The concept of livelihoods became prominent in the middle of the 1980s with work done by Robert Chamber and Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Furthermore, Ellis (2000) has emphasized more on the access to assets and activities in dealing with livelihood which is influenced by social relations and institutions. The livelihoods framework is a tool for understanding of livelihoods, particularly the livelihoods of the poor. Therefore, the concept of livelihood framework will be useful in dealing with changes to livelihood of migrant commercial motorcycle operators.

Moser (1998) cited in Makhetha (2010) observed that when discussing the poor, it is important to refer to the assets that they have access to in order to draw focus on what they have rather than what they do not have. These would allow us to understand how they make use of what they have in order to compensate for what they do not have. The relationship between assets and vulnerability is present in the fact that the more assets that people have access to, the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the erosion of

their assets, the greater their insecurity (DFID, 2000). Individuals draw on their assets in a number of ways, and this includes pooling resources and the skilful use of social networks in order to avoid the poverty cycle (Hossain, 2005)..

As observed by Ajay (2011), Ikot, et al., (2011) and Nwaorgu (2013), prior to 1980, motorcycles or motorbikes were primarily used for private purposes such as for individual mobility and for domestic purposes like fetching water and firewood, as well as for conveying farm produce from the farm or to the market. Tijani (2013) argued that it emerged as a means of transportation within rural communities. They also served as status symbol for the low income earners who could afford them (Christopher et al., 2013). Nwaorgu (2011) revealed that commercial motorcycle, however, found its way as a means of public transportation within the country's cities from late 80s to 90s.

Skinner (2008) argued that the term livelihood is a concept that tends to be applied to urban poverty, and it is defined as comprising the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a living. Livelihood is also considered to be sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in future. The concept of livelihood is important because it exposes the fact that households are not passive victims during times of disasters, but that they are active in ensuring that they survive harsh conditions by drawing on a number of assets (Rakodi, 1999). Applying this concept to the daily lives of informal commercial motorcycle operation will be useful in helping us gain a better understanding of the various activities they engage in and the assets on which they draw in order to make a living and survive in the city. Commercial motorcycle operations also create employment opportunities to many unskilled urban labour and further job opportunity to informal sector workers who wish to switch jobs in search of higher rewards (Timalsina, 2010).

There is an apparent gap in knowledge on the livelihood opportunities of commercial motorcycle riding particularly in Northern Nigeria. This is

despite the widespread practice of commercial motorcycle riding in Nigerian cities, including urban centres in Northern Nigeria where Bida is located. This study seeks to close this observed knowledge-gap by assessing the livelihood opportunities of commercial motorcycle riding in Bida, Nigeria.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The required data were collected directly from the field using personal observation and structured and Likert-Scale questionnaires respectively. Relevant secondary data were sourced from published and unpublished sources. The study adopted a stratified simple random sampling technique in selecting a representative sample from commercial motorcycles parking places to sample 215 respondents for the study.

Data collected were analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive (frequency analysis) and inferential (Chi-Square and Correlation) analytical techniques were adopted. The data collected and analysed were presented in forms of tables, charts and graphs.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Gender of Riders

The gender of the commercial motorcycle riders in the study area is presented in Table 1. The result shows that commercial motorcycle riding is essentially a male livelihood strategy. This is not surprising given the nature of the job and the cultural, socio-religious and regional nature of Bida.

Table 1: Gender of Riders

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	215	100
Female	0	0.0
Total	215	100.0

3.2 Motorcycle operation as primary means of livelihood

Table 2 investigates whether commercial motorcycle riding was the primary livelihood strategy of the riders in Bida. The result shows that the activity was the primary livelihood strategy of about 38% of the commercial motorcycle riders in Bida.

Table 2: Motorcycle operation as primary Means of Livelihood

Livelihood	Frequency	Percent
Yes	81	37.7
No	134	62.3
Total	215	100.0

Following the finding in Table 4.4, those who reported that commercial motorcycle riding was not their primary livelihood strategy further indicated their primary livelihood strategies. Figure 1 shows that farming was the primary livelihood strategy of majority of the commercial motorcycle riders in the study area. This is not surprising owing to the fact that Bida is surrounded by fertile and arable land. For this category of the riders, the commercial motorcycle business is a complementary livelihood activity that improves economic resilience and build the capacity.

