

WOMEN IN TRANSPORT: INVESTIGATING CULTURAL DIMENSION OF FEMALE TRANSPORT OPERATORS

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INTRODUCTION

Transportation is a critical aspect of modern society, facilitating the movement of people and goods, economic activities, and social interactions. In Nigeria, like many other countries, transportation plays a pivotal role in the nation's development and daily life. The transport sector is a vital part of the Nigerian economy, accounting for about 10% of GDP and employing millions of people. However, the participation of women in the transportation sector has often been limited, influenced by various factors contextually cultural dimensions and socio-economic factors. It is crucial to understand that gender encompasses the culturally influenced expectations regarding the roles and conduct of individuals based on their perceived sex. This term distinguishes between roles shaped by societal constructs and those inherently linked to biological aspects of being male or female. Gender roles and responsibilities are subject to evolution throughout an individual's life and can sometimes change rapidly. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that any meaningful understanding of the concept of "Gender" necessitates acknowledging the element of distinguishing between sexes. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize that factors such as culture, environment, prescribed roles, values, and norms are integral components when discussing the gender issue (Olagbemi, 2005). Gender bias within the transportation sector represents a significant concern for any democratic and developing state

committed to the welfare of its citizens. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO 2022), women make up only 30% of the transport sector in Nigeria. This is significantly lower than the global average of 47%. It is imperative that these states incorporate measures promoting equal opportunities and fair compensation for female workers within their governmental policies. According to a 2022 report by the Gender and Transport Hub, women make up only 10% of the land transport sector in Nigeria. This is significantly lower than the global average of 22%. The report also found that women are more likely to be employed in informal and low-paid jobs in the land transport sector, such as street vendors and bus conductors. They are also less likely to be in positions of leadership and decision-making (Gender and Transport Hub 2022).

Transportation stands as one of the sectors that have traditionally excluded women in various capacities, a situation that still persists in numerous countries today. Comprehensive and accurate data on the employment of women in the transport sector, particularly in specific transport modes like maritime, ports, inland waterways, civil aviation, road, and railways, remain challenging to obtain (Peter, 2013). The achievement of sustainable transport cannot be deemed successful without concurrent, effective, and efficient programs that enhance the livelihoods of people, especially women (Odufuwa, 2007). In many developing nations, such as Nigeria, the gender dimensions of transportation planning, management, and employment have often been overlooked in the context of transportation and development (Odufuwa, 2007). This oversight is evident in numerous cities in Nigeria, where public transportation systems often lack consideration for the unique needs and perspectives of women (Fernando, 2002; World Bank, 2001; & TRB, 2006). Gender inequality in transport sector in developing countries particularly in Nigeria has been traced to numerous factors in which specifically this study will look into cultural dimension. Nigeria, a diverse and

multi-ethnic country, is characterized by a rich tapestry of cultures, traditions, and norms. These socio-cultural factors significantly influence the roles and expectations placed on women within the society. Historically, traditional gender roles have confined women to domestic spheres, limiting their involvement in sectors like transportation. Gender norms, such as the belief that women should prioritize their family roles over career pursuits, have contributed to this disparity. However, it is also imperative that policy maker making efforts to enhance women's participation in transportation must take into account cultural dimensions. Policy interventions that challenge gender stereotypes, promote education and training opportunities for women in transportation, and create a supportive environment for female transport professionals are essential. Moreover, it is vital to engage with local communities and traditional leaders to foster a cultural shift that values and encourages women's participation in the sector.

Consequently, there has been a global push for the empowerment and rights of women in all aspects of society, including the transportation sector, employment, and economic engagement, with the aim of mitigating gender inequality (Bivas & Panigrahi, 2013). In recent years, it has been observed that there is a significant increase in women participation in the operation and management of transport in Nigeria (gender equality) which is ideal. Gender equality has been a global issue in which world leading organizations, NGOs and government agencies such as the United Nations and UNICEF, are strategically advocating in bridging the stereotype at all means. These initiatives have done diversified project such as SDG 5 of the united nation initiative in combacting the gender inequality by 2030. This is suggested to have been a rationale for the significant increase in the participation of women in the operation and management of transport in Nigeria transport sector. This study aims to

provide a comprehensive background on women's participation in transportation in Nigeria, focusing on the cultural aspects that shape their roles and opportunities.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was used for this investigation. This approach was helpful in determining the challenges and opportunities in cultural dimension of gender participation in transport operation.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and linear regression techniques.