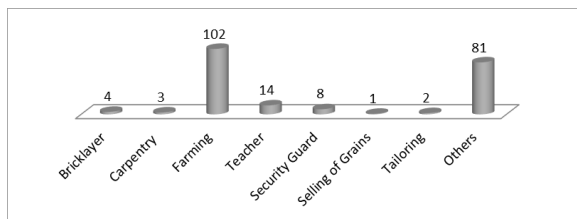


Fig. 1: Primary Livelihood Indicated

3.3 Place of residence

The place of residence of the commercial motorcycle riders in Bida is shown in Figure 2. It was found that majority (about 51%) of the commercial motorcycle riders in the study area resided in Bida. However, it was also found that about 18% of the riders resided in Lavun; 13% resided in Katcha; 7% resided in Gbako; 5% resided in Agaie; and another 7% resided in Edati. The implication of this is that commercial motorcycle riding in Bida serves as a livelihood strategy for riders within and outside Bida.

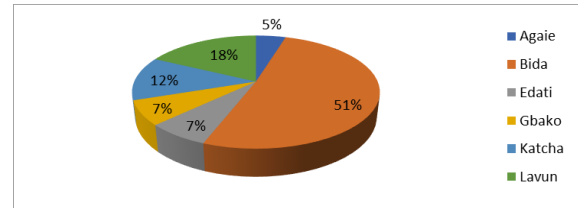


Fig. 2: Place of Residence

3.4 Parks where passengers are carried

The trip origins of commercial motorcyclists in the study area are shown in Figure 3. It was found that Old Market and New Market had the highest concentration of passengers with more than 18% of the commercial motorcycle riders reporting that they pick their passengers therefrom. This validates the assertion that the presence of markets contributes to the clustering of commercial motorcycle riders (Narteh, 2012). This was followed by Esso Park and FMC gate contributed about 9% and 8% of the passengers respectively. However, this is contrary to the popular opinion that traffic nodes and junctions are the major locations for commercial motorcycle clustering (Abdussalam, 2014).

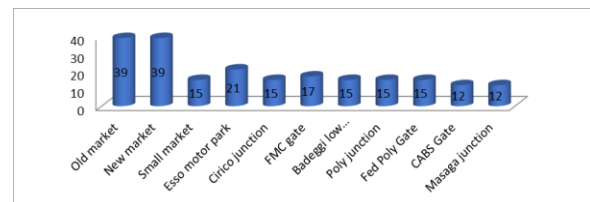


Fig. 3: Parks Where Passengers Are Carried

3.5 Motorcycle ownership

The ownership status of the motorcycles operated by the study population was examined. Figure 4 shows that about 78% of the commercial motorcycle riders in Bida were the owners of their bikes. The implication of this is that majority of the commercial motorcycle riders in the study area enjoy considerable livelihood security. Secondly, the motorcycle is a personal asset of the riders

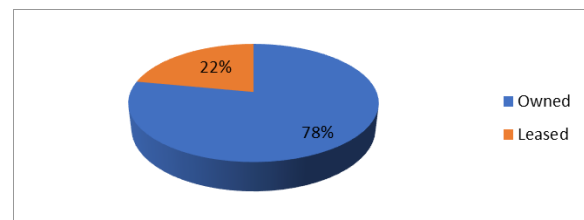


Fig. 4: Motorcycle Ownership

3.6 Nature of worked time

Table 3 shows the nature of the work of commercial motorcycle riders in Bida. The result shows that about 94% of the operators were engaged in commercial motorcycle riding as a full-time livelihood strategy; while up to 6% were part-time commercial motorcycle riders. It is not surprising that a considerable proportion of the riders were part-time operators given that Table 3 shows that not all commercial motorcycle riders in the study area engaged in the activity as their only livelihood strategy.

Table 3: Nature of Worked Time

	Frequency	Percent
Full time	202	94.0
Part time	13	6.0
Total	215	100.0

The commercial motorcycle riders who engaged in the activity on a part-time basis were interrogated on the time of their operation as shown in Table 4. Only about 8% stated they operated in the afternoon; while more than 92% stated that they operated at night. The implication of this is that they resume commercial motorcycle riding after closing from their primary livelihood strategies.

Table 4: Part Time Operation of Commercial Motorcycle

Part time operation	Frequency	Percent
Afternoon	1	7.69
Night	12	92.31
Total	13	100.0

3.7 Daily income before joining the business

The daily income of the commercial motorcycle riders in Bida before joining the commercial motorcycle riding business is shown in Table 5. The result shows that none of the commercial motorcycle operators in the study area earned more than N1,500; while about 37% had no noticeable daily income before joining the business. On the aggregate, about 74% of the operators had less than N1,000 daily income before joining the business. The implication of this is that majority of the commercial motorcycle

riders in Bida were income poor prior to joining the commercial motorcycle operation livelihood.

Table 5: Daily Income Before Joining the Business

	Frequency	Percent
0	79	36.7
500	5	2.3
600	7	3.3
700	37	17.2
800	29	13.5
900	1	.5
1000	48	22.3
1200	7	3.3
1500	2	.9
Total	215	100.0

3.8 Daily income from the business

The current daily income of the commercial motorcycle riders in Bida from the practice of their business is shown in Table 6. By comparison to the initial income of the riders as earlier shown in Table 5 where about 74% earned less than N1,000 daily, less than 4% of the commercial motorcycle riders in the study area earned less than N2,000 daily from the business. Similarly, the minimum and maximum daily income of the operators rose from N0 and N1,500 to N1500 and N4,000. The implication of this is that commercial motorcycle riding has improved the financial capital base of the operators and consequently contributed in lifting them out of the income poverty trap.

Table 6: Daily Income from the Business

	Frequency	Percent
1500	7	3.3
1800	32	14.9
2000	83	38.6
3000	83	38.6
3500	7	3.3
4000	3	1.4
Total	215	100.0

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A major challenge facing urban planners is how to incorporate an understanding of gender and differences on the one hand and livelihood systems on the other, into formal and informal planning process. A livelihood perspective is conventionally

understood solely in terms of income earning and a conventional response is to promote employment creation and a local economic development. These are indeed important and appropriate responses. However, despite the availability and potentiality of commercial motorcycles in the study area and its operations, income poverty still persists. The level of motorcycle business activities is very high in the cities and these activities has a positive significant effect on people's livelihood, since they can find jobs on it and also there are some challenges facing commercial motorcycle operation in the study area which include poor road infrastructure, road accident, security problem, harassment by union, over daily payment and traffic regulation.