RESULTS

This part present in details, the data analysis and the results obtained from this study, findings obtained from the study are presented under the following headings: socio-demographics characteristics of participants, socio-economic influence, and Cultural barriers, Perception of profession, gender-stereotyping and professional capacity of female drivers.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Association between Demographics and Socioeconomic Character of Participants of Female Bus Driver

	Strongly Discourage	Discourage	Neutral	Encourage	χ^2	P-Value
Age						
15-24	2 (28.6)	-	4 (57.1)	1 (14.3)	10.28	0.113
23-34	1 (12.5)	2 (25.0)	-	5 (62.5)		
35-44	1 (16.7)	2 (33.3)	1 (16.7)	2 (33.3)		
Marital Status						
Divorced	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)	-	1 (25.0)	12.33	0.195

Married	-	2 (28.6)	3 (42.9)	2 (28.6)		
Single	3 (37.5)	-	2 (25.0)	3 (37.5)		
Single Mother	-	-	-	2 (100.0)		
Do you have Bank Account						
Yes	4 (19.1)	4 (19.1)	5 (23.8)	8 (38.1)		
Monthly income						
10k-20k	2 (33.3)	-	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)	8.400	0.753
21k-40k	-	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)		
41k-80k	1 (25.0)	-	1 (25.0)	2 (50.0)		
81k-150k	-	1 (50.0)	-	1 (50.0)		
150k above	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	-	1 (33.3)		
Number of Children						
None	4 (40.0)	-	3 (30.0)	3 (30.0)	10.45	0.107
1-3	-	4 (40.0)	2 (20.0)	4 (40.0)		
3-5	-	-	-	1 (100.0)		
Ethnicity						
Igbo	-	-	-	6 (33.3)	3.33	0.343
Yoruba	4 (22.2)	4 (22.2)	4 (22.2)	2 (100.0)		

Aurthor’s Compilation (2023)

Hypothesis Testing: The p-value of suggests that there is not statistically significant association between economic condition and the factors influencing participants. The relationship appears to be non-significant at a conventional significance level of (alpha=0.05)

CULTURAL BARRIERS, PERCEPTION OF PROFESSION

Association between Demographics and Cultural Barrier of Participants of Female Bus Driver

Category	Extremely Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	χ^2	p-Value
Age						

15-24	4 (57.1)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	-		
23-34	2 (25.0)	4 (50.0)	2 (25.0)	-	6.6643	0.353
35-44	4 (66.7)	1 (16.7)	-	1 (16.7)		
Marital Status						
Divorced	2 (50.0)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)	-		
Married	2 (28.6)	2 (28.6)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)		
Single	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	-	-	7.9143	0.543
Single Mother	2 (100.0)	-	-	-		
Do you have Bank Account						
Yes	10 (47.6)	7 (33.3)	3 (14.3)	1 (4.8)		
Monthly income						
10k-20k	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	-	-		
21k-40k	3 (50.0)	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)		
41k-80k	2 (50.0)	-	2 (50.0)	-	14.7167	0.257
81k-150k	-	2 (100.0)	-	-		
150k above	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	-	-		
Number of Children						
None	6 (60.0)	3 (30.0)	1 (10.0)	-		
1-3	3 (30.0)	4 (40.0)	2 (20.0)	1 (10.0)	3.65	0.724
3-5	1 (100)	-	-	-		
Ethnicity						
Igbo	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	-	-		
Yoruba	8 (44.4)	6 (33.3)	3 (16.7)	1 (5.6)	0.5996	0.897

Aurthor's Compilation (2023)

A significant portion of the respondents (47.6%) expressed that traditional cultural norms have an extremely negative impact on the acceptance of women in commercial bus driving professions.

GENDER-STEREOTYPING AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF FEMALE DRIVERS.

Association between Demographics and Gender Stereotyping of participants

Category	Extremely Facilitate	Extremely hinder	Hinder	Neutral	χ^2	p-Value
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Age						
15-24	1 (14.3)	3 (42.9)	3 (42.9)	-	5.9261	0.432
23-34	-	4 (50.0)	4 (50.0)	-		
35-44	-	4 (66.7)	1 (16.7)	1 (16.7)		
Marital Status						
Divorced	-	3 (75.0)	-	1 (25.0)	8.5739	0.478
Married		4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	-		
Single	1 (12.5)	3 (37.5)	4 (50.0)	-		
Single Mother		1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	-		
Do you have Bank Account						
Yes	1 (4.76)	11 (52.4)	8 (38.1)	1 (4.8)		
Monthly income						
10k-20k	1 (16.7)	2 (33.3)	3 (50.0)	-	10.3210	0.588
21k-40k	-	5 (83.3)	1 (16.7)	-		
41k-80k	-	2 (50.0)	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)		
81k-150k	-	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	-		
150k above	-	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	-		
Number of Children						
None	1 (10.0)	4 (40.0)	4 (40.0)	1 (10.0)	3.4364	0.752
1-3	-	6 (60.0)	4 (40.0)	-		
3-5	-	1 (100.0)	-	-		
Ethnicity						
Igbo	-	-	2 (100.0)	-	3.3333	0.343
Yoruba	1 (5.6)	10 (55.6)	6 (33.3)	1 (5.6)		

Aurthor's Compilation (2023)

Among participant aged 15-24, 42.9% found gender stereotypes extremely hindering. 50.0% found gender stereotypes hindering, and 50.0% extremely hindering among 15-24 year, 66.7% found gender stereotypes hindering. 75.0% found gender

stereotypes extremely hindering among participants, and 25.0% hindering. 50.0% found gender stereotypes hindering, and 50.0% extremely hindering. Among participant with bank account 4.76% found gender stereotypes extremely facilitating, 52.4% hindering, 38.1% extremely hindering, and 4.8% neutral. Participants with a monthly income of 10k-20k: 16.7% found gender stereotypes extremely facilitating, 33.3% hindering, and 50.0% hindering. Among participants with a monthly income of 21k-40k: 83.3% found gender stereotypes hindering, and 16.7% extremely hindering. Among participants with no children: 10.0% found gender stereotypes extremely facilitating, 40.0% hindering, 40.0% extremely hindering, and 10.0% neutral.

Hypothesis Testing: It was found that none of the variable was statistically significant. The p-value suggests that there is not statistically significant association between gender stereotypes and the socio-demographics of the participants. The relationship appears to be non-significant at a conventional significance level of ($\alpha=0.05$)

DISCUSSION

Based on the objectives of the study, the result shows that there is no statistically significant association between economic condition and the factors influencing participants. The relationship appears to be non-significant at a conventional significance level of ($\alpha=0.05$). This implies that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic conditions and factors influencing female transport operators in Ibadan. This is findings is in relation with social exclusive theory which investigates how particular groups, such as women, suffer hurdles to accessing resources and opportunities, especially transportation, because of their socioeconomic level.

It was also found that none of the variable was statistically significant. The p-value suggests that there is positive statistically significant association between gender stereotypes and the socio- demographics of the participants. The relationship appears to be non-significant at a conventional significance level of ($\alpha=0.05$). This implies that there is positive significant relationship between gender stereotypes and the socio-demographics of the participants. This findings is in line with social cognitive theory which posits that individuals learn and adopt social norms and behaviors through observation, imitation, and social interaction.

Conclusion

The research investigated the experiences and obstacles faced by female workers in Nigeria's transportation industry as a result of cultural factors. Its main goal was to comprehend the cultural aspects of women's involvement in Nigerian transportation operations. The study aimed to accomplish this through a number of specific goals, such as analyzing the impact of gender stereotypes on women's professional capacity, assessing the influence of socioeconomic factors on women's decision to become bus drivers, and examining the cultural barriers preventing women from participating. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the study collected data through interviews and surveys with female employees in the transport sector. The gathered information was then analyzed using descriptive and linear regression techniques. While the study aimed to link socio-economic factors, cultural influences, and gender stereotypes to the choices and experiences of female transport operators, the results

revealed no statistically significant associations at the conventional level ($\alpha=0.05$).

The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between socioeconomic factors and the choice of becoming a bus driver. This implies that initiatives supporting education, training, and financial resources for women can significantly encourage their participation in the transport sector.

The study uncovered a negative and significant influence of cultural beliefs on women's participation in the transport sector. This highlights the crucial need to address these negative stereotypes and promote cultural changes that foster gender equality in order to overcome this significant barrier.

Finally, the research identified a negative and significant impact of gender stereotypes on the perceived and actual professional capacity of female drivers. This highlights how crucial it is to dispel these myths through awareness programs and the presentation of positive role models in order to empower women and improve their performance in the transportation industry.

The results of this study highlight the critical need for a multi modal strategy to overcome the economical and cultural challenges that women in the transportation industry confront. We can progress toward a more inclusive and equitable transportation sector that provides opportunities for everyone by aggressively promoting gender equality, tearing down damaging stereotypes, and empowering women via assistance and education.

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