The study concludes that commercial motorcycle operation contributes significantly to livelihood improvement of the operators and facilitates movement of individuals, hence increase social integration. The study therefore recommends that the government should consider and recognize commercial motorcycle operation as one of the livelihood activities that fill the gap of youth employment problem. Provision of support in terms of loans to the operators of commercial motorcycles especially for those riders who hire/lease their motorcycles is also suggested. These will contribute to the reduction in unemployment and poverty rates.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdussalam, O. I. (2014), Contribution of Keke-Napep to Poverty Alleviation in Kwara State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 4(2), 129-139
- [2] Ajay, K. (2011). Understanding the emerging role of commercial motorcycles in African cities. In *Sub-Saharan Africa Discussion Paper No. 13, Urban Transport Service: A political economy perspective*, Retrieved from www.worldbank.org/cifr/ssatp
- [3] Chambers, R. & Conway, G. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. Brighton: University of Sussex, Institute for Development Studies, Discussion Paper 296.
- [4] Christopher, E. M, Usman A. O., & Eke, C. C. (2013). Abolition of Commercial Motorcycles and Implications on Transportation and Criminality in Calabar Metropolis. *International Journal of Social Sciences Studies*.1(1).
- [5] De Haan, L., Quarles, P. and Van, U. (2002). About trade and trust: The question of livelihood and social capital in rural-urban interactions. In: I.S.A. Baud & J. Post, eds, *Realigning actors in an urbanizing world: Governance and institutions from a development perspective*, pp. 243-264. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- [6] DFID (2000). *Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets*. Department for International Development. <http://www.livelihoods.org/info/info_guidancesheets.html> (Accessed October 2nd, 2019).
- [7] Ebonugwo, M. (2009), Okada; not lucrative business any more in Okonkwo, E.C, Emehute, V. C and Nwosu A.C (eds) *The Okada phenomenon: effects on agricultural and Rural development*. Proceeding of the 44th Annual Conference of Agricultural society of Nigeria pp 278- 279.
- [8] Ellis, F. (2000). *Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries*, Oxford: Oxford University press.
- [9] Hossain, S. (2005) *Poverty, Household Strategies and Coping with Urban Life: Examining 'Livelihood Framework' in Dhaka City, Bangladesh*. *Bangladesh e-journal of Sociology*, 21(1).
- [10] Ikot A. S., Akpan, U. U., Benson, P. J. and Etim, O.P. (2011). *Motorcycle Ban and Its Economic Implication on Uyo Metropolis of Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria*. *International Journal of Economic Development Research and Investment*.
- [11] Kemtsop, G. A., and Starkey, P. (2013). *Rural transport service indicators: report of the Pitoa-jallou Road, Northern Cameroon*. June 2013. *International Forum for Rural Transport and development*.

- [12] Makhetha, P. (2010). Exploring the Livelihood Strategies Employed by Street Traders Selling Vegetables and Fruits along Noord Street. *Modern African Studies*, 2(1), 61-89.
- [13] Moser, C. (1998). The Asset Vulnerability Framework: Reassessing Urban Poverty Reduction Strategies. *World Development*, 26(1). Pp. 1-19.
- [14] Nwaorgu, F. (2013). Nigeria: The ban on commercial motorcyclist. On Line Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/articles/ad.asp?blurb=856>.
- [15] Rakodi, C. (1999). A capital assets framework for analyzing household livelihood strategies: Implications for policy. *Development Policy Review*, 17, pp. 315-342.
- [16] Rakodi, C. (2002). A livelihoods approach: Conceptual issues and definitions. In: Rakodi, C. and Lloyd-Jones, T. (Eds). *Urban livelihoods: A people-centered approach to reducing poverty*. Sterling, VA: Earthscan.
- [17] Schafer, J. (2002) 'Supporting Livelihoods in Situations of Chronic Conflict and Political Instability: Overview of Conceptual Issues', Working Paper 183, Overseas Development Institute, London.
- [18] Skinner, C. (2008). Street trade in Africa: A review. School of Development Studies, Working Paper no. 51. University of KwaZulu Natal.
- [19] Tijani, T.B. (2013). Trends in motorcycle accident in Lokoja, Nigeria. *European International Journal of Science and Technology*, 2(6): 251-261.
- [20] Timalsina, K. P. (2010). *Struggling for livelihood; Making a living in the urban informal sector*. VDM Verlag, Dr. Muller, Berlin, Germany, 2010.
- [21] Timalsina, K. P. (2011). An urban informal economy: Livelihood opportunity to poor or challenges for urban governance. Study of street vending activities of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*, 2(2.2),1.3.
- [22] UNHCR (2014). *Global Strategy for Livelihood*. Geneva, Switzerland: UN Refugee Agency. <http://www.unhcr.org>
- [23] Young, H., Yacob, A., George, W., Andy, C., Tim, L., Annalies, B., Angela, R. R., Patrick, W., Diane, H., & Wendy, J. (2002) *Nutrition and Livelihoods in Situations of Conflict and other Crises; Reducing Vulnerability and Risk*.
- [24] CC/SCN Discussion Paper at 29th Session One-Day Symposium On Nutrition In The Context Of Crisis And Conflict. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University.